

Katalog

Nordby Sognearkivs udstilling september 2006 om

Thomas Schmidt



THOMAS SCHMIDT: PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS, AND PRINTS

Karen Eskesen

Miscellaneous Remarks

Thomas Schmidt painted landscapes and interiors.

Portraits: I know of only two portraits, but they are set in landscapes: Helga sitting reading in the Schmidt garden, and Aslag Eskesen, about 4 years old standing on a porch at night in New Jersey (a very dark painting, showing TS' eagerness to try something new).

In the landscapes and interiors, of course, there are women in Fanø costume, and these are actually carefully observed portraits, but not in the sense that a person is the only object of the painting: in all these works, the entire milieu is important, and the person is an important part of the milieu. And we can reverse this and say, the milieu is an important part of his portraits -- they are inseparable.

A Neo-Classical Peace (Nyklassisistisk) reigns in TS paintings and drawings. We cannot know how much art he had seen, but as an educated man he must have known paintings from the Danish Golden Age, either from seeing them in museums or from having seen prints in books. He evidently preferred these calm views of an idyllic Denmark to the more exciting modern style of painting among painters at Skagen and Faaborg.

Exner: While it is said that TS never went farther south on Fano than Paelebjerg, and therefore never visited Sonderho, there is much in his work to make us think he was very familiar with Exner's paintings. However, TS' portrayals of Nordby interiors are more calm and pensive than Exner's lively genre scenes.

AND -- Thomas Schmidt does not re-arrange the ceiling beams in his paintings the way Exner does!!!

Alfred Lithographs: Who was Dr. Alfred?

A comparison of the original TS sketches and the Alfred lithos shows that TS's work was more skillful than the Alfred lithos. The person drawing on the lithographic stone, while quite accurate, made the pictures more stiff than the originals. Perhaps this is due to the small size of the little tourist books. The young woman in the church door is a good example.

Lith: made the lithographic copy

Del: drew the original

Pinx or Pinxit: painted the original

Grisaille a rendering in black and white paint.

An Ink Wash drawing is also rendered in black and white, but only in ink with water added to make shades of gray, and usually without using white paint.

A Pencil Drawing can also be rendered in shades of gray, we can also call this a value drawing.

Verso or Reverse of painting or drawing. Any notes on the back of a photograph or work of art are important and should be recorded in the main archive files. I can't do that here, because I don't have the originals.

TS explored new inventions

We may tend to think TS was very conservative because of his careful portrayals of the colorful traditions in Nordby, but he also loved new things: He plunged into a project portraying the new villas and hotels at Fanobad. To us they look quaintly old-fashioned, but to him they were exciting: Sea bathing was a fairly new "invention", and the hotels and villas were quite avant-garde designs for their day.

In other works we see telegraph lines, new roads, steel-hulled steamships, factory chimneys, the new steam-driven ferry to Esbjerg.

Known Signatures and initials of Thomas Schmidt

The signature varies from year to year, and is affected by the medium: The signatures with a fine pen are more elegant than the oil signatures, which have to be written with thick paint. In the sketchbooks there is rapid pencil scribbling, while grisailles prepared for reproduction by the lithographer have the prettiest signatures. The lithographs, in turn, coarsen signatures slightly. Most typical are the intertwined TS, and the full name, Thomas Schmidt. Occasionally we see T Schmidt with the T and S intertwined.

ARTWORK BY THOMAS SCHMIDT FROM KAREN ESKESEN

PROVENANCE

All paintings and sketches have passed from Thomas Schmidt to Alma Schmidt Eskesen, to Aslag Hallum Eskesen, to Karen Eskesen. (no. 1 – 11.)

“View from Østervej to Thomas Schmidt Vej” and “View from Thomas Schmidt Vej to Østervej” were owned by Aslag Eskesen all of his adult life. The other paintings were in Asta Eskesen’s home until her home was sold.

CONSERVATION AND GENERAL CONDITION

All of the oil paintings were cleaned by Karen Eskesen in the 1970’s and covered with Damar Varnish. On the back, most were lightly coated with Borax powder to discourage insect attacks. The paintings from Asta Eskesen’s house tend to be stained on the top of the frame and on the back by dark fumes from a coal-burning furnace.

“View from Østervej to Thomas Schmidt Vej” and “View from Thomas Schmidt Vej to Østervej” hung in the office of Aslag Eskesen and were exposed to decades of tobacco smoke. This has stained the pale sky areas. As the original linen was crumbling on the edges, I attached it to new linen with a mixture of beeswax and French turpentine. With the increase in thickness, the original stretchers would not fit into original frames, so paintings are now loosely wrapped on masonite supports. In preparing paintings for shipment, the loosening edges were re-attached with beeswax. Original frames are sturdy, in good condition.

“Alma and Thomas Schmidt’s House”. Oil painting on cardstock primed with an unknown gray paint. In excellent condition. Original frame, made at 39 Vesey Street, New York City, is in good condition. Three corners of gilded carved plaster have chipped a little.

“Helga Schmidt Reading”. Excellent condition. Small tear in upper right area is patched with beeswax and linen, inpainted with black oil paint. Original stretcher and gilded frame. Interior carving of acanthus leaves is in fine condition but exterior plaster details are brittle. Over the years chipped plaster has been touched up with “gold” paint or brown shoe polish.

“Thyssens Mølle”. Small oil painting in excellent condition. Original stretcher, original frame, gilding is stained, from SWA[INS] Art Studio, 317 W. Front St., Plainfield [New Jersey].

“Herskend”. Oil painting, original stretcher, original frame, all in excellent condition except smoke stains on top of frame. Gilded wood frame is from Swain’s Art Store 317 W. Front St. Plainfield N.J.

“Unknown House”. Oil painting on thin plywood covered with cardstock on both sides. Painting and frame in excellent condition.

“Autumn Trees”. Oil Painting. Has been lined with new linen, using beeswax and French turpentine. New stretcher to fit original frame. Painting is in excellent condition. Frame is losing some surface paint or gilding and the mitered corners are not tight, but are solidly attached.

“Fole” Pen and ink drawing on paper, which has turned brown where exposed to light and air. Frame is in fair condition. Matting and backing were not acid-free, brown and brittle and were thrown away. Fragment of original brown paper on back : “Aslag Eskesen Fars Hjem I... Fol... (Helga’ Schmidt’s handwriting).” Glass was removed for shipping.

“Gram” Lithograph, hand colored. Unfortunately mounted on poor quality cardboard. Original frame from Oestreicher’s Art Shop, 882 6th Ave. near 50th St. New York. The Litho was probably put into a frame by a family member -- mat and backing were badly cut and thrown away because they were crumbling. Glass removed for shipping.

“Ved Aunsø”. Black and white oil on gray-primed cardstock, fine condition except for a spot of glue.. Original wood frame from 39 Vesey Street, N.Y. Glass removed for shipping.

“Stemning Ørn Sø”. Pastel drawing in excellent condition. Mat is red flocked velvet with gold edge. Back of drawing and mat heavily stained by fumes from coal furnace. Original frame of red lacquer with gilt egg-and-dart filet are chipping. The mat does not really belong to the pastel and covers about ¼ of the drawing. I would recommend a better-quality mat . Glass removed for shipping. BE CAREFUL PASTEL DOES NOT SMEAR. Thank you.

NOTES ON THOMAS SCHMIDT’S PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS

Thomas Schmidt’s compositions are always very striking in their quiet way. He loved geometric forms in architecture and emphasized the triangles of house gables and the rectangles of picket fences. He often built up a composition by a series of layers of subject matter, progressing from front to back, each layer has its interest. He never just paints something “because it is there”. His motifs have special meaning to him: he is recording his affection for a particular place or person.

