



# Lives of Caspar David Friedrich

**J. W. von Goethe**

**Carl Gustav Carus**

**Clemens Brentano**

**Introduction by Johannes Grave**

**Caspar David Friedrich**

**Heinrich Meyer**

**Heinrich von Kleist**

**Vasily Andreyevich Zhukowski**

**Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert**

**Achim von Arnim**

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- A fascinating picture of the impact of the German Romantic landscape painter's art on his contemporaries
- Visionary, disconcerting, enthralling: Caspar David Friedrich's art mined a vein of feeling completely new in painting
- Never before available in English, these reminiscences of the painter and assessments of his path-breaking art include texts by some of the greatest names of the German Romantic movement – Goethe, Kleist, the painter Carus, the psychologist Schubert – as well as Friedrich's own Commandments of Art, and letters by the Russian poet Zhukovsky

Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), one of the great visionaries of European art, spent all his life in Northern Germany, apart from four years studying in Copenhagen, and his output appears to consist almost entirely of German landscapes. But far from being parochial, he was, in the words of the French sculptor David d'Angers, the artist who 'discovered the tragic in landscape'. His paintings assemble minutely observed elements of nature into compositions that celebrate the riches and the melancholy of a cosmos fully imbued with the divine, while never losing an almost hallucinatory engagement with reality. For all their clarity, they are the quintessence of Romanticism.

Almost too familiar today, to Friedrich's contemporaries these extraordinary paintings were astonishing and challenging. This volume records the reactions of some of the most prominent figures of German Romanticism: Kleist, Brentano and Arnim (in a witty series of dialogues between gallery visitors alternately bewitched and bewildered by Friedrich's *Monk by the Sea*), the painter and physiologist Carus, the psychologist Schubert, the Russian poet and translator Zhukovsky. A piece by Goethe and his colleague Heinrich Meyer records the somewhat baffled admiration of the earlier generation; and Friedrich's own Commandments of Art breathes the almost overwhelming passion with which he approached his vocation. An introduction by the leading scholar Johannes Grave situates Friedrich's art and its reception in the context of the Romantic movement both in Germany and in Europe as a whole.

**Johannes Grave** is a professor of art history at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena. He has written several books about Caspar David Friedrich, is co-editor of the scholarly edition of the artist's writings and was external co-curator of the major anniversary exhibition *Caspar David Friedrich. Art for a New Age* at the Kunsthalle Hamburg (2023/24).

