



Federico Armando Beltran Masses

1885-1949

Portrait of Madeleine Bonnardel, Countess of Montgomery

Oil on canvas / signed lower right

Dimensions : 196,5 x 132,6 cm

Dimensions : 77.17 x 51.97 inch



Biography

Born in 1885 in Cuba, the last Spanish colony, Federico Beltran Masses moved to Barcelona at the age of seven. He first studied at the Escuela de Artes la Llotja in Barcelona, then went to Madrid where he took classes with the painter Joaquín Sorolla.

In 1915, he painted a portrait of a naked Spanish countess: "La Maja Marquesa". The painting caused a scandal and was rejected by the Committee of the National Exhibition of Fine Arts. After this event, Federico Beltran Masses decided to settle in Paris in 1916. After one of his paintings was purchased by King Alfonso XIII, he gained support of the Spanish royalty and acquired a reputation which opened him the doors of high Parisian society.

In 1920, the artist exhibited at the Venice Biennale and was highly successful. This trip had a great influence on his work, as he placed his figures in imaginary Venetian architectures, like in the "Portrait of Madeleine Bonnardel, Countess of Montgomery".

He won several awards during his international exhibitions in the United States, Belgium, Italy, India and took part in the Hispanic-French exhibition of Fine Arts in 1919.

Women portraits became a specialty of Federico Beltran Masses. He pictured seductive and mysterious feminine figures using dark and intense colors. The originality of his painting lied in his representation of night scenes and his dramatic use of light. To achieve this particular atmosphere, the painter used to work in a dark studio where he projected lights on his models, which created a contrast between their bodies and the sets.

The Spanish and Cuban heritage of the painter is visible through the costumes of the characters and the musical and poetic references. His paintings also resembled the atmosphere in "Les Fleurs du Mal", a poetry collection by Charles Baudelaire, and were chosen to illustrate one of its editions.

Federico Beltran Massés was greatly successful during his lifetime and painted many famous personalities, actors, members of royalty and aristocracy. His works were also collected by Charlie Chaplin.

Museums

Musée national d'art moderne - Centre Pompidou

Musée national centre d'art Reina Sofía, Madrid

Musée de Beaux Arts, Chambéry

Musée du vieux château, Laval

Musée d'art déco et d'art Nouveau Casa Lis, Salamanque

Bibliography

Federico Beltran Masses - A painter in the court of Hollywood, Edition Museu Diocesà de Barcelona, 2011