

PAUL
DURAND-RUEL



AND THE TWILIGHT
OF IMPRESSIONISM

Until well into the 19th century the principal showcase in France for artists' work continued to be the Paris Salon, a major art exhibition in which a jury of academic artists was responsible for selecting the works to be exhibited, which consequently reflected official taste. As a result of this system numerous creators were excluded from the art market. The growing presence of galleries and dealers from the decade of the 1870 completely changed this situation and Paul Durand-Ruel made a fundamental contribution in this sense.

Visionary and audacious, Paul Durand-Ruel devised working methods that were highly innovative for the time. He acquired exclusive rights to his artists' work, purchased their entire output, paid them on a monthly basis and supported them at auctions and through the organisation of individual and group exhibitions at his galleries in Paris and New York and his other European and American spaces.

It took Durand-Ruel very little time to grasp the mechanisms of the market and the importance of personal relationships with artists, which he nurtured through visits to their studios. This allowed him to advise them on the themes to develop in their works, techniques and how to manage their careers. In his dealings with the Post-Impressionist generation he followed the same methods that he had established with the previous two, all based on mutual trust, such as the fact that there were never written contracts between the two parties. Durand-Ruel facilitated these artists' daily lives through setting up current accounts for them at the bank which allowed them to pay certain bills: purchases of material, rent, travel and expenses of all kinds.

After Durand-Ruel's death in 1922 the subsequent generations of the family maintained this commitment until the last of the galleries, the Paris space, closed in 1974.

PAUL DURAND-RUEL

In 1865 Paul Durand-Ruel took over the gallery which his father Jean had founded and over the following years he became one of the best known dealers in Paris. Durand-Ruel devoted much of his life to fostering and championing modern art in opposition to the defenders of academic painting. At the outset of his career he focused on supporting painters such as Eugène Delacroix and Gustave Courbet, in addition to the artists of the so-called “Barbizon School”, such as Camille Corot, Charles-François Daubigny, Jean-François Daubigny and François Millet. Soon after that period Durand-Ruel embarked on what is considered to be his most famous professional endeavour: the promotion of Impressionist artists including Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir and Camille Pissarro. In the last decade of the 19th century, by which time those painters had finally achieved public and critical recognition, he began a new (and less well known) undertaking which would be continued by his children, supporting and disseminating the work of a new generation of painters: Henry Moret, Maxime Maufra, Gustave Loiseau, Georges d’Espagnat and Albert André.

The heirs to Impressionism, these painters were active in a dynamic context in which other innovative artists and trends were opening up new directions, coexisting and establishing dialogues. Everything found its place here, from the personal experiences of Vincent van Gogh and Paul Cézanne to the Neo-Impressionist experimentation of Georges Seurat and Paul Signac, the Synthetist investigations of Paul Gauguin and Émile Bernard at Pont-Aven, and the contributions of the Nabis painters. All these

figures have traditionally been grouped under the heading of “the Post-Impressionist generation”. The rich complexity of this artistic climate undoubtedly had a liberating effect on these five painters. Some were very close to Impressionism and the style of the Pont-Aven circle, for example the landscape and marine painters Moret, Maufra and Loiseau, whereas D’Espagnat and André favoured genre scenes, portraits and decorative painting close to that of the Nabis.

The exhibition *Paul Durand-Ruel and the twilight of Impressionism* has a dual aim. Firstly, that of introducing the wider public to the remarkable art dealer and patron Paul Durand-Ruel, who promoted the art of his time both from his Paris gallery and from the spaces that he would later open in New York, London and Brussels. Secondly, contextualizing and reassessing the work of these five artists of the new generation whom he decided to support, with the aim of assigning them the position they merit within the history of art.



PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR

Paul Durand-Ruel

1910

Oil on canvas

Paul Durand-Ruel met Pierre-Auguste Renoir around 1871 through Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro, marking the start of a relationship between the dealer and artist that would go far beyond the purely professional. Between 1876 and 1882 Durand-Ruel commissioned Renoir to paint portraits of his children but the artist did not portray the dealer himself until 1910, by which date Durand-Ruel's reputation as a gallerist was fully established. This work reflects the friendship between the two after almost forty years of unwavering loyalty. It is the only portrait of Durand-Ruel by an artist.

