



Henri Lebasque

1865-1937

« Jeune Femme à la Ceinture Bleue »

Oil on canvas / Signed lower left

Dimensions : 65 x 54 cm

Dimensions : 25.59 x 21.26 inch

Biography

Henri Lebasque was born in Champigné (Maine et Loire) in 1865. The son of a modest family, he started his artistic education at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Angers, before moving to Paris where he studied in the Studio of the portraitist Leon Bonnat at the Beaux-Arts Academy. He began to exhibit regularly at the annual art society exhibitions and at the Paris Salon. Meanwhile, he assisted the artist Ferdinand Humbert with the decorative murals at the Pantheon for 6 years.

Very soon he decided to give up his studies and befriended the artists Paul Signac, Bonnard and Vuillard, cofounders of the Nabis group and the " Intimists " group, who favoured the quietness and lightness of domestic subject matters, and from whom he would learn the significance of a colour theory which stressed the use of complementary colours in shading. He also met Camille Pissaro, in 1902, and Renoir. Both would have a large influence on his work.

Travelling abroad, he went to London where he discovered the work of Turner.

A friend of Matisse, Manguin and Rouault, he did not share their style, violent colours and strong brushstroke, but stayed closer to the subtlety of Impressionism until 1905. In 1906, the discovery, (thanks to his friend Manguin), of the South of France and its very specific light would lead him to a drastic change of style. While maintaining a very delicate palette of soft and luminous tones, his brushstroke became looser and wider, in enchanting indoors and outdoors intimate scenes, which were often located on the mediterranean shore : " Young girls in a park ", " Children reading in a garden ", " The cigarette " in the Musée d'Orsay.

He kept on travelling to Vendée, Brittany and Normandy but he would always prefer the small idyllic villages of the South of France and , for the next 30 years, his paintings depicted his family members posing in gardens, by the rivers, or on the beach. He first settled in Saint Tropez and Sainte Maxime, then in Le Cannet in 1924, becoming neighbour with Dunoyer de Segonzac et Bonnard, and he remained there until his death in 1937.

Due to his close friendship with Matisse, Raoul Dufy, Valtat and Manguin, and the fact that he was exhibiting at the Salon d'Automne (which he cofounded with Matisse in 1903), quite often, Lebasque has been classified wrongly among the Fauves.

Hailed by critics and artists as " the painter of the good life ", he was acclaimed for his individuality, his delicate sense of light and his very personal touch. A style of his own, where " the artist's sensitivity merges within the inspiring light ", according to Guillaume Apollinaire's writings in 'l'Intransigeant', the review of the 1910 Salon.

Museums

Paris ; Orsay Museum , Modern Art Museum, Marmottant Museum

Angers, Nantes, Lyon, Strasbourg, Fine Art Museum

Geneva, Musée du Petit-Palais

Madrid, The Thyssen Bornemisza Collection

Ghent, The Royal Museum of Fine Art

Ottawa, the Museum of Fine Art

San Francisco, the Museum of Fine Arts

Indianapolis, the Museum of Art

Tokyo, the National Western Art Museum

Taiwan, Xi mei Museum

Bibliography

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Guillaume Apollinaire, " Chroniques d'Art, 1902-1918 ", Paris, NRF, Gallimard 1960

Dictionnaire de la peinture moderne, Paris, Hazan 1954

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