

## Caspar David Friedrich

Caspar David Friedrich was born in Greifswald (Germany) on September 5, 1774. Friedrich's father worked in the soap industry and had besides Caspar David 9 other children. In 1781, Caspar David's mother died, and another 6 years later his brother died while trying to save Caspar David from drowning.

From 1794 to 1798, Caspar David Friedrich studied at the Academy of Copenhagen. After his studies in Copenhagen, Friedrich returned to Germany to settle in Dresden where he met some of his highly intellectual friends such as Goethe and Novalis.

By experiencing the death of his mother and brother at young age, Caspar David Friedrich had a lifelong obsession with death, God, and nature. In the solitary beauty of the landscape, Friedrich found comfort and inspiration. His travels to the Baltic coast, to the Riesengebirge (the Giant Mountains), and to the Harz Mountains provided him with subject matter. During these excursions, Friedrich made drawings of certain motifs - such as rainbows, old oaks, and fir trees - that had archetypal significance for him.

Remarkably gifted as an observer and interpreter of landscape, he was particularly adept at expressing nature through the eyes of a pious believer. "The divine is everywhere, even in a grain of sand", he wrote. Friedrich's fusion of observation with piety resulted in pictures of extraordinarily expressive power and spiritualism.

Stripped to an essence, Friedrich's paintings are hypnotic and memorable, evoking powerful longing, as though deep memories, dreams, and yearnings have been revived and ache to be fulfilled. The product of a singularly pious and sensitive personality, Friedrich's landscapes joined the writings of Goethe and Schiller, and the music of Beethoven as a particularly profound expression of German Romanticism.

In 1825 Friedrich suffered from a stroke which made it almost impossible for him to continue his work. Caspar David Friedrich died May 7, 1840 at age 64 but as a true romanticist his paintings never earned him a lot of money.

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