

Press Release

Glashütte, August 2024

Caspar David Friedrich – Where It All Started

"Recognise yourselves and your time". With this pivotal statement, the painter Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840) epitomises Romanticism and the art of German landscape painting. To mark his 250th birthday, the Dresden State Art Collections (SKD) is honouring his work with an extensive exhibition. As a long-standing partner, A. Lange & Söhne is supporting the exhibition of the world-famous artist, who is closely connected with the home of Saxon precision watchmaking.



Caspar David Friedrich, The Great Enclosure near Dresden, 1832, © Albertinum, SKD, photo: Elke Estel/Hans-Peter Klut

An Exhibition of Iconic Masterpieces

With 14 iconic paintings, the SKD holds one of the most important collections encompassing all of the creative phases of the artist, who was born in Greifswald in 1774 and died in Dresden in 1840. The exhibition "Caspar David Friedrich. Where It All Started", will be on display at the

Albertinum from 24 August 2024 to 5 January 2025 and in the Museum of Prints, Drawings and Photographs from 24 August to 17 November 2024. Important loans will be presented, such as "Wanderer above the Sea of Fog" from the Hamburger Kunsthalle and "Moonrise by the Sea" from the Alte Nationalgalerie Berlin, together with outstanding landscape paintings from the museum's own collection, such as "Two Men Contemplating the Moon" and "The Great Enclosure near Dresden". The Dresden exhibition is thus the finale of a cycle of festival contributions in honour of the artist in Germany. A major retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum in New York will follow in 2025.



*Carl Johann Bæhr, Portrait of the painter
Caspar David Friedrich, 1836,
© Albertinum, SKD, Photo: Elke Estel*

At the end of the 18th century, Dresden was considered as the centre of landscape art and became the painter's favourite place and main place of residence, where he established numerous connections with his contemporaries. This special exhibition invites visitors to experience Caspar David Friedrich's art in the place where a large part of it was created. The central theme revolves around real landscapes and places, which are also allegories for Friedrich's captivating landscapes of longing and contemplation. They are viewed from different perspectives, such as his approach towards nature and his political and religious views and invite visitors to follow in the artist's footsteps. The focus is on Friedrich's perception of the Old Masters and his contemporaries, which until now has received little attention in research and yet provides new insights into Friedrich's creative process and career.

The Painter – Contemplation and Perception

The key to understanding Friedrich's work lies in his subjective experience of nature, a central theme of Romanticism, which made the melancholic artist world-famous with his compositions. To study the delicate, atmospheric nuances of dusk, which he masterfully captured in his paintings, he travelled around the area from Dresden to the Ore Mountains and into Saxon and Bohemian Switzerland. His intention was not simply to reproduce familiar landscapes, but to create his own compositions from a wealth of motifs. With his unusually subtle, at times almost dematerialised painting, he created suggestive works of longing and hope, which explore existential questions about human life and its finite nature. These themes are as relevant today as they were in the 19th century and are expressed in particular in his famous Rückenfiguren (Figures from Behind).



Caspar David Friedrich, View of the Elbe Valley, 1807, © Albertinum, SKD, photo: Elke Estel/Hans-Peter Klut

The Draughtsman – Master of a Moment

While paintings by Friedrich are placed alongside old masters such as Jakob van Ruisdael and Gerard ter Borch in the Albertinum, an exhibition starting at the same time in the Museum of



Caspar David Friedrich's „Äußerungen bei Betrachtung einer Sammlung von Gemälden von größtentheils noch lebenden und unlängst verstorbenen Künstlern“, Manuscript, ca. 1830, © Museum of Prints, Drawings and Photographs, SKD, photo: Caterina Miksch

Prints, Drawings and Photographs focuses on Friedrich's creative process in his drawings. From 24 August to 17 November 2024, visitors can discover over 160 artworks that illustrate the artist's evolution from his early works to his late works. In addition, the exhibits include a sketchbook that has never been shown before and which redefines our understanding of the artist, as Friedrich goes into great detail about his ideas in it. The utmost accuracy in capturing nature formed the foundations of Friedrich's artistic work, and his concentration and dedication to detail can be felt in each piece.

Lange CEO Wilhelm Schmid identifies connections to the art of Saxon precision

watchmaking as practised today at A. Lange & Söhne: "Caspar David Friedrich spent his entire life studying landscape painting, which he would go on to redefine in the 18th and 19th centuries with his outstanding craftsmanship and visionary perspective. With his evocative imagery, which was quickly regarded as revolutionary and is still deeply moving today, he followed his own path and created astonishing perspectives that are as relevant today as they were when they were created. Ferdinand Adolph Lange, who founded the first watch manufacture in Glashütte in 1845, devoted himself to precision watchmaking with the same passion. His quest for the utmost precision resulted in mechanical masterpieces that were among the best of their time. It still influences the work of our watchmakers and finisseurs today. They dedicate themselves to every detail in order to create a precision mechanical microcosm that is also an inspiring work of art." For A. Lange & Söhne, this commitment is an acknowledgement of their shared roots, says Schmid. "We are delighted that the 250th anniversary of Caspar David Friedrich's birth is being celebrated in Dresden and that we can support the State Art Collections in this fantastic project."

About A. Lange & Söhne

Dresden watchmaker Ferdinand Adolph Lange laid the foundations for Saxony's precision watchmaking industry when he established his manufacture in 1845. His precious pocket watches remain highly coveted among collectors all over the world. The company was expropriated after World War II, and the name A. Lange & Söhne nearly vanished. In 1990, Ferdinand Adolph Lange's great-grandson, Walter Lange, had the courage to relaunch the brand. Today, Lange crafts only a few thousand wristwatches per year, predominantly in gold or platinum. They are equipped exclusively with movements made in-house that are elaborately finished and assembled twice by hand. With 72 manufacture calibres developed since 1990, A. Lange & Söhne has secured a top-tier position in the world of watchmaking. Its greatest achievements include the LANGE 1, the first regularly produced wristwatch with an outsize date, and the ZEITWERK, with its precisely jumping numerals. Extraordinary complications such as the ZEITWERK MINUTE REPEATER, the TRIPLE SPLIT and the GRAND COMPLICATION presented in 2013, the most complicated model to date, represent what the manufacture always strives for: to drive the traditional art of watchmaking to ever-new heights. Launched in 2019, the sporty-elegant ODYSSEUS marked the beginning of a new chapter for A. Lange & Söhne.

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