

Fabio Fabbi

1861-1946

Le marchand d'esclave

Huile sur toile signée en bas à droite

Dimensions : 116 x 65,5 cm

Dimensions : 45.67 x 25.59 inch

Dimensions with frame : 137 x 87 cm
Dimensions with frame : 53.94 x 34.25 inch

Biography

Fabio Fabbi, born in Bologna in 1862, first studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence under the painter and sculptor Augusto Rivalta, where he won first prize in 1880. Further awards followed in 1881 and in 1883 the government prize for his bas-relief "A Question of Honour", which is kept at the Academy. But Fabbi felt attracted to painting, which he practised for the moment almost in secret, without exhibiting it. He undertook several trips, notably to Paris and Europe, but it was after a prolonged stay in Egypt with his brother Alberto, himself a painter, that he finally adopted painting.

On discovering this country, Fabio Fabbi became fascinated by Egyptian life, which he studied in depth. The picturesque scenes he observed during his stay in Alexandria inspired the Orientalist paintings he executed on his return to Italy. The first of these were exhibited at the Circolo Degli Artisti in Florence in 1888. They include Arab Woman, A Terrace in Alexandria, The Potter and The Old Muslim. He also participated in the International Exhibition in Monaco the following year. In addition to oil painting, Fabio Fabbi was also an original and vigorous pastellist and a precise draughtsman. He published an album entitled "Egypt Album of Memories", illustrated with drawings and published by Fotografia Alinari in Florence at the end of the 1880s. During the same period, he participated in the decoration of the smoking room of the Villa Sorani in Florence, for which he produced six large orientalist distempers.

In 1896, he collaborated with the Florentine magazine "Fiammetta", for which he designed the poster in 1897.

Appointed professor at the Florence Academy in 1893 and academician in Bologna in 1894, Fabbi was decorated by King Umberto I in 1898. In addition to his book illustrations, he painted genre scenes and religious subjects, taking part in the 1911's Exhibition of Modern Christian Art in Paris.

He illustrated more than a hundred works, preferring, in addition to the literary classics published by the Nerbini publishing house in Florence, adventure novels, especially by Salgari "which he knew how to imbue with the particular and graceful atmosphere of an oriental dream" according to Faeti, and which are characterised by technical and chromatic ductility in the use of tempera and watercolour, and an original narrative lightness.

He met with success thanks to his Egyptian scenes, slave markets, women resting on terraces overlooking Cairo or Alexandria. Shows also inspired the painter, who liked to depict dancers performing in private homes or in the streets. Dressed in diaphanous pink and white dresses, the dancers swirl scarves and sway to the music.