Occasionally there are several versions of the same composition. My guess is that he painted them for family members.

1 & 2

“View from Østervej to Thomas Schmidt Vej” and “View from Thomas Schmidt Vej to Østervej”. This was the street where the Schmidt family lived. In both paintings, he has

chosen a deep perspective partly obscured by trees, so the viewer has to work a little to get to the end of the street. The shadows of the houses add interesting shapes to the otherwise boring surface of the street. These are afternoon shadows. Both paintings signed “Thomas Schmidt” “Aug 1900” or “1900 Aug”.

3

“Alma and Thomas Schmidt’s House”. This tiny oil painting is not signed. There is a similar work in the home of Elaine Eskesen in Damariscotta, Maine. Elaine’s painting is on fine linen, but this is on cardstock primed with gray paint. The open window on the left was T.S.’s office. To right of door was the kitchen. This is painted after the walls of the original low Fanø house were built higher, to make elegant, up-to-date, high ceilings. The ivy was on the house for almost 100 years. There are seven layers of subject matter, working from the front right corner to the back.

4

“Helga Schmidt” Beautiful Helga sits in the garden of the Schmidt home and reads a book. She never married, but moved to America and lived with Asta and Bøjenhardt Eskesen in New Jersey, and helped care for the four children. “Aunty Hia“ was very dearly loved for her warmth and her laughter. T.S. was an avid gardener, and also had a vegetable garden on the North of town at “Degnens Have”. We can see his sense of beauty and order in this wysteria-draped garden shelter made of plants. Signed Thomas Schmidt 1901.

5

“Thyssens Mølle”. Thyssen and his family were close friends of Alma and Thomas. He married Miss Mathilde Helms, who was Helga Schmidt’s godmother. His sister married the shipbuilder Abrahamsen, who was Aage Schmidt’s godfather. The three triangular house gables are echoed by the V-shape of the meeting streets and the mill’s sails. Signed, Thomas Schmidt Septbr. 1882.

6

“Herskend”.

T.S. took a trip to Copenhagen in 1899, but most likely this is painted in “Aalborg at the Bergs” or at “the [Pastor] Troejels” who were also visited in 1899. Over the years, when the family was in Northern Jutland at Skanderborg, Aalborg, Fredericia, Horsens, or Vejle, they visited the Troejels. Pastor T. served Nordby church 1879-1890 and was transferred to Aarhus. He was Sigurd Schmidt’s godfather.

This painting has a very remarkable composition, with layer upon layer, very geometric. Signed “Herskend Thomas Schmidt 1899”.

7

“Autumn Trees”. Oil painting. Thomas Schmidt and Alma visited Asta and Bøjenhardt Eskesen in New Jersey in 1907. Alma notes in her journal that he often travels to Staten Island to paint the trees. Signed “Thomas Schmidt 1907”.

8

“Thomas Schmidt’s Father’s Home in Fole” Pen and ink. Every tiny detail is lovingly rendered in this view of T.S.’s childhood home. Relatives say that the house has been changed so much that it is unrecognizable today.

9

“Gram”. It is not too surprising, is it, to read at the bottom, “Thomas Schmidt del. & Lith.”? So here we see Schmidt also drew on a lithographer’s stone and printed the results. We had known that he had had his drawings reproduced by lithography in a little book printed by Dr. E. Albert & Co. But we did not know he also experimented with this medium himself. The rows of wheat sheaves form a fan-like composition. We glimpse past them to Gram Slot and the woods behind. Hand colored with watercolors.

10

“Ved Aunsø”. An oil sketch in black and white, progressing through a series of layers from right foreground to left middleground, through grasses, bowed trees, little dock and rowboat...then the eye penetrates to the horizontal line of the treecovered shore and works its way back to the right, and then to the farthest shore.

11

“Stemning Ørn Sø”. Reflections in still water were a favorite theme for T.S. This lake with its perfect reflections is almost hypnotising because of its stillness. If you turn the drawing upside down, you can see it is a mirror image.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM NORDBY SOGNEARKIV COLLECTIONS

Collection Number: 12

Photograph mounted on Cardstock

Provenance: Helga Schmidt, Aslag Eskesen, Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

Portrait photograph of Alma Hjort (Schmidt) as a young woman. She wears a floor-length dress of light, horizontally-striped fabric, with buttons up the middle of the bodice, mutton-leg sleeves, and a little white lace collar. A small brooch is placed at her throat between the collar tips. Alma sits with her body facing left, but her face and eyes look straight at the camera. Her hands are clasped together in her lap. Her hair is parted in the

center and swept back, possibly into a snood, on the nape of the neck. There is a black ribbon fastened in a bow on the top of her head. This tiny photograph was always kept in a little hand-carved wooden frame with a photo of Helga Schmidt and the photo of the small children, Aage, Asta, and Helga, on the chest of drawers in her daughter Helga's room in New Jersey.

Collection Number: 13

Photographer: M. Tönnies, Aalborg

Photograph mounted on cream-colored cardstock

Signature: Embossed on left bottom of cardstock, "M. TÖNNIES". On right bottom margin, "AALBORG"

Provenance: Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet.

Knee-length portrait of Alma Hjort (Schmidt) as a young woman, facing right, with her forearms resting on an upholstered chair back. She wears a dark dress decorated with gathered garlands and bows of the same cloth. The neck is V-shaped and filled in with fine white or pale-colored lace and a dark ribbon is tied at her throat, with a cross hanging from it. Alma's hair is braided and formed into a circle and sits like a high crown on top of her head. A dark cloth or ribbon is draped from the back of her head past the waist.

Collection Number: 14

Photograph mounted on Cardstock

Provenance: Asta Eskesen, Aslag Eskesen, Karen Eskesen

Formal portrait of Alma Hjort Schmidt and Thomas Christensen Schmidt. Alma is seated in a chair on the left, her hands clasped in her lap, in a dark dress. The bodice is decorated with sequins (pailletter) or black beads. Her hair is parted in the center and pulled back. TS stands on the right with his arm protectively placed on the back of her chair. His left thumb is tucked into the vest pocket, and he wears a pale gray tie. The photographer has carefully posed them...note how three of their forearms are parallel and form a diagonal movement to offset the vertical placement of the torsos.

Collection Number: 15

Photographer:

Formal portrait of Thomas Schmidt facing slightly to the left, wearing formal suit with a black bow tie. In his right hand, he holds his eyeglasses hanging from his neck on a fine chain.

Collection Number: 16

Photographer: Hansen and Weller

Photograph mounted on cream-colored cardstock

Signature: HANSON & WELLER on left lower margin, 28 Bredgade on right lower margin of cardstock

Date:

Provenance: Karen Eskesen

An oval head and shoulders portrait of Thomas Schmidt. Cardstock is unevenly trimmed on the right side. He wears a soft, scarf-like silk necktie.

Collection Number: 17

Photographer: Professional photographer on "Hellig Olaf" ship

Date: July or August 1907

Provenance: Asta Eskesen, Aslag Eskesen, Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

Thomas Schmidt on the "Hellig Olaf" on his trip to America. He is on a bench on deck with an unidentified gentleman and boy. He wears an overcoat over his suit, and a striped wool cap with a visor, and holds a cigar (?) in his left hand. The right arm is crossed over his stomach, and his right leg is crossed over the left leg. His daughter Asta sat exactly like this when she smoked a cigarette as an older lady. The photo was in an album titled, "Hellig Olaf".....

