

Grete Zahle: A Picture Caption for a Double Portrait

The painter Jørgen Sonne was commissioned to do the mural decorations for the building which Gottlieb Bindesbøll had created as a museum for Thorvaldsen's works and collections.

Sonne chose, probably together with Bindesbøll, to present in parallel two major events on each of the building's long sides.

These murals are linked on the eastern end wall by an almost

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abstract presentation of the frigate Rota, which brought Thorvaldsen home from Italy.

The northern wall presents, as in a film or a comic strip, the happy day when Denmark's great sculptor landed in Copenhagen – greeted enthusiastically from innumerable boats, filled with Denmark's artistic and cultural elite.

The southern wall shows the transporting of the priceless sculptures and other works of art, the sculptor's gift to his homeland. Beside the entrance to the museum on this wall is a full-length double portrait of the painter Jørgen Roed and his wife Emilie, *née* Kruse.

This double portrait is the subject of the article. There are little-known letters concerned with the two which tell about their lives, and especially about Emilie's personality and ideas.

It was an innovation to make portraits of living people in the way chosen by Sonne. With few strokes and colours, he creates a poignant depiction of his two close friends, the Roeds.