Private collection



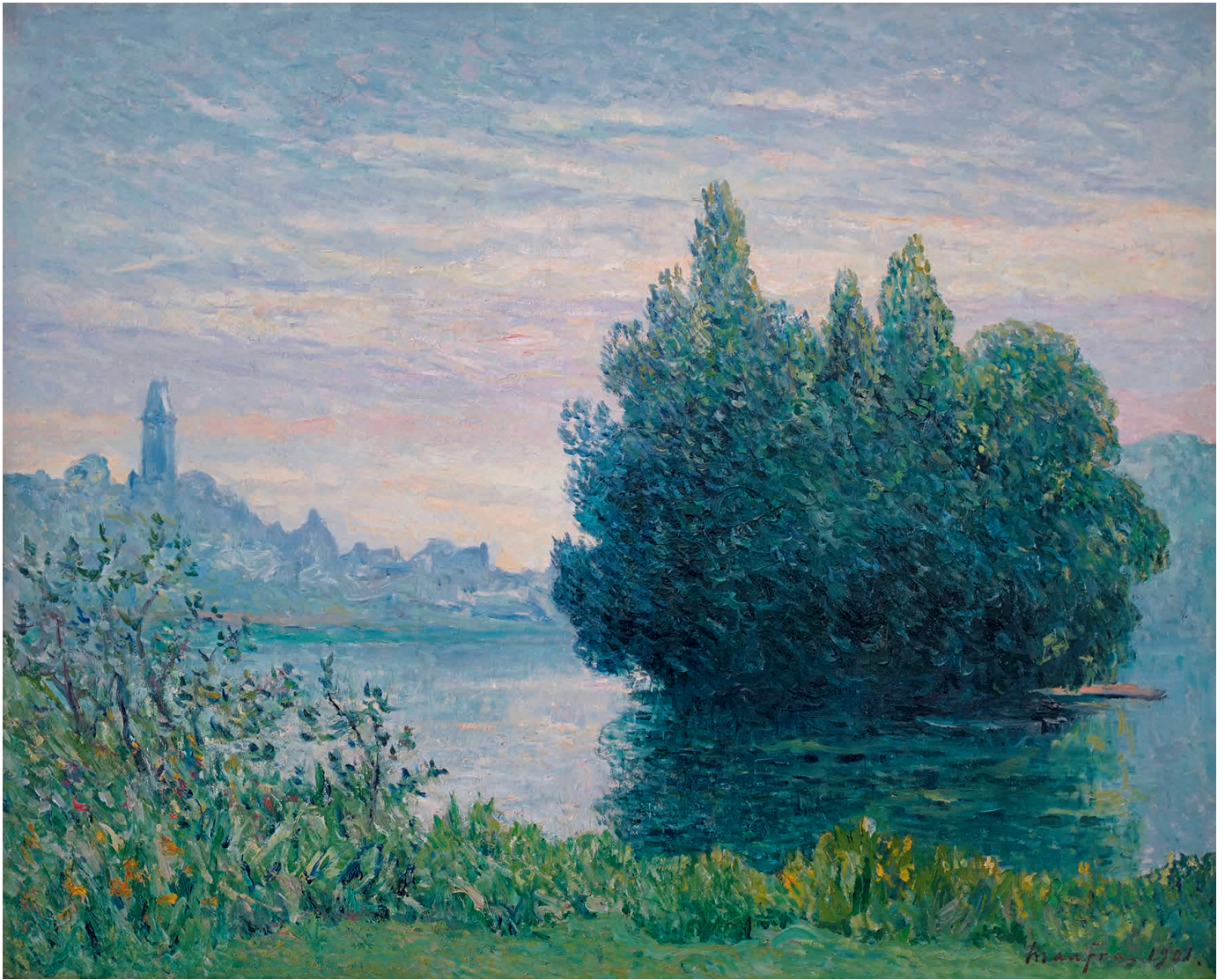
GUSTAVE LOISEAU

The green Rocks

c. 1893

Oil on canvas

In 1897 Paul Durand-Ruel began buying works from Gustave Loiseau and the following year offered him his first exhibition, which was extremely successful. During their thirty-two years' collaboration, the dealer acquired more than eleven hundred works by the artist and organised a total of nine solo exhibitions for him. In 1900 Loiseau exhibited at Durand-Ruel's gallery in New York with his friends Henry Moret and Maxime Maufra.