Collection Number: 18

Thomas Schmidt seated behind a cloth-covered desk or table in his home office. He leans his head on his right hand and looks down at an open book. There is another book and a palette with brushes on the table. On the left, an easel with part of a painting. On the wall behind him an engraving of "The Reading Abate" (a young cleric or young man studying for the priesthood) from a painting by Martinus Rørbye. The motif was painted in 1842 and again in 1846 from a sketch Rørbye made in Rome in the late 1830's. The painting is now in Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. In 1862, Kunstforeningen in Copenhagen made the engraving and sent it to its members. Several TS paintings are placed above a door in the back wall, and in the right corner there is a "Fano chair".

18a

Collection Number: 19

Date: ca. 1885

Provenance: Helga Schmidt, Aslag Eskesen, Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

Portrait of Alma and Thomas Schmidt's three first children. Aage, about six years old, stands on the left; Asta, about two years old, sits on a wood chair with an upholstered seat and curved back; and Helga, about four years old, stands next to her, holding her hand.

Collection Number: 20

Photographer: Ludv. W. Meyer

Photograph mounted on brown cardstock

Signature: Ludv. W. Meyer on left lower margin, Kjøbmagergade 4, Hj af Østergade on right lower margin of cardstock

Date:

Provenance: Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

Head and shoulders portrait of Helga Schmidt, facing right. She wears a dark dress with 5 rows of smocking from the neck to the shoulders. A tiny lace collar sticks up under the neck of the dress, and there is a brooch at the throat. Her hair is pulled softly back and fastened in a bun at the back of her head. There are little curls on either side of her forehead. Her mother noted in her journal that Helga was in Copenhagen in 1896, visiting the family of Etatsraad Rahlff. She was 17 years old.

TS took his daughters to Copenhagen in 1899, but Helga, then 20 years old, would probably look older than this photograph.

Collection Number:

Photographer: J.N. Kromann

Photograph mounted on cardstock

Signature: J. N. Kromann on left lower margin of cardstock, NORDBY FANØ on right lower corner of cardstock.

Provenance: Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

A head and shoulders portrait of Anna Schmidt (Lassen) facing slightly left. She wears a high-necked dark dress with three rows of darker piping around the neck and down the left side. There is a large collar or small shawl of white open-work embroidery over her shoulders. Her hair is pulled back softly and set up high on the crown of her head.

Collection Number:

Photographer: Mary Steen

Photograph mounted on white cardstock

Signature: Mary Steen KONG HOFFOTOGRAF on left lower margin of cardstock, KJØBENHAVN AMAGERTORV 4 on right lower margin of cardstock.

Date: ca. 1902

Provenance: Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

Head and shoulders portrait of Asta Schmidt Eskesen facing slightly to the right, shortly after her marriage. She wears a low-necked white dress over a white blouse with a high collar. A small circular pin is placed in the center of the blouse's collar and matches the jewel in her husband's necktie. Her hair has been pulled straight up and back, and some short locks on the sides of the forehead have been curled with a curling iron. This photograph was taken as one of a pair: see photograph of her husband, Laurids Bøjenhardt Eskesen.

Collection Number:

Photographer: Mary Steen

Photograph mounted on white cardstock

Signature: Mary Steen KONG HOFFOTOGRAF on left lower margin of cardstock, KJØBENHAVN AMAGERTORV 4 On right lower margin of cardstock.

Date: ca. 1902

Provenance: Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

Head and shoulder portrait of Laurids Bøjenhardt Eskesen facing forward. He wears a dark suit with vest, and a white or pale gray necktie. His hair is parted on the left and he has a handlebar moustache. This photograph is one of a pair; the other is of his young wife, Asta Schmidt Eskesen, shortly after their marriage. The jewel in his necktie matches the jewel on her blouse at the base of her throat.

Collection Number:

Photographer: Kromann

Photograph mounted on brown cardstock

Signature:

Date:

Provenance: Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

Waist-length view of Anna Schmidt Lassen in Fano costume turned to the right but smiling at the camera. This is part of a photograph showing her with relatives posing in Fano costumes and fishermen's clothes, probably supplied by Photographer Kromann. People at this time loved to dress up in Fano costumes for a photographic souvenir -- even the princess of Denmark did it.

Collection Number: 22

Photographer: Family Member or Friend

Amateur Snapshot

Signature: No

Date: Summer 1914

Family gathering in Alma Schmidt's garden on Thomas Schmidt Vej. Alice Eskesen sits on a "rustic" chair made of tree branches. In the back row, from left to right, Aslag Eskesen in wool cap with visor; Alma Schmidt in a long dark dress with white lace at her throat and head; Gudrun Eskesen with her characteristic large hair ribbon; Laurids Bøjenhardt Eskesen in dark suit and hat; just behind him, Helga Schmidt in white blouse and light-colored skirt, with hands on her hips. Asta wrote, "...had a delightful summer. Nobody thought it was the last we would enjoy together with Bøjenhardt." He died just before Christmas after an emergency operation.

Collection Number: 23

Artist: Ole Olsen

Oil painting on canvas

Signature: Ole Olsen, lower right corner

Date: Summer, about 1912

Provenance: Asta Eskesen, Aslag Eskesen, belongs to Lauritz B. Eskesen, Ft Lauderdale

The artist was from Copenhagen, but painted this portrait in the garden of the Schmidt family home on Thomas Schmidt Vej. It hung in the home of Asta Schmidt Eskesen in New Jersey until her death. The children of Asta and Laurids Eskesen play checkers on a

garden bench. Gudrun sits on bench at left, Aslag on the right. Alice stands watching them. All wear sailor outfits.

Collection Number: 24

Photograph on cardstock

Signature:

Date: Summer 1911

Provenance: Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

Alma Schmidt with her grandchildren, from left to right, Alice Eskesen, Oscar Lassen, Aslag Eskesen. Alma has a slight smile, unusual in a formal portrait. She wears a floor-length black skirt and black blouse fastened at the throat with a brooch. Her hair is parted in the center and pulled back. Alice wears a lace-trimmed white dress, and Aslag is in a sailor outfit.

Collection Number: 25

Unknown Amateur Photographer

Snapshot of Captain Aage Schmidt in the garden, in front of the south side in front of his house on west side of Mellemgaden between Brigvej and Barkvej. The walls are covered with blossoming roses.

Collection Number: 26

Unknown Amateur Photographer

No Signature

Date: ca. 1930

Provenance:

Asta Schmidt Eskesen and her son Bennet Hallum Eskesen pose together in front of a large summer house (or hotel?) at Fanobad. Asta wears a knee-length loose dress gathered at the hips, a string of pearls and a cloche hat. Bennet is in knickerbockers, a jacket, a white shirt, and a striped tie.

Collection Number: 27

Unknown Photographer

No signature

Date: ca. 1925

Provenance:

Asta Schmidt Eskesen and Helga Schmidt with children of Asta Schmidt Eskesen and Anna Schmidt Lassen.. From Left to Right: Bennet Eskesen, Gudrun Eskesen, Oscar Lassen, Alice Eskesen, Anker Lassen, Asta Eskesen, Helga Schmidt, Erik Lassen, Per Olaf Lassen. Kurhotel in background. The ladies are fully dressed, in white stockings and heels -- only the two little boys do not wear ties. Asta's oldest son, Aslag, had already graduated from Cornell University and worked as an accountant for International

General Electric.

Collection Number: 28
Unknown Photographer
Photograph
No Signature
No date
Provenance:

Snapshot of Helga Schmidt at Fanobad in Fano folk costume, which was owned by her sister, Anna Schmidt Lassen.

Collection Number: 29
Unknown Photographer
Photograph
No signature
No date
Provenance:

Snapshot of a young girl in the same Fanodragt as Helga Schmidt is wearing. Perhaps it is Alice or Gudrun Eskesen??? She stands in front of a house at Fanobad. The house might be Olaf Lassen's "Godt Haab".

