



# Between Formula and Freestyle

## Nicolai Abildgaard and 18th Century Painting Technique

### Troels Filtenborg

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- A new technical study of the composite techniques and styles of the eighteenth-century Danish history painter, Nicolai Abildgaard

As the most important Danish history painter, Nicolai Abildgaard (1743-1809) worked in a century that saw marked shifts in the styles of painting, from the late Baroque via Rococo to Neoclassicism, as well as the emergence of art academies throughout Europe as the prevalent factor in the training of young artists.

This book presents results of a paint technical study of his oeuvre, from early student paintings to mature works from his late years. As a result of the composite nature of his training in Copenhagen as well as in Rome in the 1760s and 70s, a number of factors in Abildgaard's formative years were influential in shaping his painting methods and choice of materials. Though his practice may at times appear unorthodox and inconsistent, most of its separate components are found in works by his contemporaries, making his technique a reflection of different characteristic currents in eighteenth-century painting.