MAXIME MAUFRA

Dawn at Champagne-sur-Oise

1901

Oil on canvas

Maxime Maufra and Paul Durand-Ruel met in 1894, possibly at the gallery Le Barc de Boutteville. In 1896 the dealer organised Maufra's first exhibition at his Paris gallery, which led to a professional relationship that would last for nineteen years. During that period the dealer bought seven hundred works from the painter and organised seven exhibitions at his galleries in Paris and New York.



HENRY MORET

Haymaking

1891

Oil on canvas

In 1895 Paul Durand-Ruel became interested in the work of Henry Moret, with whom he established a nineteen-year collaboration that included the organisation of six solo exhibitions, two of them at his New York gallery. In total, the dealer bought more than six hundred works from Moret. In 1959, on the occasion of the retrospective exhibition on the artist which Durand-Ruel organised at his Paris gallery, the critic Henry Hugault wrote: “In Henry Moret there is all of Brittany, and in Brittany all of Henry Moret.”

Private collection



ALBERT ANDRÉ

Women sewing

c. 1898

Oil on cardboard painted on the reverse

The collaboration between the Durand-Ruel galerie and Albert André lasted sixty-one years and went far beyond that of a purely professional relationship. During that time the dealer bought nearly eight hundred works from the painter. He also organised sixteen exhibitions at his galleries in Paris and New York. André's first solo exhibition at Durand-Ruel's Paris gallery took place in 1904.