WORKS OF ART

Collection Number: 30
Thomas Schmidt
Provenance: Asta Schmidt, Aslag Hallum Eskesen, Bennet Hallum Eskesen, Painting now belongs to Elaine Eskesen

North side of the Schmidt family home on Thomas Schmidt Vej in Nordby. A very small, intimate portrait of a dearly loved home. TS's office window is open on this early summer day. A high flowering bush on right overlaps the background house (Skolevej 1) and keeps the composition from getting stuck at the end of the street. Professionally cleaned and restored. A new crack at top, along the stretcher's edge.

Collection Number: 31
Thomas Schmidt
Title: Kvinde arbejder med garnet
Lithograph from a book

A young woman in Fano folk costume stands in a corner of a parlor, on the right, facing left. She winds a ball of yarn. There is a door to an alcove bed behind her, and a built-in little cupboard with glass door cut off at the right edge. The floor planks are unusually

wide. Because TS is dealing with the corner of a room, all of the furniture, the ceiling beam, ceiling boards and walls are at angles. The tiles in the wall, set diagonally, contrast with the other angles.

Collection Number: 32

Thomas Schmidt

Pencil drawing on paper from TS Sketchbook

No Signature

Date: 12/3/1892, lower right corner

Provenance:

This study was used for the lithograph, “*Kvinde arbejder med garnet*“, which is virtually identical in composition and motif, except that the lithograph does not include the woman at a spinning wheel on the right. The sketch shows more life and is less stiff than the lithograph made from it. Line drawing in pencil, with values added in smooth shading and some hatching.

Collection Number: 33

Thomas Schmidt

Title: Køkkeninteriør

Electrogravure fromBook

Thomas Schmidt leads the viewer from a wood box in lower right corner past the delft-tiled cooking niche and finishes the composition with a closed door. The peaceful geometry of many quadrilateral forms is offset by a Fano woman, cat and two copper kettles placed at angles.

Collection Number: 34

Thomas Schmidt

Title:

Pencil sketch from Thomas Schmidt sketchbook

Preparatory study for electrogravure in “*Fanø Album*“ Book. A woman in Fano folk costume, standing facing right. From the waist up, it is a finished value drawing. Hand, apron, and two additional face studies are simple line drawings.

Collection Number: 35 and 36

Thomas Schmidt

Title: Kvinde skriver brev

Oil Painting

Provenance: Asta Eskesen, Alice Eskesen Ganzel, painting now belongs to Fano Kunstmuseum

On the left of the painting, a woman sits writing, facing left. On the table in front of her, a small framed picture, on the wall a painting of a Top-sailed Schooner (topsejlsskonnert). She is writing to a betrothed or husband who is away at sea. TS has built up a peaceful,

orderly picture with very many squares, rectangles, and other quadrilateral shapes. The two women, three circles and three plants offer contrasting shapes.

For all its simplicity, the painting is not stern. It is a portrait of a gentle, comfortable home. Our eye is led around the parlor, then through a door to a smaller room with a spinning wheel. The view out of the windows on the left, and in the back parlor, is blocked by potted plants, which keep us in the room with the letter-writer.

When the painting was restored recently, the conservator discovered a young girl entering from the right. Is she bearing bad news from the ship? Why did TS paint her out of the painting?

Fano captains at this period preferred schooners to full-riggers, because they had fewer sails and required a smaller (cheaper) crew.

Collection Number: 37
Thomas Schmidt
Title: Kvinde skriver brev
Oil on (?) canvas (?)

This is a photograph of a painting Deacon Th Schmidt painted of an old Fanoehus which stood in [what is now] the garden of book dealer's S. C. Hansen's private home. The laundry is drying on a clothesline, and under the roof's edge hangs a line of dried, salted dabs (fish). If you look carefully, you can see a man taking a nap on the roof of the outbuilding on the right. This is Jens Nielsen Brinck. This house was demolished a long time ago. Jens Marius Mathiasen lived in the house on the left (Mellemgaden 29) until recently.

Jens Marius Mathiasen was born in the house on the left. He remembered running errands to the church and to the ordained minister's house for TS when he was a little boy.

This was the view the Schmidt family had from their front door to the North East corner of Thomas Schmidt Vej and Mellemgaden. It is said that there was also a troublesome fly-covered pile of manure, which the artist has tactfully omitted. We get a glimpse of farm life in the middle of Nordby. Chickens roamed freely, practical wood-plank fences kept cows, pigs and sheep on the property, and the family's water pump rose proudly out of all the barnyard muck! The roof over the stall area had holes in it. Compare to the ship-shape Mathiasen home.

Collection Number: 38
Thomas Schmidt
Title: Udsigt mod nord I Hovedgaden
Lithograph fromBook(?) Pencil Drawing on Paper prepared for Lithograph?

A view North on Hovedgaden in Nordby. On the right, from front to back, 70A, 70, 68,

66, 64. The otherwise steep perspective down the cobbled street is softened by two women in Fanøe costume walking towards us, and the many young trees planted just inside the garden fences on both sides.

Collection Number: 39

Thomas Schmidt

Title: "S.J. Terkelsens Hus I Nordby. Nedbrudt 1891, lower left corner, in T. Schmidt's handwriting)

Pencil, pen and ink, and watercolor drawing

Signature: T Schmidt (with intertwined TS) in ink, in lower right corner

Date: 11-4-91 [1891]

Provenance:

TS, ever the faithful recorder of Fanø customs and events, has documented for future generations a half-timbered house about to be torn down. Was this house white-washed? Note the different types of fences. The watercolor shows faint signs of a drawn grid, for enlarging and copying the drawing onto a canvas or other format.

Collection Number: 40

Artist Unknown, copy of Thomas Schmidt drawing?

Title:

Pencil and colored pencil?

Signature:

Date:

Provenance:

A copy of TS's drawing of S.J.Terkelsens Hus, probably by a child. Typical for a young artist is the careful documentation of a few little details omitted by TS: A little opening for chickens or cats in the left barn door, and a big boulder next to the pump.

Collection Number: 41

Thomas Schmidt

Title: "En sidegade I Nordby"

Lithograph, or original black and white drawing for lithograph, forBook

Signature: Thomas Schmidt, right lower edge

Date:

Niels Mathiasen, Klokkemand, on Lodsvej, an uncle (?) to Jens Marius Mathiasen, a child who lived at Mellemgaden 29 near the TS home and ran errands to the church for TS. The Klokkemand was also great-grandfather or great-uncle to Rita Appel, amber jeweller on Konsul Lauritsens Plads. The steep perspective of the receding street is played against a curve of the road and four figures moving about the middle ground. The artist creates a lively composition but instills a feeling of almost monumental calm by using the geometric shapes of fences and houses to anchor the design. There were many different types of fences in Nordby noted by TS, ever the faithful recorder of Fanøe customs. Starting on the left, we see Toftevej 5, Lodsvej 11 and 9...two more roofs, then

the tower of Hotel Nordby, and the building replaced by Nordby Bio. On the far right, Lodsvej 2 and 4 (or 6)

Collection Number: 42

Thomas Schmidt

Title: Lodsvej

Pencil drawing on paper from TS sketchbook

Signature: No

Date: No

Provenance:

A rapid, free-hand sketch, of Lodsvej, Fano, amazingly accurate and showing a skillfull, active, searching pencil line. This scene was later prepared for a lithographic reproduction showing Klokkemand Niels Mathiasen.

Collection Number: 42

Thomas Schmidt

Title: Engsti

Oilpaiting

Signature: No

Date: No

Provenance: Larry B. Eskesen

Collection Number: 43

Thomas Schmidt

Title: "Udsigt tl Nordby"

Oil painting on Board? Gray-primed paper mounted on board?

