



Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer (1865-1953)



**Venice**

Charcoal and ink signed lower left

19.68 x 24.80 inch

Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, born Lucien Lévy, was a French symbolist painter, who also took part in Art Nouveau. His artistic production was very diversified, as it includes paintings, drawings, ceramics as well as furniture and interior design.

When he was fifteen, he began to learn drawing and sculpture in Paris, in Wallet's and Raphaël Collin's classes. His first show at the Salon of French Artists was in 1882, where he exhibited the Birth of Venus from Cabanel and a little ceramic plate too. In 1887, Lévy settled near Cannes in South of France and worked in ceramics' decoration.

He quickly became Artistic Director of Clément Massier's studio, job that he will practice until 1895. In 1892 he was the director of Art Works and signed his first ceramics together with Clément Massier. Persian and arabian motifs present in the first iridescent ceramics of Massier are the result of Lévy's work. Simultaneously to his activity in this manufacture situated in Golfe-Juan, Lévy-Dhurmer continued to practice oil painting and pastel. This will allow him to take part of public exhibition in 1894, known as the Soul Painters.

In 1895, he joined Paris and dedicated himself to painting harder. At this time, he went to Italy and found in the Renaissance's artists a great attraction. One year latter, he exhibited for the first time at the Galerie Georges Petit in Paris under the name Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer. He exhibited there a set of 24 works of art with 16 pastels, 2 sanguines and 5 oil paintings, of which some are now very famous : Gust, Silence, Georges Rodenbach's portrait, Eve, Mystery. His works were a great success among public and artists. He received raves for his attentions to details and the way that he showed the faces in a melancholic haze, in contrast with impressionist and luminous colouring. Mix of Academicism and Impressionism, his art works had the mark of an idealism and a Symbolism tinted with mystery. His Georges Rosenbach's portrait is maybe the most gripping exemple of this strange and extraordinary collaboration.

Influenced by Pre-Raphaelism movement, this artist who was so well fitted in the wave of " Soul Painters " against realism without inner self, achieved great success among public. In 1900 he rewarded a bronze medal at the Universal Exhibition and was decorated with the Legion of Honour in 1902.

Then he took part in several public exhibitions, many Salons and above all in eight personal exhibitions. Although he has been attracted by symbolist iconography, which is really present in many of his art works, Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer realised also in his Parisian studio many portraits for private orders, far from his first artistic dreams.

After 1901, Lévy-Dhurmer got away from pure Symbolism, integrating more landscapes in his works, due to his travels in Europe and North Africa. He continued to be inspired by musique and tried to reproduce with painting some works of great composers, like Evocation of Beethoven, exhibited during the 1908's Salon and bought by State for the Opera Comique theater. He also realised The moonlight Sonata, The Appassionnata and the Funeral march, some misty feminine nudes tinted with reverie. From 1920, he found a new inspiration in literature, and particularly in the Fables by Jean de La Fontaine.

## Museums

Musée d'Orsay

Collection du Petit Palais

Metropolitan Museum de New York

Musée d'Ixelles, Bruxelles

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