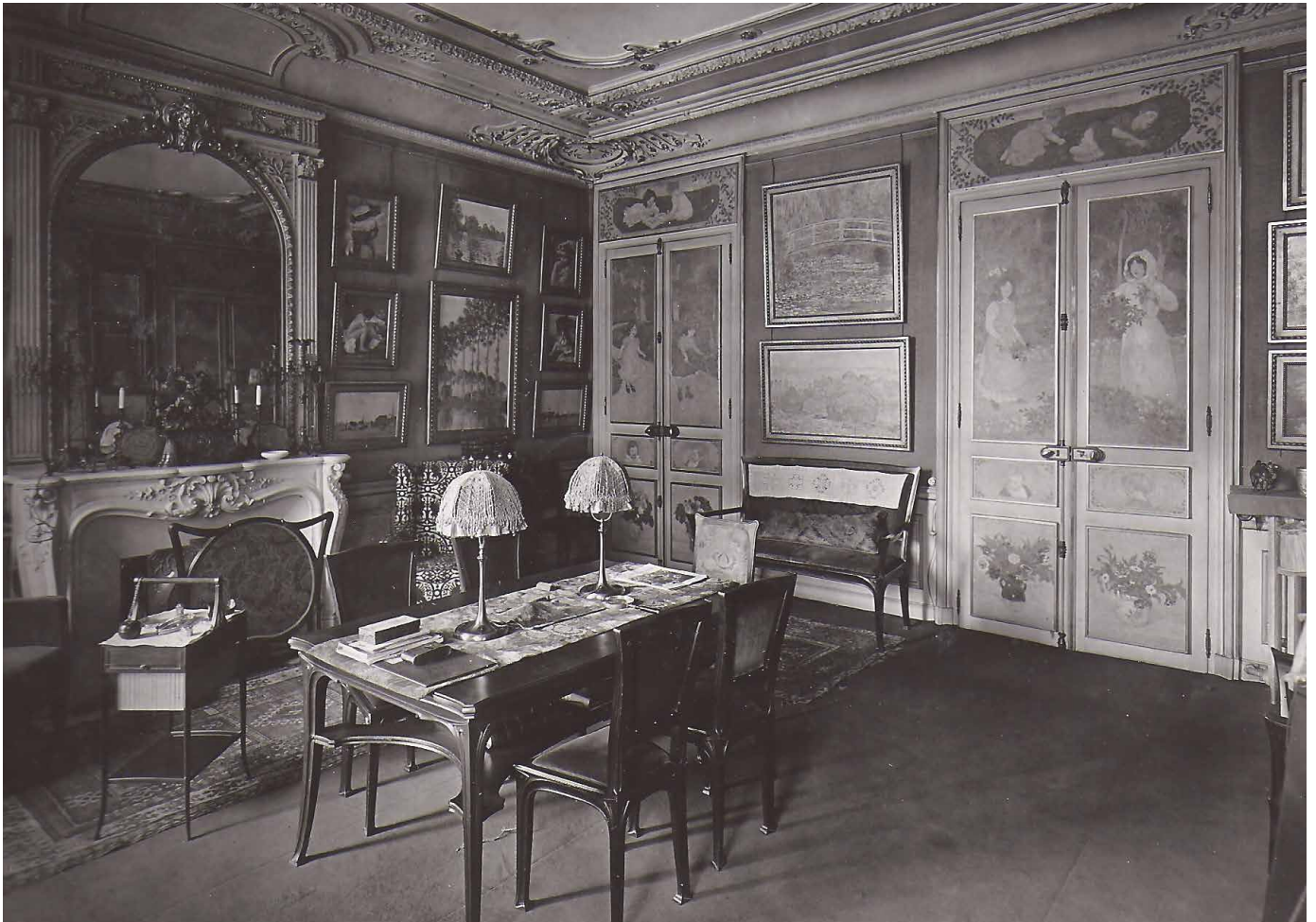
GEORGES D'ESPAGNAT

Girl at the Window, the climbing Rose

c. 1901

Oil on canvas

Paul Durand-Ruel met Georges d'Espagnat after seeing his work at the gallery Le Barc de Bouteville in 1894. In 1898 he organised the artist's first solo exhibition at his gallery on rue Lafitte in Paris. During the twenty years of their collaboration the dealer acquired five hundred works by d'Espagnat and organised seven exhibitions for him. Their collaboration was interrupted in 1920 when the painter refused to continue with the exclusivity clause that tied him to the gallerist.



GEORGES D'ESPAGNAT

Panels from the doors of Joseph Durand-Ruel's drawing room at 37, rue de Rome, Paris

1900

Oil on canvas

In 1883 Paul Durand-Ruel commissioned Claude Monet to decorate the doors of the drawing room of his Paris apartment at 35, rue de Rome. In 1889 his son Joseph, who lived in the same building as his father, similarly commissioned Georges d'Espagnat and Albert André. The former was responsible for the drawing room doors in Joseph Durand-Ruel's home, on display in this gallery, while the latter decorated the dining room doors, shown further on in this exhibition. These double doors, each consisting of seven decorative panels (in the case of D'Espagnat of children playing and in Albert André's of women in an exterior) reveal the trust that Joseph Durand-Ruel placed in the two artists. D'Espagnat and André's doors shared space with paintings and decorations by Monet and other works by Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro and Paul Cézanne, visible in old photographs of the drawing room and dining room. In these works, two generations of artists with a similar approach to painting led the way towards artistic modernity.

Private collection

GUSTAVE LOISEAU

Following the advice of one of his teachers, in 1890 Gustave Loiseau travelled from Paris to Pont-Aven in Brittany where he met and established close friendships with Henry Moret and Maxime Maufra. In Pont-Aven all of them associated with Paul Gauguin who, together with Émile Bernard and Paul Sérusier, developed the Synthetist style (characterised by broad, vigorous brushstrokes and large planes of pure colour which eliminate the sensation of depth), in some cases combined with the Cloisonnist approach (outlining the forms with black lines to produce compositions reminiscent of stained glass). Although this style did not significantly influence Loiseau, who preferred the dynamism of the Impressionist brushstroke, some of his early works reveal certain echoes of it in the force of the colour, the purer tones and the simplification of the modelling, as evident, for example, in *The green Rocks*.

A considerable part of Loiseau's work focuses on depictions of the landscapes of the Seine and its tributaries, the Brittany coastline and the English Channel, following in the footsteps of the Impressionists. Unlike those artists, however, Loiseau avoided the intense light of the midday sun and worked in the early morning or late afternoon, thus giving prominence to atmospheric effects: the pure white of the clouds splashing the blue of the sky in *Tournedos-sur-Seine*, or the mist that prevails in *The frozen Eure* and *Étretat, L'Aiguille* and the *Porte d'Aval*. Loiseau's close affinity with Impressionism is also evident in his bustling scenes of urban life in Paris and Rouen, many of them painted at different times of the year and thus following the practice of his masters.



GUSTAVE LOISEAU

Étretat, L'Aiguille and the Porte d'Aval

1902

Oil on canvas

The cliff at Étretat in Normandy was already one of Claude Monet's favourite motifs and he painted it at different times of the day. Gustave Loiseau was a follower of the Impressionist group, with a type of brushstroke that came increasingly close to Monet and Camille Pissarro's. During his walks in this coastal region he sought to capture its fleeting light.