Carefully painted sand dunes on left, marshy shore in center. On the right, across a calm body of water, a town with two windmills. (Nordby?) (View from Halen?) The white paint in sky has "alligator cracks" -- either it was white paint in poppy oil, or another oil which cracks, or it was painted thickly over a "fatter" paint (hard to believe, as TS was so methodical). The alligatored paint looks very healthy, firmly attached and not flaking off.

Collection Number: 44

Thomas Schmidt

Title of Work: Barkskib under Bygning

Medium: Pencil on paper

Signature:

Date: 1890's

Provenance: Belongs to Handels-og-Søfartsmuseet paa Kronborg

At Fano's shipworks simple tools built large wooden ships. Originally ships were built by eye. Construction blueprints came into use in the mid-1800's as increasingly larger

ships came into demand. TS's figures here are slightly naïve, but the perspective of the ship's hull is superb.

This could be Abrahamsen's Skibsværft?

Collection Number: 45

Thomas Schmidt

Title of Work: "Nordby havn"

Medium: Lithograph (fromBook?)

Signature:

Date:

Provenance:

Nordby Harbor, with, from left to right, Krogaarden, Hotel Nordby, "Havnekiosken", the Customs House, two wooden docks. On far right, the new, modern, steam-powered ferry boat. People in Nordby called the ferryboat "Skildpadden". Two Jolle with their rowboats are anchored off shore. Jolle were used for local fishing in the Wadding Sea. TS. shows the exact position of each building by firmly rendering the overlapping triangles of house gables.

Collection Number: 46

Thomas Schmidt

Title of Work: "Fra Nordby havn"

Medium: ?

Signature:

Date:

Provenance:

Nordby Harbor, with, from left to right, The Ship-Owner's Association, another large building, Krogaarden, some little houses, Hotel Nordby, Havnekiosken, and the Customs House .

The position of each building is firmly drawn. There is more shipping and shore activity in this view than in his other harbor drawing. The eye is led from a right foreground diagonally to the left background through a series of five boats: a jagt or sloop (slup), which has a deep keel and has to be anchored offshore; two men in a flat-bottomed pram; a rowboat with an awning (solsejl) for tourists; and two everts at the dock. Everts brought peat (klyne) for use as fuel to the treeless island. Then the eye moves across the shoreline to the new ferry boat and its dock. TS repeats his well-loved theme of reflections of buildings and boats in still water.

Collection Number: 47

Thomas Schmidt

Title of Work: "Høbåd Losses"

Medium: Lithograph fromBook

Signature: Lithographer's "Albert"

Date:

Provenance:

Three older men on a bench sheltered by a heavy growth of shrubbery are deeply engrossed in conversation. Their position, on left foreground (probably at corner of Havne Slippe and Langelinie) overlooks a flat-hulled evert close to shore, in the right middle ground. A horse and wagon stand knee-deep in the water unloading hay from Holsted, where Fano owned or rented meadows called "Fano Høladet". Another boat is anchored in the center. Both are reflected in the calm water. The mainland crosses the composition in the background in a horizontal line, and perfectly balances the three tall masts.

Flat-hulled ships were used to transport goods along the Wadding Sea.

Collection Number: 48

Thomas Schmidt

Title of Work: "Saltværkets broforsyning"

Pencil on paper, from Thomas Schmidt Sketchbook

Signature: Thomas Schmidt, right lower margin

Date: 14 August 1891, right lower margin.

Provenance:

The shoreline looking North of Nordby, with Esbjerg in the distance. A small fishing boat (fiskesmagge) lies in the sand. An S-curved wagon track on right and a diagonal wagon track on left add interest to the almost deserted scene. The wooden structure of (the salt works?) crosses the middle ground. While the drawing is divided horizontally into even thirds by this construction, the composition is by no means boring -- between each set of "legs" is a new miniature landscape.

Collection Number: 49

Thomas Schmidt

Title of Work: "Køer på Grønningen"

Pencil on paper, from Thomas Schmidt Sketchbook

Signature: No

Date:

Provenance:

Shaded drawing in pencil of a cow facing right, with head and forelegs of another cow behind her facing left. A girl's hand holding a rope (?) in lower right edge.

Collection Number:

Thomas Schmidt

Title of Work: Grønningen på Fano
Pen and Ink drawing from TS sketchbook
Signature:
Date: 20 August 1891 right lower right edge
Provenance:

Pen and ink drawing of three boys tending cows along the water's edge at Grønningen, the common pasturelands on the north of Fano island. Esbjerg is seen across the water, and large sailing vessels are anchored outside Esbjerg Harbor on the right.

Collection Number: 50
Thomas Schmidt
Title of Work:
Carved wood box with an oil painting on inside of lid.
Signature: Thomas Schmidt, lower right corner.
Date: 1906
Provenance: Asta Schmidt Eskesen, Aslag Hallum Eskesen, belongs to Larry B. Eskesen

Thomas Schmidt loved woodworking and here we see another aspect of his skills. Fine woodworking ("Slojd") was an important part of education in the early 1900's. His daughter Asta actually wanted to be a cabinet-maker, but it was not considered proper work for a woman.

We have a wooden box with an Art Nouveau ("Jugendstil") design on the front which suggests the letter "A" (perhaps it was made for Alma or Asta?). The lid is slightly curved. Attached to the box: a metal lock, hinges, and two ornaments on the lid. Painted directly on the inside of the lid is a landscape of Fano, described below. A narrow strip of wood with a beaded or egg-and-dart motif frames the painting. The left piece is missing.

The Church KIRKEN

Beside his conscientious and productive work as Deacon, Th. Schmidt also benefited the church with ideas about "beautification" as well as designing a base for the Christening font.

Baptismal font cast in bronze 1450-1500, and base of black polished marble from 1887, designed by Church Vaerge (Warden?) Thomas Schmidt; it is a 50 cm high, octagonal block with a multi-level base and ring for the basin. On three sides carved, gilded lettering: "Let the little children come unto me! Mark 10. 14"

The Font was installed September 3rd, 1887, on the new base given to the church by the merchant, Johannes Mathiasen, and his wife, Karen Hansen, at the celebration of the church's 100 year anniversary.

Along the north side of the churchyard there is a hedge of English maple, and within the southern wall grows a trimmed rowan. Two narrow paths lined with rows of pollarded elm trees between the street and church are perhaps the remains of a beautification from 1888, for which Church Warden Thomas Schmidt oversaw the fulfillment of a plan with double rows of trees, graveled paths, and privet hedges.

Collection Number: 51
Photo of the christening font
Date:

Collection Number: 52
Thomas Schmidt
Title:
Pen and Ink on paper
Signature: Thomas Schmidt, right lower edge
Date:

An architectural drawing in pen and ink for the base to the christening font given to Nordby Church by the merchant, Johannes Mathiasen, and his wife, Karen Hansen, in celebration of the church's 100 years' anniversary in 1887. The drawing shows a side view in ink lines with the design for the lettering and the forming of the base and top. On the right, a smaller value drawing in perspective rendered in ink wash. The wording is in TS handwriting: "Planned Marble base for the Baptismal Font in Nordby Kirke. Scale Relationship 1:5" with a Scale showing 60 Centimeters.

Collection Number: 53
Thomas Schmidt
Title of Work:
Architectural Drawing, Pen and Ink
Signature:
Date:
Provenance:

Plan of church and churchyard with pathways and proposed rows of trees. The writing in ink is Thomas Schmidt's formal handwriting.

Collection Number: 54
Artist? Thomas Schmidt?
Title of Work: "Nordby kirke set fra sydøst"
Pencil on paper
Signature:
Date:
Provenance:

A simple, calm drawing of Nordby church seen from the Southeast. Villagers would have recognized each grave monument shown. Note how stark the church is without trees or hedges. Fano, before Thomas Schmidt and his friends began to plant trees, was very bare. A slight tear in the paper in the upper right edge.

