

Biography

Adrien Désirée Etienne called Drian was born in 1885. He started his drawing's apprenticeship at the Julian Academy in Paris before turning himself to engraving on copper. He felt in perfect harmony with this medium, and presented his first etchings at the 1902's Salon. Pastel was also attractive to him and he began to exhibit some portraits executed in pastel in 1907. He regularly exhibited at the Salon until 1911.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Drian was a recognized illustrator. He was closed to the French couturier Paul Poiret and the movie director Sacha Guitry. From 1907, he began to work for the magazine Femina. Then he worked with many magazines of whom Les Feuilles d'Art in 1920, the Illustration, Harper's Bazaar, Les Costumes Parisiens or the Gazette du Bon Ton.

In 1912, he took part in Paul Poiret's creations as a fashion designer. Little by little, he was going to become one of the best fashion designer and illustrator of the 20th century.

He exhibited in many events, for example in the Gallery Levesque in Paris, during the exhibition "Les Collaborateurs de la Gazette du Bon Ton". During this event, the Parisian publisher Devambez made a first album of his drawings.

His decorative style is characterized by the clear and quick line, and also by the right distribution of colors. He was compared to Helleu in the 1920's and 1930's, and after to Domergue for his so typical representations of Parisian women. He influenced René Gruau who said that he was the greatest. He illustrated novels and tales, created showcases in the US, made the decoration of the office of Molyneux and frescoes for Elsie de Wolfe. In addition to his illustrations, he painted some oils on canvases and finished his artistic career as a portrait painter, especially for Wallis Simpson.

He did a set of paintings on glass that was exhibited at the Parisian Gallery Charpentier in 1950. This technique requires a wonderful precision, because the painter realizes his work directly on glass. After one can see the artwork on the verso of the glass that serves as support as well as varnish and protective layer. This reversed work is closed to the engraving medium, technique that Drian had perfectly understood.

Bibliography

David Downton " Les Maîtres de l'illustration de mode, Paris, Eyrolles, septembre 2011 " Étienne Drian ", p. 46 à 53

Bénézit, " Dictionnaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs ", Gründ 1999.