GUSTAVE LOISEAU

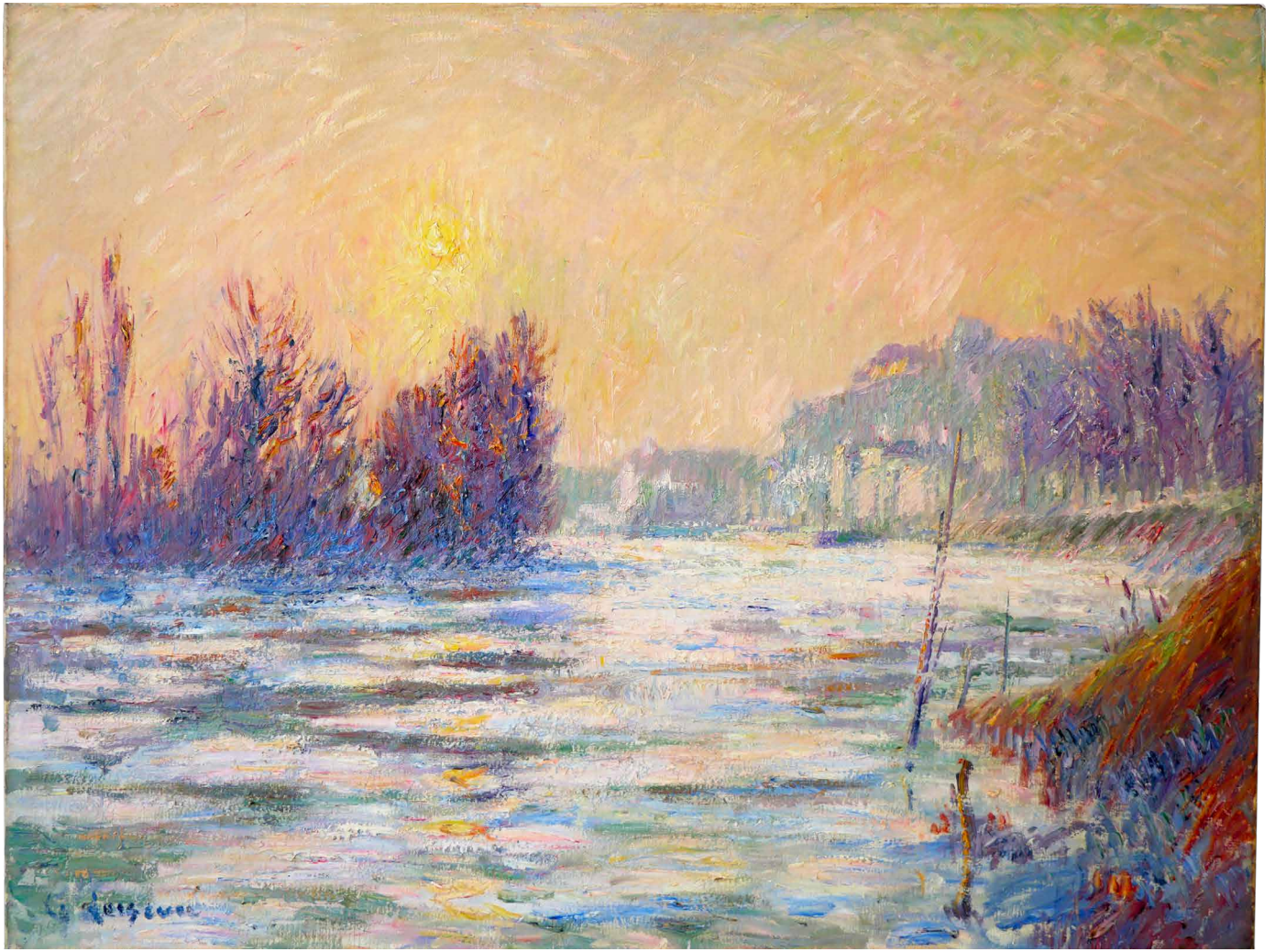
The Place de la Haute-Vieille-Tour, in Rouen

c. 1929

Oil on canvas

Depicting the same motif at different times of the day was a common practice among the Impressionist painters. Gustave Loiseau adopted this formula, as seen in this view (and in its companion displayed in this gallery) of Rouen Cathedral from the square. In 1895 Monet exhibited his famous series on the cathedral at Durand-Ruel's Paris gallery. Loiseau undoubtedly knew that series, as revealed by his own views. Although he painted them around 1929, he interpreted the scenes and their light with a delicate brushstroke typical of the masters he so admired: Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro and Alfred Sisley.

