

Post-Impressionism
in
France



MILMO-PENNY FINE ART

Exhibition of Paintings

Post-Impressionism in France

Essays by
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Autumn Catalogue 2024

MILMO-PENNY FINE ART

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François-Alfred Delobbe 1835 – 1920



Corentine

1. Oil on canvas 24 x 29 inches.

Signed by the artist and dated 1890.

Stamped verso, Salon de 1890.

Exhibited: Paris, Salon des Artistes Français, 1st May 1890, number 726.

Literature: Salon de 1890, illustrated p.103.

Provenance: Christies, N.Y, lot 117, May 1998.

Famed for his sensitive portrayal of bare-footed women at work, this painting of Corentine shows Delobbe at his very best and illustrates his extraordinary ability to portray his subjects in a natural manner. Painted in the evening below a rain-filled sky, the narrative needs little explanation. However, the rock-strewn setting can hardly be described as pastureland and a herd of just three cattle is perhaps a stark reminder of the extent to which life has changed. Nevertheless, the shepherdess appears content and at ease. As a plein-air painting, the composition is equal to Bastien Lepage and, as a portrait, on a par with William-Adolphe Bouguereau.

The distinguished historian, Janet Whiteside, summarises the artist's career: "François-Alfred Delobbe, was a French painter in the Naturalist style. He was a student of Thomas Couture and William Bouguereau at the École des Beaux-arts, where he had been admitted at the age of sixteen, and had his debut at the Salon in 1861 with a portrait of his mother. Mythological, Orientalist and genre scenes in the Academic style were his original specialities. His career was truly launched when he obtained a commission to decorate the Town Hall of the recently annexed Fifteenth Arrondissement; one of only eight such commissions granted. From 1875 until his death, he and his family were regular visitors at the artists' colony in Concarneau, where he had been invited to come by its founder Alfred Guillou and in whose home they sometimes stayed. The soft light of the region inspired him to focus on painting children and young women, generally in peasant scenes. He would often sketch profusely during the summer, then finish the painting during the winter at his Paris studio. Most of his models came from the Concarneau region."

As a city dweller, Delobbe preferred the tranquillity of the surrounding villages. Lancriec is one of the nearest of these to Concarneau and, considering the costume, this may be the setting for the current work. Corentine is the feminine version of the Breton name, Corentin, with origins in the ancient Celtic and Norse languages.

Emma Herland 1855 - 1947



Le Matin d'une Noce

2. Oil on canvas 35 x 53 inches.

Signed by the artist and dated 1889.

Provenance: Pascal Maiche, Le Coudray, France, June 2023.

Exhibited: Paris, Salon des Artistes Français, 1889, no.1333.

Emma Herland is well known for her fine interiors and the current work might well be regarded as her masterpiece. Sunlight floods through the windows illuminating the white coiffes of the bride and her entourage, although an umbrella held by the seated woman suggests that rain might be expected. A small child looks on as final adjustments are made to the exquisite silk costume of the young bride. Another girl, perhaps an older sister, tidies garments lying over a chair in the background.

The groom's party remain outside, some standing on the stairs, as he delivers a posy for his bride through a door guarded by another young girl. The interior is rustic yet surprisingly elegant. A grandfather clock stands as high as the door and records the time as 9.55. A large dresser laden with colourful local ceramics stands in the background. Copper pots and pans adorn the walls. The scene evokes an air of prosperity suggesting that the bride might be the daughter of a wealthy Pont-Aven merchant.

Emma Herland 1855 - 1947



Meadow Flowers

3. Oil on canvas 15 x 18 inches.

Signed by the artist.

Provenance: Dorothee Galludec, Lorient, France, July 2019.

Born in Cherbourg in 1855, Emma Herland moved with her family to Brest where her father was stationed as a naval officer. She displayed a natural gift for painting as a child and later received formal training under Alexandre Fischer, Benjamin-Constant Lefebvre, Jules Lefebvre and at the Académie Julian, Paris, in 1887 and 1888. Considering this formal academic background, it is hardly surprising to find that her paintings display a quality unsurpassed by her contemporaries. She moved to Concarneau in 1884 and established a studio where she produced a number of large format market scenes. Her work records the Breton way of life in coastal scenes, church exteriors, washer-women and other genre and figurative work. The current painting is a good example. Three young girls, presumably sisters, pass the time assembling small posies of wildflowers, picked from the meadow as the rest of the family cut hay and gather it into stacks for drying in the sun. A narrow waterway runs along the meadow and leads the eye into the distance and a glimpse of the Atlantic on the horizon.

William John Hennessy 1839 – 1917



Gathering Apples, Normandy

4. Oil on canvas, 71 x 40 inches.

Signed by the artist and dated 1884,

Provenance: Sotheby's, London, May 2006, lot 29.

Exhibited: Autumn Exhibition, Manchester, 1884, number 361;

Milmo-Penny Fine Art, December 2006.

William John Hennessy was born at Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny on the 11th July 1839. His father, John Hennessy, was forced to flee his homeland following his involvement with the Young Ireland movement of 1848. He landed in Canada but moved to New York soon afterwards where his wife Catherine and their two sons joined him in 1849. Private tutors provided most of William's education. While still in his early teens he made his first drawings from life. In 1854 he gained entry to the National Academy of Design. His first exhibit was shown at the Academy three years later from an address at 87 Franklin Street. From 1860 onwards, his exhibition address was given as New York University. He was elected an associate of the Academy in 1861 and an academician in 1863. He presented *The Wood Gleaner*, an oil sketch on paper, as the representative example of his work, which he was obliged to present on election. The paintings and illustrations, which he produced from his New York studio during these years, won him considerable acclaim. His landscapes were particularly praised, as was his ability to paint a good sky.

