



Charles Camoin

1879-1965

"Paysage"

Oil on canvas / Signed lower right

Dimensions : 73 x 92 cm

Dimensions : 28.74 x 36.22 inch

Biography

As a colorist, I have always been and still am a wild animal on the loose. Ch. Camoin

Born in Marseille in 1879, Charles Camoin studied business while practicing drawing at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. In 1896 he received a "first prize for figure" which encouraged him to move to Paris with his mother where he entered Gustave Moreau's studio.

It was there that he met Matisse, Marquet and Manguin with whom he soon left the Beaux-Arts school to join free studios and paint outdoors in the streets of Paris. He took the opportunity to study the work of the Impressionists, already exhibited in the Durand Rueil and Vollard galleries and also in the Musée du Luxembourg thanks to the Caillebotte legacy.

In 1900, Camoin had to do his military service, which took him to Aix-en-Provence in the fall of 1901. Gathering his courage, he took the opportunity to visit the painter Paul Cézanne (1839 - 1906), whose difficult character was well known to young artists. However, the meeting between the two men went so well that the young Camoin kept up a regular correspondence with the master until his death, thus benefiting from his numerous advices.

Camoin moved to Paris in 1903 and began to exhibit at the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne. The critics noticed him when he exhibited at the Galerie Berthe Weill alongside Matisse, Manguin, Marquet and Jean Puy. Camoin travelled regularly to the south of France and painted landscapes with a lively, broad and expressive touch. He spent the summer of 1905 with Cross, Signac and Marquet in Saint-Tropez where they painted on the motif in a completely new palette. At the famous Salon d'Automne of 1905, he presented two flamboyant landscapes of Cassis in Room VII - soon to be called the "Cage aux Fauves" by the critic Louis Vauxcelles. And here is Camoin attached to the Fauvist movement which characterizes a use of color in a free manner and a drawing often simplified. Unlike the Impressionists, Camoin was not interested in atmospheric effects or in the refinements of retinal perception, but rather in the arrangement of forms and planes in perspectival space, applying the lesson of Cézanne who advised him to "do Poussin on nature".

In 1908, Camoin's first solo show was held at the gallery of Daniel Henri Kahnweiler, a young dealer of German origin who opened the doors of European exhibitions to him. He was soon presented at the Golden Fleece Exhibition in Moscow, the Mânes Society in Prague, the Salon de la Libre Esthétique in Brussels and the Sonderbund in Düsseldorf. He even exhibited in New York in 1913.

A stay in Tangier with Matisse during the winter of 1912 upset his work to the point that, once he get back, he destroyed the paintings in his studio located rue Lepic. Fortunately, some of the canvases that had been cut up in this way were recovered and restored by Père Soulier, a famous dealer on rue des Martyrs at the Marché aux Puces. The story quickly made the rounds in Paris and the works soon joined prestigious collections. Thus is the painting now preserved in the museum of Menton "The Moulin Rouge with carriages".

During WWI, Camoin was first sent to the front as a stretcher bearer before joining the camouflage section in 1916 where he painted canvases by the mile. There he met Dunoyer de Segonzac and the poet Léon-Paul Fargue, with whom he became friends. At the end of the war, the return to civilian life also rhymes with family life, since he married Charlotte Prost in 1920. His post-war paintings revive the delicacy of his Tangier period. The numerous views of the South of France realized during this period reveal a light and an intimate atmosphere that brings him closer to the work of Matisse who had settled in Nice since 1917. He affirms his taste for a sensual and spontaneous painting, devoid of any intellectual pretension.

He then divided his life between his Parisian studio and long stays in Saint-Tropez, a town where he found refuge during the WWII. He continued to exhibit every year at the Salons d'Automne and des Indépendants, as well as at the Salon des Tuileries. In 1955 he was promoted to Officer of the Legion of Honor and received the Grand Prize at the Menton Biennale the same year.

The last survivor of the first Fauvist group, Camoin died in his studio in Montmartre in 1965. The following year, the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Marseille devoted an exhibition to him, bringing together 41 paintings. Two major retrospective exhibitions followed in Nice in 1971 and in Marseille in 1998. The Musée de Montmartre is currently devoting an exhibition of a hundred paintings and drawings to him under the title "Charles Camoin, un fauve en liberté".

Museums

Musée national d'art moderne Centre Pompidou, Paris

Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence

Musée de Grenoble

Musée Cantini, Marseille

Musée des beaux-arts, Nice

Musée Fabre, Montpellier

Petit Palais, Genève

Institute of Art, Chicago

MoMA, New-York

Staatliche Museen, Berlin

Bibliography

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Collectif, *Charles Camoin, rétrospective, 1879-1965*, musées de Marseille, Réunion des Musées nationaux, 1997

Claudine Grammont, *Correspondance Henri Matisse - Charles Camoin*, Lausanne, La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1997

La Provence vue par les peintres, par Sylvie D'Eze

Charles Camoin, Association les Archives Camoin