

Biography

Ferdinand-Joseph Gueldry, a French artist, was born in May, 1858 in Paris and died in 1945. He was a painter of animated compositions, landscapes, and nautical scenes. A very skilled draftsman, born of a wealthy family, he could devote his time very early to both his favorite hobbies, painting and canoeing.

He studied art at the Paris Fine Arts Academy with the painter Jean-Léon Gérôme, meanwhile spending a lot of free time canoeing along the Marne river. A member of the Nautical Society of the Marne, he enjoyed depicting his friends rowing and regating, and excelled in rendering on the canvas the shimmering reflection of the water.

In 1878, he made his debut at the Paris Salon where he exhibited regularly until 1933. In 1885, he won a third place medal, and in 1889, a silver medal at the Universal Exhibition.

In 1900, he was granted a scholarship to travel abroad. In 1908, he was awarded the Legion of Honor.

He started representing the life of workers in workshops and factories, though illustrating the changes occurred with the Industrial revolution. He then concentrated on painting landscapes of riverbanks, lakes, animated boating scenes and regatas.

In the years 1880/1890, canoeing is still very fashionable in the suburbs of Paris. Initiated with the Impressionists, this new hobby is the subject of many paintings. Gueldry depicts this activity faithfully, a fine observer being himself often part of the game. He gives us the details of the costumes, the striped shirt, the straw hat of the rowers, either rowing energetically, or strolling loose on the Seine or the Marne rivers.

An international referee in that sport, Gueldry had several opportunities to cross the Channel towards England and participate in the famous Henley regatas. This gave him the chance to paint one of his masterwork, "On the river Thames", a painting he never parted from.

Therefore, Ferdinand Gueldry has long been recognised as a specialist of nautical scenes and his works are well represented in French Museums.

Museums

Paris, Musée de l'Armée, (La Veille de Montmirail, le 10 février 1814)

Musée Carnavalet, Musée de Nogent/Marne.

Amiens, Musée des Beaux-Arts

Cahors, Musée Henri Martin

Quimper, Musée des Beaux-Arts

Reims, Musée Saint-Denis

Bibliography

Bénézit, Dictionnaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs, Gründ 1996.

Schurr & Cabanne, "Les petits maîtres de la peinture, 1820-1920", Ed. de l'amateur 1989.

"Avirons et pagaie sur la Marne", Musée de Nogent sur Marne, Catalogue de l'exposition, Avril/Oct.1999.

Michel Rioussel, "Les environs de Paris et leurs peintres".Ed. Amatteis, 1985.

Catalogue du Musée d'Art & d'Histoire, Ville de Poissy.