In 1870, shortly after his second marriage, he moved to London and spent the summer months in Normandy where he had a residence close to the port of Honfleur. A school of painting, based in Saint Siméon's Inn, was already well established there. Corot, Isabey and Huet were amongst the first painters of the group. Boudin, who was born there, invited Courbet, Jongkind and Monet to join them. It was at this time that Boudin encouraged Monet to paint in the open air and it was this activity that led to the advent of Impressionism. Hennessy might have had this in mind when he painted *An Impressionist at Work; Scene in a Normandy Cider Orchard*, which he sent to the Royal Academy in 1881. Other Calvados works include *Normandy Pippin*, 1879; *In a Normandy Cider Orchard*, 1880 and *En Fête – Calvados*, 1882.

William John Hennessy 1839 – 1917



Shrimpers, Normandy

5. Oil on canvas, 24 x 48 inches.

Signed by the artist and dated 1886

Provenance: Sotheby's, London, May 2006, lot 30

Milmo-Penny Fine Art, March 2013

Scenes set in cider orchards recur many times in Hennessy's work. Perhaps the best known version is *Fête Day in a Cider Orchard, Normandy*, painted in 1878 and now in the Ulster Museum. A related work of 1877, *A Couple Seated Before an Inn*, shows a young man and woman seated at a bench with a pitcher of cider. A girl sits in the doorway wearing the traditional costume similar to that worn by the woman who bends down to gather apples in the painting on the previous page. Hennessy must have been conscious of Millet's work, when he drew this figure in her back-breaking pose. The apples are shaken from the tree by a man with a long pole. His pose and that of the stooping woman are reminiscent of Osborne's famous orchard scene painted in Quimperlé in the previous year. Hennessy was familiar with Osborne's painting or that they both borrowed from the same motifs. The scene portrays an idyllic lifestyle. The orchard is set behind a traditional thatched Norman farmhouse from which an old woman approaches with an empty basket. A dappled light falls on the rich and fertile grasses that grow amongst the trees. A young woman in more modern dress has filled her basket. She leans to one side against its weight as she carries it off to the cider press.

Shrimping groups working the tides on the coast of Normandy was a favourite topic in the coastal art colonies of the late 19th century. Hennessy's version is a fine example of the genre. Idyllic as it might appear to the viewer, the work was hard and the returns were slight. Nevertheless, coastal villagers working in family groups were well prepared to take advantage of seasonal opportunities such as this. Apart from the weight of the soaked nets, the shrimpers had to deal with the weight of the catch, which could be considerable on a good day. There is a slight stoop in the two main figures in the current work as they lead the retreat barefooted from the incoming tide with apparently full baskets. A Steamer on the horizon and distant headland set the perspective as the group pass the sad skeleton of a wreck, reminiscent of Nataniel Hone's *Derelict* on St. Marnock's Sands.

Théophile Louis Deyrolle 1844-1923



Repos des Faneuses

6. Oil on canvas 36 x 50 inches

Signed by the artist

Title inscribed on label verso; Chenu, 5 rue de Terasse, Paris, no.159

Packers label verso, Ferret, Neveu; Roubaix Tourcoing 1901

Exhibited:

Paris, Salon des Artistes Francais, 1898, no.670, illustrate p.111

Literature:

Charles-Guy Le Paul, La bibliothèque des Arts Lausanne, Paris, 1983. Illustrated page 13;

Judy Le Paul, 'Gauguin and the impressionists at Pont-Aven', Abbeville Press, New York, 1987, illus. p.13.

Regarded by many as one of his best works, *Repos des Faneuses* is a great example of Deyrolle's depiction of everyday life in Brittany. He was a jovial painter and a terrific storyteller through his work. Four harvesters sit in a circle at the end of a day's harvesting; five sisters perhaps overlooked by the eldest. One holds a pitch fork, another hold a rake. One holds on to a kettle, which sits beside their picnic. It appears that there are two different conversations going on and that the elder sister might not approve of what she is hearing. In the background, the evening light of sunset falls through an orchard on to a lush meadow surrounded by forestry. The red head-dress on the harvester to the right adds vital warmth to the painting, a device established by Corot and often borrowed by the Breton School.

Théophile Louis Deyrolle 1844-1923



Pardon Haut

7. Oil on canvas 32 x 46 inches.

Signed by the artist and on a label verso

Inscribed with title verso 'Pardon Haut'

La Lutte Bretonne, an alternative title of more recent times, tells a far more intriguing story. Translated, *The Breton Struggle*, might well be a play on words. However, Deyrolle's original title, *Pardon Haut*, is inscribed verso and is more meaningful. Painted about 1890, the setting is a field known as 'Le Dérout Lollochon' situated on high ground above Pont-Aven. According to Andre Cariou, there is therefore the religious feast at the level of the church *below in the village* and the profane feast with the combatant struggles *above*, hence the *High Pardon*. This particular Pardon takes place about the 20th September every year and to this day is traditionally followed by the wrestling tournament. The sheep held by the young boy in our painting goes to the winner of the tournament. The same field appears in several paintings by Gauguin and Emile Bernard painted another version of the wrestling match, *Les Lutteurs a Pont-Aven*.