Private collection



GUSTAVE LOISEAU

The frozen Eure

c. 1914

Oil on canvas

Equipped with an easel and brushes, Gustave Loiseau frequently painted the River Eure and the poplars on its banks. The early hours of the morning, when the frost had not yet melted, was among his favourite time, possibly due to the evocative atmosphere created by the misty luminosity at that hour. Loiseau was one of the painters who most focused on the course of the Seine and its tributaries such as the Eure, devoting numerous works to them throughout his career.

MAXIME MAUFRA

The work of Maxime Maufra, who had been captivated in his youth by the art of J. W. M. Turner during a trip to London in 1883, focused largely on the depiction of the coastal landscapes of Brittany and Normandy. In 1890 he left the family business to focus on his artistic career. It was at this point that he decided to settle in Brittany, firstly in Pont-Aven and later in Le Pouldu, where he came into contact with Paul Gauguin and that artist's Synthetist theories which did not, however, significantly influence his work. Despite this, Gauguin showed himself to be aware of Maufra's abilities: "You and I follow different paths; persist with yours, which is good."

Maufra was an inseparable friend of both Gustave Loiseau and Henry Moret, with whom he toured the coasts of Brittany. In his work he aimed to capture every aspect of the landscape, an aspiration that at times brought him close to Synthetism, as evident in the solidity of his brushwork. Maufra's interest in the effects of light and his choice of subjects derive from Impressionism. In his emphatically structured compositions, in which the human figure is barely present, Maufra's gaze often focuses on the rocks and sea, leaving little space for the sky. This is the case with *The three Cliffs at Saint-Jean-du-Doigt*, *Rocks at Belle-Île-en-Mer* and *Holborn Head (Scrabster)*, *Thurso Bay (Scotland)*.

Maufra was also interested in showing the simplicity of Breton customs and the purity of the region's lifestyle through the labours of fishing, as well as the modernity of Paris as manifested during the celebration of the Universal Exhibition of 1900.



MAXIME MAUFRA

Effect of Snow by the Sea in Brittany

1892

Oil on canvas

In 1892 Maufra painted this scene in a panoramic format and with a somewhat more traditional approach than that employed by Claude Monet in the paintings of snow he produced at *Étretat* between 1868 and 1869. Maufra took advantage of the effects of dawn and dusk light, using them to create a slightly mysterious atmosphere typical of a maritime region in which the fleeting nature of the of light generates very variable and surprising atmospheric effects.



MAXIME MAUFRA

Rocks at Belle-Île-en-Mer

c. 1905

Oil on canvas

Maxime Maufra painted on Belle-Île-en-Mer, the largest of the Breton islands, on numerous occasions, particularly from 1903 when he moved to Kerhostin in Saint-Pierre-Quiberon, just fifteen kilometres from Belle-Île. As Monet had done in 1886, Maufra recorded the island's untamed coastline – its powerful rock formations and wild green sea – in compositions that generally leave little room for the sky.



MAXIME MAUFRA

The three Cliffs at Saint-Jean-du-Doigt

1894

Oil on canvas

In 1894 Maxime Maufra met Paul Gauguin in Le Pouldu, Brittany. Shortly after, and reflecting his practice as an itinerant artist, he explored the north coast of Finistère where he painted this work. The famous cliffs at Saint-Jean-du-Doigt partly conceal the bay of Saint-Michel-en-Grève, delicately suggested in the background. Maufra used pure colours applied to flat surfaces, such as the green in the upper part of the cliffs or the white of the foam of the waves breaking against the rocks. By doing so he came close to the Synthetism inherited from Gauguin.



MAXIME MAUFRA

Nocturnal Fantasy. Universal Exhibition of 1900

1900

Oil on canvas

This nocturnal view from the Seine celebrates the modernity of Paris, lit up – thanks to the relatively recent invention of the electric light bulb – for the Universal Exhibition of 1900, which was visited by more than fifty million people. The scene, which is only disturbed by a boat with anonymous passengers and which emits a cloud of steam that appears pink in the artificial light, is a hymn to progress and a fine example of the use of black by a Post-Impressionist artist.