Collection Number: 55

Thomas Schmidt

Title: "Nordby kirke"

Lithograph

Signature: "Thomas Schmidt, del. & lith", in lithographic print, right lower margin

Date:

Provenance:

Thomas Schmidt has drawn a view of Nordby Church on the lithographic stone and printed it himself. A calm view from South to North. Behind some fields and two cows, from left to right, we see a windmill, and a few farmhouses. A man in the far end of the field brings the eye back from the steeply plunging fences and telegraph line. On the right, two unidentified houses (demolished?), Thyssen's mill, and Nordby church. Note the telegraph line: he loved new developments. It appears he has enjoyed the visual patterns created by the line and poles.

Collection Number: 56

Thomas Schmidt

Title:

Ink wash with touches of white, on cardstock

Signature: Thomas Schmidt, white paint on black ink background, lower right corner

Date: 1887 or later

Provenance: Asta Schmidt Eskesen, Aslag Hallum Eskesen, Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

Two very careful renditions, of the church interior, and the view from the church door, bound together by an overlapping sprig of blossoming geranium moving from lower right corner of the interior to lower right corner of the landscape. The church interior is shown as a vignette in the lower left quarter of the artwork. The font, with new black marble base designed by Thomas Schmidt in 1887, stands before the altar. The landscape shows part of the church on the extreme left, Hovedgaden (still a dirt road), and thatched brick houses (modern addresses of houses?)

Beyond a meadow at the water's edge, we see Esbjerg, which is still a collection of small buildings on a high bluff, with a church tower and smoking factory chimneys. There is a sketch of this geranium in the TS sketchbook. A careful drawing like this was probably made for lithographic reproduction.

Collection Number: 57

Thomas Schmidt
Title: "Blomstrende Geranium"
Pencil on paper from Thomas Schmidt sketchbook
Signature: No
Date: No
Provenance:

A simple line drawing with some shading of a sprig of geranium which appears in an ink wash rendering of two vignettes on one page of Nordby Church interior and view from the church over to Esbjerg. The vignettes are bound together by this spray of geranium, which overlaps them and joins them visually.

Collection Number: 58
Thomas Schmidt
Title: "I kirkedøren"
Oil on canvas
Signature: Intertwined TS lower right corner
Date: 85 [1885]
Note: an intertwined "TS" at extreme lower edge of canvas and "85" extreme lower right edge, partially rubbed away -- probably re-painted higher into painting to suit a frame.
Provenance: Krissy Johnson

A young woman in Fano costume stands on the left just inside the church door with hymn book in hand, looking out. The morning sun pours in and casts diagonal shadows across floor and door. Beyond a few family grave sites and wind-blown shrubs, we have a view of Halen. Many quadrilateral figures of floor tiles, door planks, white pointed brickwork and graveyard paths and gravesites anchor the composition. The rounded lines of the feminine young lady, the softly arching white-washed doorway, and feathery shrubbery are a pretty contrast. A sweeping diagonal line from the shadowed floor down the churchyard's path is stopped visually by the soft horizontal line of Halen in the distance.

Collection Number: 59
Thomas Schmidt
Title:
_____ cm. X _____ cm.
Lithographic reproduction of a TS painting
Signature: Intertwined TS on right lower corner; ALBERT (the lithographer) lower left corner. The TS as copied by the lithographer is not identical to the TS in the original oil.
Date: 85 in lower right corner
Provenance:

A lithographic reproduction of (I kirkedøren) which shows a girl standing in the doorway of Nordby Church, looking out towards the right.

See description of oil painting.

Collection Number: 60a, 60b, 60c

Thomas Schmidt

Title:

Grisaille oil painting on gray-primed paper mounted on cardstock

All bear the intertwined TS initials

Date:

Provenance: Asta Schmidt Eskesen, Aslag Hallum Eskesen, Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

These three tiny paintings were probably designed for reproduction. There is a plate from Royal Copenhagen, or B&G, with the moonlight motif. .

The paintings illustrate three stanzas of the song, “Fano, O Fano” by _____.

Stanza One: The song stanza is drawn directly on the grey-primed paper with pen and ink, in the lower right quarter of the painting. Surrounding the stanza is a view past sun-drenched sand dunes to the beach at Vesterhavet, with a for-and-aft skonnert, or a galease, on the horizon. A bouquet of four Sea Oats (?) stems lying diagonally behind the song, with a few grass-tips draped over it, unite the two elements. Intertwined TS at left edge about ¼ way from bottom edge.

Stanza Two: The song stanza is drawn directly on the gray-primed paper with pen and ink, in the lower right quarter of the painting. A night scene with a jagt or evert seen behind sand dunes coming into Nordby Harbor. Halen is in the distance and a flock of ducks are in flight under the full moon shining on the calm waters of Fano Lo. The two motifs are trimmed by scissors into an interesting shape. Intertwined TS in the lower margin of the landscape next to the song.

Stanza Three: The song stanza is drawn directly onto the gray-primed paper with pen and ink in the lower right quarter. A Fano woman and girl stand on the left on a little beach North of Nordby (?), watching boats entering the harbor. From left to right, boats are moving towards them: a steamship with sails, (damper med hjaelpsejl), a sloop (slup), and a brig. Along the peninsula behind them, telegraph lines (?) move into the distance (towards Esbjerg?). TS initials are on the left margin just under the center.

Plantningsmand Planter of Trees

The planting of trees was one of Schmidt’s many interests. His efforts in this activity were meant to improve his town. With this in mind, he started a Beautification Association, and was chairman until his death.

Collection Number: 61

Photographer, publisher of post card:

Title: "Nordby kirke"

Post card

Signature:

Date:

Provenance:

Postcard with photograph of Nordby Church seen from the Southeast. The rows of trees planned by TS are seen in the churchyard.

Collection Number: 62

Photographer, publisher of postcard:

Title:

Post Card

Signature:

Date:

Provenance:

Photograph postcard showing the rows of trees planted by TS along both sides of Hovedgaden. Modern addresses of houses are Hovedgaden _____ and _____ (Peder Christensen's farm, which burnt around 1950 -- says Theodor B.). On the right is the churchyard wall. It is always interesting to see how many different types of walls and fences were used in Nordby around 1900.

Collection Number: 63

Photographer, (publisher of postcard?):

Title:

Photograph (Post Card?)

Signature:

Date: 3/1 91 [1891]

Provenance:

Looking South on a winter day along Hovedgaden with snow on the street, and in the branches of the little trees planted by TS along Hovedgaden. The Dairy building stands on the left. Telegraph line is on left side of street, now it has three wires -- does Nordby now have telephones?

Collection Number: 64

Photographer/ publisher of post card:

Title:

Photograph on Postcard

Signature:

Date:

Provenance:

Looking South along Hovedgaden. The trees planted by TS along the sides of the street have matured a little. On the left, The Dairy has been enlarged. On the right, Arresthuset (the jailhouse).

FANOBAD

Collection Number: 65

Thomas Schmidt

Title:

Pencil Drawing on Paper

Signature:

Date:

Provenance:

We look through an opening between two sand dunes and see the primary dunes closest to the North Sea, and three vessels heading in or out of Esbjerg harbor. One is a steamship (damper). The days of Fano wooden ships are ending, the new steel-hulled ships are taking over and need the deeper waters in Esbjerg. Two groups of seagulls emphasize the feeling of distance.

Collection Number: 66

Thomas Schmidt artist, Albert, Lithographer

Title: "Klitter ved havet"

Lithograph

Signature: Thomas Schmidt, lower right corner. ALBERT, lower left corner

Date:

Provenance:

Between high sand-dunes on left and right, narrow valleys zig-zag down to Vesterhavet. There is a boat on the horizon, and three seagulls glide high in the sky on the right.

