

P. S. KRØYER

1851–1909

70. *Study of a Woman from Arildsläge in Sweden in Festive Dress,*
1872

(*Studie af en kvinde fra Arildsläge i højtidsdragt*)

Oil on canvas, 10¼ x 7¾ in. (26 x 20 cm)

PROVENANCE: Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 465, 1984, lot 60 (described as *Svensk bondekone i kirke dragt*).

EXHIBITED: Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, *Danish Paintings of the Nineteenth Century from the Collection of Ambassador John Loeb Jr.*, 1994, no. 15.

LITERATURE: Probably H. Chr. Christensen, *Fortegnelse over P.S. Krøyers Oliemalerier*, Copenhagen 1923, no. 61 (27 x 23 cm/10½ x 9 in.); Margareta Ramsay (ed.): *Konstnärerna hos Mor Cilla. Nordiska målare i Arildsläge 1856–1913*, Hälsingborg 1987, Krapperup Museums skriftserie no. 4 (on the artists' colony at Arild); Peter Nisbet, *Danish Paintings of the Nineteenth Century from the Collection of Ambassador John Loeb Jr.*, Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1994, pp. 10–12.

The young Danish figure painters of the 1870s spent summers studying in the open and hunting for motifs, and ever since the Golden Age the preferred subjects of artists had been the ordinary people of the country districts. The painters took lodgings in country villages and fishing villages, filling their portfolios with detailed studies of the local models, dresses, articles of everyday use, houses, and surroundings. On the basis of these, the artists then spent the winter in their studios painting one or more large compositions intended for exhibition and sale. The painters who could exhibit motifs from regions unfamiliar to their public could be sure of attracting attention.

In the summer of 1872, a couple of years after completing his studies in the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Krøyer settled for a time at Arildsläge on Kullen, the mountainous peninsula in Sweden located at the northern extremity of the Sound. It was a spot that had attracted both Danish and Swedish artists since about 1830; for instance, F. C. Kiærskou had painted Kullen as seen from the sea, and in 1860 and over the following years, the marine artist Carl Bille (1833–1895) worked in Mölle and C. F. Sørensen (1818–1879) in Arild, a place known for shipbuilding and shipping. The artists appreciated both the picturesque mixture of buildings and scenery and the untouched countryside. It was especially the Kullen massif,¹ with its dramatic differences in height, that tempted the Danish artists, who at home had to look hard for anything but gentle hills and flat, cultivated fields. It is not far from the Danish capital to Kullen via Elsinore and Helsingborg.

In Arildsläge, Krøyer painted a series of somewhat similar pictures of men and women from the local population, one of which was the present work, which is not registered by H. Chr. Christensen in his catalogue of Krøyer's oil paintings. The characteristic headgear forms part of the local costume from Lugguda on Kullen, a festive dress that was, and still is, worn on Sundays and holy days and at parties. However, no major finished figure pictures by Krøyer are known from Arild. He did not complete paintings of this kind until he visited Hornbæk, where he worked during the following summers.

Arild was an artists' colony, and it is quite undeserved that it should not be known in the same way as Skagen and other colonies from the same time in Scandinavia, Britain, and France. As in Skagen, there was a hospitable inn at Arild, run since 1856 by "Mor Cilla" (Cecilia Andersson), in which painters and authors



congregated and inspired each other. In the 1890s there was even art instruction arranged in conjunction with the inn. At the end of the 19th century the place was visited by important Swedish painters such as Carl Skånberg (1850–1883), Richard Bergh (1858–1919), and Gustaf Rydberg (1835–1933). Krøyer visited Arild again in 1881 and 1895, when he was a guest of Bernhard Middelboe (1850–1931), who, like August Jerndorff, had his own house there and thus was permanently associated with Kullen.

E.F.

¹A principal mountain mass.