



Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer

1865-1953

Two mermaids

Pastel on paper / signed lower left

Dimensions : 62,3 x 47,3 cm

Dimensions : 24.41 x 18.50 inch

Biography

Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer was a French symbolist painter, who also took part in the " Art nouveau " movement. His artistic production was various, including 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. In 1882 he participated for the first time to the Salon of French Artists where he exhibited the "Birth of Venus" from Cabanel and a little ceramic plate. In 1887, Lévy-Dhurmer settled near Cannes in South of France and worked on the decoration of ceramics.

He became the Artistic Director of Clément Massier's studio from 1887 to 1895. In 1892 he was the director of " Travaux d'Art " and signed his first ceramics together with Clément Massier, creating the Persian and Arabian patterns on the first iridescent ceramics of Massier. Simultaneously to his activity in this manufacture located in Golfe-Juan, Lévy-Dhurmer practiced oil painting and pastel, and took part in the collective exhibition of the " Painters of the Soul " in 1894.

In 1895, he went to Paris and dedicated himself to painting. At this time, he visited Italy and was very inspired by the artists of the Renaissance. One year later, he exhibited for the first time at the Galerie Georges Petit in Paris under the name Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer. There, he showed a set of 24 artworks: 16 pastels, 2 sanguines and 5 oil paintings including "Gust", "Silence", "Georges Rodenbach's portrait", "Eve", "Mystery". His works met a great success among public and artists. The way he represented the faces in a melancholic haze was very different from the impressionist and luminous colouring. Mix of Academicism and Impressionism, his works had the mark of Symbolism tinged with mystery. His portrait of Georges Rodenbach is probably the best example of his unique and extraordinary style.

Influenced by the Preraphaelism movement, this artist was part of the " Painters of the Soul" movement against pure realism. In 1900 he was rewarded with a bronze medal at the Universal Exhibition and was decorated with the Legion of Honour in 1902. He took part in several public exhibitions, many Salons and in eight personal exhibitions. Although he was attracted to symbolist iconography, which was present in many of his works, Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer also made many portraits for private commissions.

After 1901, Lévy-Dhurmer gave up pure Symbolism and integrated landscapes in his works, inspired by his travels in Europe and North Africa. He continued to be inspired by music and tried to reproduce with painting some pieces of great composers, like "Evocation of Beethoven", exhibited during the 1908's Salon and bought by State for the Opera Comique Theater. He also painted "The Moonlight Sonata", "The Appassionnata" and the "Funeral March". From 1920, he found a new source of inspiration in literature, and particularly in the "Fables" by Jean de La Fontaine.

Museums

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Musée du Louvre, Paris

Petit Palais, Paris

Musée du Quai Branly, Paris

Musée basque et d'histoire, Bayonne

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Quimper

Musée de l'Histoire de France, Versailles

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Musée d'Ixelles, Bruxelles

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