

Gustav Adolf Mossa

1883-1971

Lucifer, 1906

Huile sur toile

Dimensions : 40 x 39 cm

Dimensions : 15.75 x 15.35 inch

Dimensions with frame : 58,5 x 57,5 cm  
Dimensions with frame : 22.83 x 22.44 inch

## Biography

Gustav Adolf Mossa was a French Symbolist painter born in 1883 in Nice. His father, the painter Alexis Mossa, a former professor at the National School of Decorative Arts, was the author of many posters for the carnival of Nice and strongly influenced Gustav Adolf Mossa in his career.

Until 1900, Mossa studied at the School of Decorative Arts in Nice where he learned the Art nouveau style. He studied anatomy, drawing all the plant vocabulary of Art nouveau. He also drew furniture and decorations. In the same time, his father introduced him to the art of watercolor landscape around Nice and the hinterland.

In the early 1900s, he began writing plays and poems. After his visit at the Universal Exhibition of 1900, he was inspired by the symbolist movement and the new Art nouveau and painted his first large symbolist canvas he entitled "Salome or Prologue of Christianity" (1901). He visited Italy with his father, where he discovered Genoa, Pisa, Siena and Florence. In line with his father, he also made his first works for the carnival of Nice.

From 1904 to 1911, he decided to devote himself totally to his Symbolist-inspired paintings. He exhibited in 1911 at Georges Petit Gallery where he sold many works. He then discovered Flemish primitive art and abandoned symbolism.

When his father died in 1926, he was appointed curator for the Nice Museum of Fine Arts.

When Gustav Adolf Mossa died on May 25, 1971, his symbolist work was rediscovered, hidden by himself to his family and to the public who knew him mainly through his work of carnival of Nice.

Gustav Adolf Mossa's Symbolist work was a collection of references to mythology, Bible, legends and Shakespeare's heroines. Much of his work crystallized around the perpetual tension between the life and death instincts. He was interested in the unconscious, the permanent conflict in human relations, and more particularly between men and women.

Mossa's work took its full place in the spirit of the Art nouveau of its time, through the representation of furniture, clothing and jewelry.

## Museums

Musée Fin de siècle, Bruxelles

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nice

## Bibliography

Collectif Association Symbolique Mossa et préface de Jean Roger Soubiran, "Gustav-Adolf Mossa. Catalogue raisonné des oeuvres symbolistes", Paris, Somogy Éditions d'Art, 2010, 528

Jean Roger Soubiran, "Gustav Adolf Mossa", Ed Ediriviera & Alligator, 1985

Yolita René, Jean-Roger Soubiran, "L'oeuvre secrète de Gustav-Adolf Mossa", catalogue d'exposition, Namur, Musée Félicien Rops, du 30 janvier au 16 mai 2010, Namur : Musée provincial Félicien Rops ; Province de Namur, 2010