

Gustave Loiseau

His life & work

* 3 October 1865 Paris

† 10 October 1935 Paris

Gustave Loiseau was a french Post-Impressionist painter, remembered above all for his sea and river landscapes, as well as scenes of Paris streets.

Biography

Brought up in Paris and Pontoise by parents who owned a butcher shop, Loiseau served as an apprentice with a decorator who was a friend of the family. After suffering an attack of typhoid that brought him near to death, he explained to his parents his aspirations to become an artist. His parents, realizing that their son was unlikely to change his mind, soon sold their business and retired to Pontoise.

In 1887, when an inheritance from his grandmother allowed him to concentrate on painting, he enrolled at the École des arts décoratifs where he studied life-drawing. Loiseau established himself in Montmartre in 1887; first in the rue Myrrha, and then at La Maison du Trappeur in the rue Ravignan. Loiseau was one of the first artists to occupy this house, which would later achieve international fame as the Bateau-Lavoir, where Picasso lived and worked in his early career.

However, a year later he left the school after an argument with his teacher. He then invited the landscape painter Fernand Just Quignon (1854-1941) to tutor him in painting.

Although Loiseau found Quignon's luminous and airy painting appealing, he was disappointed by both his approach and his methods. He felt that Quignon's process of painting in his studio from sketches produced works that lacked spontaneity, freshness and intensity. Loiseau, with his totally different method of painting en plein air, found it inconceivable that a canvas should not be painted directly from the subject.

On Quignon's advice, Loiseau traveled to Pont-Aven for the first time in May of 1890, taking a room in the cheapest pension in the village, Marie-Jeanne Gloanec's auberge at the end of the town square.

It was at the Pension Gloanec that Loiseau met the artists Maxime Maufra and Henry Moret (1856-1913). He and Maufra, with only a four-year difference in age, had much in common and quickly became friends. Sharing a very similar artistic outlook, Loiseau was from the outset, however, naturally more inclined toward Impressionism than was Maufra. Under the influence of Gauguin's Breton period of Synthetism and Cloisonism, Maufra turned his back on the theories of Divisionism that Loiseau was following. Loiseau commented that "in many instances the juxtaposition of spots of color in the Divisionist manner gives an accurate and powerful interpretation of the effects of light."

After experimenting with Pointillism, he adopted his own approach to Post-Impressionism, painting landscapes directly from nature. Both Moret and Maufra urged Loiseau to exhibit at the Salon des Indépendants in 1891 and 1892. Also in 1891, Maufra introduced Loiseau to Le Barc de Boutteville, an art dealer in the rue Le Pelletier in Paris who was very supportive of young artists. It was in this gallery that the Rouen collector François Depeaux became the first to discover Loiseau's paintings. Depeaux, who was a famous collector and a close friend of Claude Monet, bought two of Loiseau's canvases.

Upon his return to Paris after spending the summer of 1894 in Brittany, Loiseau contacted Paul Durand-Ruel, the prestigious Paris art dealer who represented Claude Monet and was the leading art dealer of the Impressionists.

By 1894, Impressionism was well established and was beginning to sell and attract attention in America as well. Durand-Ruel began to handle Loiseau's work in 1894, at which time he terminated his exhibiting at Le Barc de Boutteville. Loiseau's relationship with Durand-Ruel enabled him to travel more extensively and discover the regions and subjects that would inspire him for the remainder of his career.

In the spring of 1895, Loiseau moved to Moret-sur-Loing and began painting the hills and rivers of the region. From that time on, Loiseau was to be one of the most sincere interpreters of the French landscape.

He journeyed through Normandy, Brittany, and the Dordogne in summer, returning to the Île-de-France each winter. From his paintings it is possible to follow his movements.

He painted many works in Pontoise, where he lived every winter. In 1904, he had a fine studio built in his garden there, and many of his canvases are views from his studio. After 1899, he also painted frequently in Saint-Cyr-du-Vaudreuil on the banks of the Eure, where he produced an impressive series of poplars, reminiscent of the works of Monet. He spent time in the river valleys the Eure, the Seine, and the Yonne, and in Normandy he painted in Dieppe, Fécamp, and Etretat.

