

Biography

Born in Boston, Edwin Lord Weeks is one of the two most famous American Orientalist painter with Frederic Arthur Bridgman. From a rich family of spices and tea merchants, he has been supported by his parents in his artistic course choice. He started very young to travel to Florida and South America to practice drawing. At the age of twenty-one, he opened his first studio in Newton and get married on the same year.

In 1871, he realised his first long trip through Egypt, Holy Land and Syria with his friend the illustrator A.P. Close. The young painter returned from his travels with many sketches showing daily life's scenes and landscapes from North Africa. He settled in Tangier in 1872 where he painted The Harbor, one of his first typical orientalist painting.

Back in Newton, Weeks was recognized by critic who congratulated his orientalist compositions exhibited at the Boston Art Club. " Weeks has never made better paintings than these two orientalist landscapes exhibited here : the sweep of the treatment and the light of his colors are extremely underlined,..., the quality of the atmosphere firmly appear to be the best he never showed us. "

Edwin Lord Weeks decided to continue his artistic training in Paris in 1874 before going to Orient. Waiting for joining the studio of Jean-Léon Gérôme, he first frequented Léon Bonnat's one. The latter already supported his students to do outside painting in order to study light and shadow. Happy with Bonnat's modern teaching, Weeks stayed about one year and a half in his studio and never joined Gérôme's although he knew personally the master.

The artist organised several exhibitions in America that were enormously successful, particularly in February 1877 at the Noyes and Blakeslee Gallery in Boston. He also exhibited at the 1878's Paris Salon a Moroccan Camel Driver. His paintings were very much liked by public and the artist lived a good life thanks to his art.

In 1883, he made his first travel to India, spending days to paint and nights to develop his photos that he will use for architectural details and backgrounds in his future compositions.

The Harpers's Magazine asked him to go back to India in 1892, with the journalist Theodore Child in charge of writing articles illustrated by Weeks. A very long trip took them to Saint Petersburg to Kurdistan, and then through Persia. They travelled by horse, erecting their tents every night and living like Bedouins. Unfortunately, his fellow traveler died for typhoid during the journey, but Weeks spent two years in India before going back to Paris. His Indian scenes of life were extremely liked in France as in United States. He told his long journey in his book From Black Sea through Persia and India and two years after he published Mountains Episodes.

Weeks has been awarded with the Legion of Honor in 1896. Definitively settled in Paris, he continued to paint mainly Indian scenes.

Museums

Musée de Roubaix, Musée du Louvre de Paris, Musées Royaux de Belgique, Musée d'Orsay
Musée de la coopération Franco-Américaine

Bibliography

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Les Orientalistes de l'Ecole Américaine, Gerald M Ackerman, ACR Edition, 1994, Courbevoie (Paris)