

PEDER BALKE TO NATIONAL GALLERY OF LONDON

International Breakthrough for forgotten Romantic

“Will Balke be the new Munch?” asks Director of Northern Norway Art Museum, Knut Ljøgodt rhetorically. This summer, the museum will show the largest exhibition of Peder Balke’s paintings in modern times. When the exhibition travels to the National Gallery in London this fall, his art will reach out to a large, international audience.

Peder Balke (1804–1887) is one of the most original and innovative painters from the Romantic period, also in a European context. A voyage to the northernmost parts of Norway in 1832 was crucial, and he returned to the dramatic, but gloomy Arctic landscape for the rest of his life. Inspired by Caspar David Friedrich, whom he knew from Dresden, he focused on the visionary more than realist aspects of the landscape. Balke experimented with techniques, and developed a unique way of painting that sometimes is close to abstraction, thus pioneering the modernist movement.

In Paris in the 1840s, Balke received a commission of 33 Norwegian landscapes from the King of France, Louis-Philippe. Due to the Revolution of 1848, Balke lost his commission, but 26 of the sketches survive and are today on display in the permanent collection of Musée du Louvre.

During his lifetime, Balke struggled to gain recognition as an artist, and was more or less forgotten after his death. Only during recent years his art has been recognized. Christopher Riopelle, Curator of post 1800 painting in the National Gallery, says: *“This long-overdue exhibition will highlight Peder Balke’s unique, innovative and virtuosic paintings of Scandinavian seascapes and we sincerely hope it will put an artist, who is richly deserving of recognition among a much wider audience, finally back on the map.”* Director Knut Ljøgodt is clear about his ambition for this project: *“We want to place Peder Balke in the canon of Western Art History where he belongs once and for all, alongside with artists like J.M.W. Turner, Edvard Munch and Paul Cézanne.”*

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- See also: <http://www.nnkm.no/en/exhibitions/peder-balke-vision-and-revolution> or: <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/press-and-media/press-releases/peder-balke>