



Walter Mac Ewen

1860-1943

Portrait of young lady in front of a mirror

Oil on canvas / signed on the middle left

Dimensions : 66,5 x 42 cm

Dimensions : 25.98 x 16.54 inch

Biography

Walter Mac Ewen was an American painter who left his native town of Chicago in 1876 to study Art in European Academies after a first training at the Northwestern University and at the Lake Forest Academy. In 1877, Mac Ewen followed lessons at the Academy of Munich where he stayed for eight years. After that, he came in Paris and completed his training with Fernand Cormon and Tony Robert-Fleury at the Julian Academy. In 1885, he opened a studio in the village of Hattem in Holland and an other one in Paris, as his closed friend the painter Gari Melchers. Mac Ewen exhibited at the Paris Salon where he gained an honorable mention in 1886 for his painting *The Judgement of Paris*. He also received a Silver Medal at the 1889's Universal Exhibition and an other one during the 1900's. A great Gold Medal honored him in Berlin in 1891.

He exhibited at the Society of French Artists from 1890 to 1895 and also at many Belgian Salon. He was decorated Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in 1896 and became Officer in 1908. In 1909, he was named Officer of the Leopold Order in Belgium. From 1903 he has been partner at the National Academy of New York city. Many of his paintings were bought by museums during his career, for example the Luxembourg Museum in Paris. One can see his works in Budapest, Magdebourg and in many Belgian and American cities. He was the first American painter to enter the Belgian collections in 1895 with his painting representing a Dutch Family (1894). Walter Mac Ewen realized some decorative paintings, including a set of compositions for the National Library of Washington. That placed him as one of the best painter for decorative American art at the end of the 19th century.

Although he studied in many countries, Walter Mac Ewen choose the most of his subjects in Holland. Indeed, he is well known for his scenes of Dutch daily life and his remarkable interior scenes inspired by Vermeer. He abandoned these motifs at the end of his career and did Parisian paintings. But in the first themes as in the second's, this was the study of light that captured his attention. He knew perfectly well how to show the calm twilight atmosphere of Dutch farmers in their homes as well as the brilliant light inside his Parisian studio. This is certainly his fascination for light that led him to study the great Dutch masters of the 17th century like Gerard Terborch and Pieter de Hooch. Mac Ewen is also known as a portrait and history painter.

In the 1920's, he started to suffer osteoarthritis and produced engraving instead of painting.

Museums

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Gand, Budapest, Liège, Magdeburg, Paris
Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Indianapolis...

Bibliography

American expatriate Painters of the late Nineteenth Century, Dayton, 1916.

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SCHMIDT, K.E., " Mac Ewen Walter ", *L'Art et la couleur, Les Maîtres contemporains*, Paris, ED ; Laurens, 1908.