



Xavier De Poret

1897-1975

Owl study - Le Grand Duc

Oil on paper signed lower right

Dimensions : 50 x 65,5 cm

Dimensions : 19.68 x 25.59 inch



Dimensions with frame : 62,5 x 77 cm  
Dimensions with frame : 24.41 x 30.31 inch

## Biography

Born in 1897, in Dinan, Xavier de Poret, son of a hussar captain, grew up during his first ten years in the Château de Farcy-les-Lys, located near Fontainebleau. Very early on, he was discovered to have a great predisposition for plastic creation. His attraction for drawing led him to multiply animal representations. Indeed, his childhood remains marked by the large bestiary sheltered by his native region: horses, birds and other mammals multiply at the heart of his production. The family home also includes a vast orchard, a stable, an orangery, a saddlery and a farmyard with aviaries. Greatly encouraged by his mother, the artist was working on sketching these animals and their environment. She used to take him to the Garden of Plants in Paris, provided him with a wide variety of birds and showed him many exhibitions.

In May 1914, the hunting painter Jules Gélibert wrote about him: "It is with great pleasure that I have seen your studies of birds, hinds and deer. It is very good. Your birds are very remarkable. I find them as good as those of the best artists who have dealt with the genre. "

However, the WWI broke out and Xavier de Poret was committed to fighting in the army. The wounded artist has been evacuated to the military hospital in Pau. There, he admired the reliefs, the bestiary and the vegetation and discovered chamois, a recurring motif in his future work. It was only in 1918 that he returned to his native region. There he went on a hunt with the crew of the Rallye Vallière, who devoted itself to hunting wild boar. In this context, Xavier de Poret exhibited his work at the Société des Artistes Animaliers, alongside Rötig, renowned for his animal painting and magazine cover illustrations, Reboussin, an artist renowned for his animal painting and lithographs, and Mérite, a painter and sculptor known for his polar expeditions and his depictions of polar bears. He also frequented Oberthür, painter, animal draftsman and writer, and Pompon, particularly known for his animal sculptures, characterized by the simplification of lines and their polished surfaces.

In 1930 Xavier de Poret travelled to Switzerland, alongside chamois hunters, to study mountain fauna. A few years later, in 1938, the cartoonist was asked to illustrate Joseph-Louis Reichlen's book entitled "Au pays du chamois" (In the land of the chamois), which was published in more than 2000 copies. Specializing in the representation of mountain animals, the artist gained great renown among hunters. A great horseman, he also became one of the most specialized draftsmen in the figuration of horses, which remains one of his favorite themes. From 1938 onwards, he studied them in their stables, at rest, as well as during training sessions and rides.

Xavier de Poret is not only an excellent animal painter. He also excelled in the genre of portraiture. Indeed, during WWI, the artist multiplied the sketches of soldiers. He is also known for his numerous portraits of the Parisian society, and those of Belgian and Luxembourg sovereigns, as well as numerous equestrian portraits of Queen Elizabeth II and her children, Princess Anne and Prince Charles.

In spite of these portraits, the artist's work is mainly known for his collaboration with Hermès in Paris. He was commissioned by the creator to produce series of drawings printed on the famous "Carré Hermès". In particular, he produced the Broodmares, Turtle Doves, Tits, Squirrels, Dachshunds, Hinds, Boots, Foxes, etc. Xavier de Poret's creations remain a true reference in the world of Hermès. The artist's name is now closely linked to that of this prestigious fashion house, which has called on his talents to illustrate the emblematic squares, adorned with an animal in various postures, drawn in graphite with a particularly precise line.

## Museums

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Chambéry

Bibliography

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P. Gremaud, Château de Plaisance. Ici vécut Xavier l'élégant, in: La Gruyère, 11 novembre 2000

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Xavier de Poret : 1894-1975, catalogue d'exposition, Chambéry, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1994