Collection Number: 67

Thomas Schmidt

Title: "Strandhotellet"

Ink wash on paper (or cardstock?)

Signature: Thomas Schmidt, lower left corner

Date:

Provenance: Asta Schmidt Eskesen, Aslag Hallum Eskesen, Karen Eskesen

A brand new road leads North to an area not yet built up. On the right, the new hotel, on the left a curiously narrow and empty beach. A steamer passes by on the horizon, on its way to Esbjerg Harbor. Such a detailed ink-wash drawing would probably be prepared for the lithographer to work from.

Collection Number: 68

Thomas Schmidt

Title:

Pencil on paper, from Thomas Schmidt sketchbook

Signature: No

Date:

Provenance:

Quick pencil-line drawing of a hotel at Fanobad. This was a study for the detailed ink-wash of the same motif.

Collection Number: 69

Thomas Schmidt

Title:

Lithographic reproduction? TS painting. Post card? On lower left, "Hilsen fra Fano"

Signature: Thomas Schmidt in lower right corner

Date:

Provenance:

We see the lakes between the primary sand dunes and the older secondary dunes at Fanobad, which have filled in over the past century. Calm waters reflect small islands, and two seagulls hovering very close to the water's surface. German-designed villas are silhouetted in the distance.

Collection Number: 70

Thomas Schmidt

Title: "Badning på stranden"

Lithograph

Signature: ? Dr. E. Albert & Co. in right lower margin

Date:

Provenance:

We are at Fanobad at the water's edge, looking South. A bathing wagon is being pulled into the sea by a horse and rider. On the beach, fully-dressed "bathing guests" promenade under parasols or sit in roofed wicker chairs safely turned away from the sun - sea air is fashionable, but sun tans and freckles are not. One daring man rides a high-wheeled bicycle. The Kurhotel is in the left background.

Collection Number: 71

Thomas Schmidt

Title: "En klitdal"

Lithograph ?

Signature ?

Date:

Provenance:

A lake among the primary dunes at Fanobad is seen through an opening between two

high, steep dunes. Four sea gulls hover over the surface of the calm water. The Kurhotel and roofs of smaller buildings can be seen behind distant sand dunes in the middle ground

A pencil sketch dated 18 Dec. 1891 shows a similar view without the sand dunes. Another pencil sketch dated 22 Dec. 91 has the sand dunes with a slightly different composition, the hotel in dead center. TS has worked out a more interesting composition after several sketches.

Collection Number: 72

Thomas Schmidt

Title: Kurhuset Fano written above signature

Lithograph

Signature: Thomas Schmidt, right lower edge; ALBERT left lower edge

Date:

Provenance:

A very direct, frontal view of the exclusive hotel on the edge of the beach at Fanobad, probably made for a tourist souvenir card or book. This is the view from the East, from Strandvejen. On the beach side, there were terrasses and shops.

Collection Number: 73

Thomas Schmidt

Title:

Original pencil drawing with touches of white oncolored paper.

Signature:

Date:

Provenance:

Two fashionable ladies walk up a brick path to the Pavillion. A horse-drawn cart with passengers approaches from behind a grass-covered sand dune in the right middle ground.

The viewer is not allowed to see beyond the building. The lines of path, road, and dune edges, in a strong single-point perspective, guide the eye to the building, but the ladies, fence, wagon, and slight curves of path and road, keep this focus from being too strong.

Collection Number: 74

Thomas Schmidt

Title: "Badevogne ved Vesterhavet"

Pencil Drawing on paper?

Signature: intertwined TS right lower corner

Date:

Provenance:

View from the water's edge at Fanobad, looking North. Wavelet upon wavelet washes

ashore. A fan-like pattern of narrow triangles develops in the ocean, as the perspective vanishing point is on the far right. The pattern is interrupted by two groups of bathing wagons facing out to sea. On the left, one wagon is being pulled into the water by a horse with rider. Three men stand on the beach, and, on the horizon, a steamship is heading into Esbjerg harbor.

Collection Number: 75
Thomas Schmidt
Title: "På en markvej"
Pencil drawing on paper?
Signature:
Date:
Provenance:

A Fano woman faces us, dressed for field work in white apron, pitchfork, and black mask. She stands by an S-shaped road between high grass-clad dunes. A man driving away in a farm wagon looks back towards her. "Lodshuset"? on Kikkebjerg? is seen beyond some hills.

THOMAS SCHMIDT PAINTINGS FROM OTHER LOCATIONS

Collection Number: 76
Thomas Schmidt
Title: Gram
Lithograph
Signature: Thomas Schmidt del. & lith. Within picture, lower right corner, and repeated in right lower margin
Date:
Provenance: Asta Schmidt Eskesen, Aslag Hallum Eskesen, Karen Eskesen, Sognearkivet

Already described in earlier paper.

Collection Number: 77
Thomas Schmidt
Title: Munkebjerg
Pencil Drawing on Paper?
Signature:
Date:
Provenance:

While the building is placed almost in dead center, the composition is elegant and sophisticated. Pine trees (?) on the left and right frame the scene, a road winds around the right middle ground, and the building is nestled down in a woods of deciduous trees. The Danebro flag TS so loved waves high in the breeze.

THOMAS SCHMIDT IN AMERICA

In 1907, Thomas and Alma Schmidt sailed from Copenhagen to U.S.A with Asta and Laurids Eskesen on the Hellig Olaf.

They left Fano the 22nd of July and spent a few days with pastor Holck and his family at Brønshøj. They went on board the 26th of July and visited Christiania Fjord, Holmenkollen, Christiansand, Christiania. They anchored in New York harbor at midnight, August 5th. Their children, Sigurd and Helga, who also lived in New Jersey, met them.

TS and Alma stayed at the seaside resort Avon-by-the-Sea until the 18th of September, and TS also visited Eckardt Viarde Eskesen's summer home up in the mountains. The rest of their stay was in Asta's home in Perth Amboy. They visited New York city often; they sailed up the Hudson River to Westpoint; and took train trips to Washington, D.C., Mount Vernon, Virginia; and Philadelphia.

They left on the 7th of December, and were home on the 22nd of December.

Collection Number: 79

Thomas Schmidt

Title: Silver Lake, Avon [New Jersey] , lower left corner

Oil Painting on gray primed paper mounted on thin cardstock

Signature:

Date: 1907

Provenance: Asta Eskesen, Aslag Hallum Eskesen, Karen Eskesen, Danish Archives North East

A canoe or rowboat and trees reflected in quiet water -- a favorite motif for TS. We have to look past some reeds on the shore on the right foreground at the receding shorelines on left and right of the painting. The little tree-clad promontory on the right middle-ground keeps our eyes from getting stuck at the central vanishing point. This would be one of the lakes the family visited during their stay at Avon-by-the-Sea. There are a few thumbtack holes in the corners, a small nick near the upper left corner, and a torn area in the upper right corner, but otherwise the condition is excellent.

Collection Number: 80

Thomas Schmidt

Title: Masten Lake [New Jersey, or perhaps upper New York State] written on lower left corner

Watercolor on paper

Signature: Thomas Schmidt, just after title

Date: 1907

Provenance: Asta Schmidt Eskesen, Aslag Hallum Eskesen, Karen Eskesen, Danish Archives North East.

A wooden cottage in the right middle ground is shown behind a steeply receding view along the lake's shore. Some boys stand on a little dock in front of the cottage. Behind them, a forested shoreline recedes in a series of wooded promontories and ends with a distant wooded shore. An unidentified wooden structure rises out of the lake behind the cottage.