He also returned faithfully almost every year to Brittany. He visited Saint-Herbot and Le Huelgoat in 1903, Cap Fréhel in 1905 and 1906 and Douarnenez-Tréboul in 1913.

His technique changed during the 1910s known as "en treillis", "touche croisée" or cross-hatching, which gave his works a special quality, now recognized as his speciality.

Toward the end of his life, while maintaining his studio on the quai du Pothuis in Pontoise, Loiseau took another studio on the quai d'Anjou in Paris, where he painted views of the city from his studio window as he had done in Pont-Aven.

Loiseau died in Paris, in 1935.

Loiseau's paintings, revealing his passion for the seasons from the beginning of spring to the harvests later in the autumn, often depict the same scene as time goes by. Series of this kind, which include many different types of landscapes, are reminiscent of Claude Monet.

Artworks in museum collections

Drawing

L'Isle-Adam ; Musée Louis Senlecq
- Bois d'Ennery 1889, Numéro d'inventaire SD0114

Paintings

Boston, Massachusetts, USA, Museum of Fine Arts

Buffalo, New York, USA, Albright-Knox Art Gallery

Cambridge, England, The Fitzwilliam Museum

Dieppe ; Château- Musée

- Fin d'automne, rivière d'Eure au Vaudreuil, Numéro d'inventaire 961.1.2 ; 3961 a (MD)
- Tournedos sur Seine, neige, givre et brume, Numéro d'inventaire 961.1.5 ; 3961 d (MD)

Geneva, Switzerland, Le Petit Palais - Musée d'Art Moderne

Kansas City, Missouri, USA, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

New York, USA, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Oxford, England, The Ashmolean Museum

Paris ; Musée d'Orsay

- L'EURE EN HIVER, Numéro d'inventaire RF 1977 228 ; AM 1961 P

Pont-Aven, France, Musée de Pont-Aven

Rennes ; Musée des Beaux-Arts

- LA POINTE DU JARS AU CAP FREHEL ; LE CAP FREHEL Numéro d'inventaire INV 52.4.1

Rouen ; Musée des Beaux-Arts

- UNE RUE A MORTAIN, NEIGE,. Numéro d'inventaire 909.1.31

St. Petersburg, Russia, State Hermitage Museum

Taiwan, Chi-Mei Museum

Versailles ; Musée Lambinet

- Champ de blé en normandie, Numéro d'inventaire 91.9.24

- Coupe de fruits, Numéro d'inventaire 91.9.25

- Pont suspendu de Triel, Numéro d'inventaire 91.9.28

- Pont-Aven, effet de Soleil, Numéro d'inventaire 91.9.26

- Rivière charriant des glaçons, Numéro d'inventaire 91.9.23

- Rue de la haute Vieille Tour à Rouen, Numéro d'inventaire 91.9.27

Exhibitions

9 mai - 27 septembre 1981, Gustave Loiseau, Musée Pissarro, Pointoise, France

15 Novembre 1985 - 17 Janvier 1986, Gustave Loiseau, Didier Imbert Fine Art, Paris, France.

Bibliography

Thiébaud-Sisson, Gustave Loiseau, exhibition catalog, Georges Petit, Paris, 1930

Gustave Loiseau, exhibition catalog, Musée de Pont-Aven, 1964

Mady Epstein, "Gustave Loiseau," Vision sur les arts, Béziers, 1975

Jean Melias Kyriazi, Gustave Loiseau, historiographe de la Seine, Bibliothèque des Arts, Paris, 1978

Gustave Loiseau, exhibition catalog, Musée Pissarro, Pointoise, 1981

Rétrospective Gustave Loiseau, 1865-1935, exhibition catalog, Didier Imbert Fine Art, Paris, 1985