



PREFACE

Mette Skougaard
Museum Director

Her Royal Highness Princess Benedikte is Princess of Denmark. She is in the line of succession to the Danish throne and frequently represents her older sister, Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II, on official occasions, as well as serving as regent (*rigsforstander*). Princess Benedikte has notably distinguished herself through her chairmanships of the Joint Council of Girl Guides in Denmark, the Danish Committee for Support of International Scouting Purposes, and a wide array of patronages. Upon her marriage in 1968 to His Highness Prince Richard of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg, she also became Princess of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg.

For a long time, it has been the wish of the Museum of National History at Frederiksborg to acquire a portrait of Princess Benedikte, who throughout her life has played a prominent role in Danish public life. In 2020, the visual artist Lars Physant undertook this assignment. It is a great joy that Denmark's National Portrait Gallery can now incorporate into its collection a portrait of the Princess created by this remarkable artist, who has previously painted portraits of Princess Benedikte as well as her sisters, Queen Margrethe and Queen Anne-Marie.

Lars Physant has in many ways gone his own way, creating a truly unique style of his own. Self-taught and having lived in Barcelona for decades, he is perhaps more in sync with the Golden Age painters and Mediterranean culture than with today's artistic environment in Denmark. He has drawn from the classical figurative tradition as well as Impressionism and Expressionism, while also engaging in his own experiments to assemble as complete an artistic expression as possible of the perception of his models. Realism and abstraction thrive side by side in the individual portraits—breaking the frame both figuratively and literally with their irregular forms—as different techniques and color palettes are juxtaposed on canvases mounted onto wooden relief structures.

The presentation of the new portrait of Princess Benedikte offers the museum a welcome opportunity to host an exhibition featuring a selection of Lars Physant's portraits. The museum would like to extend a warm and heartfelt thank you to H.R.H. Princess Benedikte for agreeing to be portrayed for the collection, and to Lars Physant for accepting the commission. The new work will remind visitors of both the Princess's role and significance, as well as the artist's.

For this exhibition, both public institutions and private individuals have made their works available. We are deeply grateful to them for making the exhibition possible. A big thank you also goes to the authors of the catalog articles: Peter Michael Hornung, MA, from *Politiken*, and Gitte Buch-Hansen, PhD, Associate Professor at the Department of Biblical Exegesis, Faculty of Theology at the University of Copenhagen.