Collection Number: 81

Thomas Schmidt

Title: The New Jersey Terra Cotta Company

Watercolor on paper

Signature: Thomas Schmidt

Date: 1907

Provenance: Asta Schmidt Eskesen, Aslag Eskesen, Karen Eskesen, Danish Archives North East

In 1907, Asta's husband, Laurids Bøjenhardt Eskesen, from the Varde area, owned a terra cotta company together with his brothers and his brother-in-law, Karl Mathiasen, from Thisted. They produced glazed bricks, sculptures, columns, etc. for the many skyscrapers being built in New York.

Karl had married Metthea Eskesen, the first of the 13 Eskesen siblings to arrive in America. She probably came as a housemaid for a Danish family. The Eskesen brothers and Mathiasen entered the United States as laborers.

Karl Mathiasen, who had worked since early childhood, started at age 14 to work in a factory making ceramic flower pots in New Jersey. Fourteen years later he and his brother had saved money from their meager earnings, bought a small vacant lot, and built a kiln themselves with bricks. Their first ventures into the business were frightening: one big order had problems with the glazes, but they managed to sell it anyway; another early order failed because the company which had ordered it went bankrupt. Mathiasen's little company barely survived these early disasters.

The Eskesen brothers put their savings into Karl Mathiasen's business. Laurids B. entered the company in 1893 as stockholder, and at the time of his too-early death, he was Vice President, and Head of the Sales and Estimate Department. When his brother, Eckardt Viarde Eskesen, arrived from Denmark equipped with an education in bookkeeping, the company was built up.

It was the largest Danish-owned business in America and hired many newly arrived Danish immigrants. It should be noted that when Karl M. arrived with his father in 1873, they were literally down to their last dollar when they walked into Perth Amboy, exhausted and hungry. They were saved when they met another Dane on the street by chance, who told them about a local factory which employed Danish immigrants.

In 1928, the company merged with two other companies to form Federal Seaboard Terra

Cotta Company. In 2001, there was only the gate and guard house of the factory left, which a local historical society was trying to save from demolition.

In the watercolor, TS has portrayed the large property with smoke in seven of its twelve chimneys. Across a vacant field we see railroad tracks placed in a diagonal line from the right foreground to the left middle ground. Four train wagons wait next to the factory wall, while a smoking locomotive approaches from the right. Inside the wall, we see a cluster of nine bee-hive ovens on the left, and at least nine large buildings built close to each other. On the roof of the highest building is a large sign with the company name. Two men walking near the wall give a sense of how large the grounds were.

The premises included a studio for sculptors to develop the original sculptures used to make molds. Some of these molds were so large that tons of clay were thrown into them, one handful at a time. Look carefully at the rooflines of early New York skyscrapers, you will see many interesting details.

Other buildings on the property would be used to dry the clay until it could be fired, to spray on the glazes, to research new glazes, to house supplies, to prepare products for shipping, for administration offices.

Collection Number: 82

Thomas Schmidt

Title: The Bluff, Perth Amboy, New Jersey

Oil on gray primed paper mounted on fine plywood

Signature: No

Date: 1907

Provenance: Karen Eskesen, Belongs to Danish Archives North East

The Bluff was a low cliff in Perth Amboy overlooking the waters of theRiver. Some of the prettiest houses in town were there, and it was used as a motif for postcards of Perth Amboy at the time. On the right middle ground, a group of wood-framed houses stand together, with an enormous tree towering over them on the right. On the left we see a little wood dock, a two-masted sailing vessel anchored offshore, and a more distant shore. Aslag Eskesen remembered swimming in the river as a child. The paper has thumbtack holes in the corners.

Collection Number: 83

Thomas Schmidt

Title: "Båd ulykke"

Pencil drawing on paper

Signature: Thomas Schmidt, lower right corner

Date: 7 Septbr. 1907 before signature

Provenance: Asta Schmidt Eskesen, Aslag Hallum Eskesen, Karen Eskesen, belongs to Nordby Sognarkiv

“At each bathing beach there are the most entrancing lakes surrounded by forests and hills and folks sailing for pleasure. We belonged to this group also, but the 7th of September was the last time, in that it almost ended tragically. Father, Bøjenhardt, Anna Jessen, Aslag and little Gudrun went out in the loveliest weather, completely still, but suddenly a strong wind capsized the boat. They estimated that they held onto the railings of the boat for ¼ of an hour, when, thanks be to God, a motorboat came along and saved them. If it had not come at that time, S. believed that he could not have held on much longer. Luckily we did not know about it until they came and told about it. It was frightful -- little Aslag was very much affected. Gudrun had certainly cried, but it was soon forgotten. Schmidt could not lift a thing for a long time, as he had held himself [to the boat] with his fingertips. B. had, thanks to his long arms, a better grip.” Quoted from Alma Schmidt journal, pp. 61 and 62, translated by K. Eskesen.

A rough sketch of a group of people holding onto a capsized boat. From left to right: Laurids Bøjenhardt Eskesen (whom the family called “Bøjenhardt” or “Bøj”), Aslag, Gudrun, Miss Anna Jessen, and Thomas Schmidt. The inside of the boat is shaded darkly to emphasize the shapes of the capsized sailors. Aslag remembered this very vividly -- he knew that if the motorboat had not come, they would have drowned.

Collection Number: 84

Asta Schmidt (Eskesen)

Title:

Pencil (?) Drawing on Paper

Signature: Intertwined AS in lower right corner

Date: 3-6-95 in lower right corner

Provenance:

Sand dunes to right and left with small building nestled in a little “valley” in center middle ground, and on distant horizon. Asta was a daughter of Kordegn Thomas Schmidt and Alma Hjort Schmidt. She was barely 14 years old when she sketched this.

Collection Number: 85

Asta Schmidt (Eskesen)

Title:

Pen and ink drawing on paper

Signature: No

Date: No

Provenance:

Pen and ink design for a decorative margin for the upper left corner of a book page or stationary. Sprigs of daisies, wheat, and grass seeds are placed alongside and overlapping the edge of the margin, in line drawing shaded with hatching and cross-hatching.

Collection Number: 85

Asta Schmidt (Eskesen)

Title:

Pen and ink drawing on paper

Signature: Intertwined AS lower right corner

Date: No

Provenance:

Beyond a big boulder on a grassy shoreline in the left foreground, a body of still water stretches to the horizon which has a hint of distant sails. A small, wooded promontory on the right and a fishing boat just beyond it balance the composition. The boulder, and the woods, make it unlikely that the sketch is of Fano, which was sandy and treeless at that time. The sketch is drawn in ink mainly in hatching and cross-hatching techniques.

Collection Number: 84

Asta Schmidt (Eskesen)

Title: "God Dag Her Admiral"

Pen and Ink on (what color paper?)

Signature: Asta Schmidt see note below

Date: [18]95

Note: Signature, title, and date are placed diagonally on the page, from the middle of the lower edge to the top right corner

Provenance:

A uniformed official on the left shakes hands with a portly man on the right who has a cigar etui in his left hand with the initials "C.T." The young Asta evidently made a little caricature of a family joke, or of a funny story she had heard in Nordby. Asta's handwriting as a 14-year-old did not change much over the years.

Collection Number: 65

Asta Schmidt (Eskesen)

Title:

_____ cm x _____ cm

Pen and ink on paper

Signature:

Date:

Provenance:

A Stone wall crosses the foreground. Its open gate on center left shows a lake or field in the distance, with a stand of trees on the right. A large tree grows just in front of the wall on the far right. A value drawing in hatched and cross-hatched pen lines. The dark values of the foreground make the distant areas seem sunny and light.

86 to 93 are mostly oilpaintings already described above.