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Reims. Legado Henry Vasnier, 11/1907

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HENRY MORET

Trained in Paris, Henry Moret showed an early interest in landscape painting, as evident in his first works which are indebted to the Barbizon School. From 1888, after he moved to Pont-Aven and came into contact with Gauguin, his work underwent an important transformation, visible in the introduction of Breton themes depicted with flat colours and defined outlines in a reflection of Synthetist theories. Dating from this period are *Meadow in Brittany* and *Haymaking*, compositions that make use of the pink and green that would come to characterise his palette.

In stylistic terms, Moret's work varied between Synthetism and Impressionism. After he met Durand-Ruel and following his advice, the artist reduced the size of his canvases and softened his palette in order to give greater commercial appeal to his paintings, which evolved towards a style increasingly close to an Impressionist sensibility.

Most of Moret's works focus on the coastline and islands of Brittany. After a stay on the island of Groix, in 1894 he moved to Doëlan, to a house facing the estuary from where he could watch the activity in the fishing port. These compositions, characterised by a fragmented brushstroke and very rich chromatic range, reveal an awareness of the ephemeral: the light as it changes over the course of the day and the different tones characteristic of the seasons of the year. Good examples are *Trou de l'Enfer, Groix*; *The Island of Groix* and *The Port of Brigneau*.



HENRY MORET

Meadow in Brittany

1890

Oil on canvas

The composition of this landscape, structured through stepped planes, is reminiscent of Gauguin's work from this period. Making their first appearance here are the intense greens and pinks which would characterise Henry Moret throughout his career and which are usually associated with happiness. For the Pont-Aven painters who followed the example of Gauguin himself, Brittany signified escape in search of purity and essence, a place remote from industrialisation and "human pollution".



HENRY MORET

Waiting for the Fishermen

1894

Oil on canvas

Both the subject and the Symbolist atmosphere with which Henry Moret imbued this canvas reflect the fundamental principles of the Pont-Aven School's depictions of Brittany. Here the principal motif is located in the background: the sea agitated by the foam of the waves, symbolising the anguish of the people anxiously scanning the horizon from the shore as they await the fishermen's return. The decorative nature of the scene, however, avoids any potential miserabilism.



HENRY MORET

The Island of Groix

c. 1898

Oil on canvas

Henry Moret was the quintessential painter of the island of Groix in Brittany, which he regularly visited from 1891 onwards. Employing an Impressionist technique based on small juxtaposed brushstrokes, he captured the force of the waves, while the style of painting the fertile land on the cliff top with a grazing cow is closer to Synthetism. The composition, structured through planes, and the heightened colours refer to the aesthetics of the Japanese prints that notably influenced the Pont-Aven painters.



HENRY MORET

Dusk in Doëlan

1902

Oil on canvas

In 1894 Henry Moret settled in the coastal town of Doëlan where he was able to give free rein to his Impressionist-derived interest in depicting the changing effects of light according to the time of day and season of the year. This work reflects that interest in its actual title; in addition, Moret's tendency to use primary colours and their complementaries, applied with a simultaneously fragmented and saturated brushstroke, refer to the Post-Impressionist approach.

ALBERT ANDRÉ

A multifaceted creator, Albert André was a painter, decorator, draughtsman, illustrator and museum curator, as well as the first biographer of Auguste Renoir. Unconcerned for the Impressionist aesthetic, like his friend D'Espagnat he preferred genre scenes and decorative painting.

André's work was initially close to that of the Nabis painters such as Maurice Denis, Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard, with whom he associated in the last decade of the 19th century. Those artists based their concept of art on the Synthetism inherited from Gauguin and on the expression of a reality which on occasions went beyond the visible through an exaltation of colour. The decorative nature of this trend is evident in one of André's most notable works, *Woman with Peacocks*. As a decorator, he was commissioned by Joseph Durand-Ruel to paint the dining room doors of his Paris apartment.

André's later work reveals a greater interest in intimism, expressed in family scenes and interiors, for example *Woman at her toilette* and *Interior with Piano and Violin*. Over the years his brushwork became more restrained, seeking a rhythm increasingly oriented towards classicism as if, in the midst of the rise of the avant-garde movements, he wished to anchor himself in reality. From 1917 onwards, living between Paris, Marseille and Laudun, André focused on depictions of Mediterranean landscapes and scenes of daily life in which pastel greens and pinks predominate, as in *The Arbour* and *Montmartre, View of the Boulevard de Clichy*.



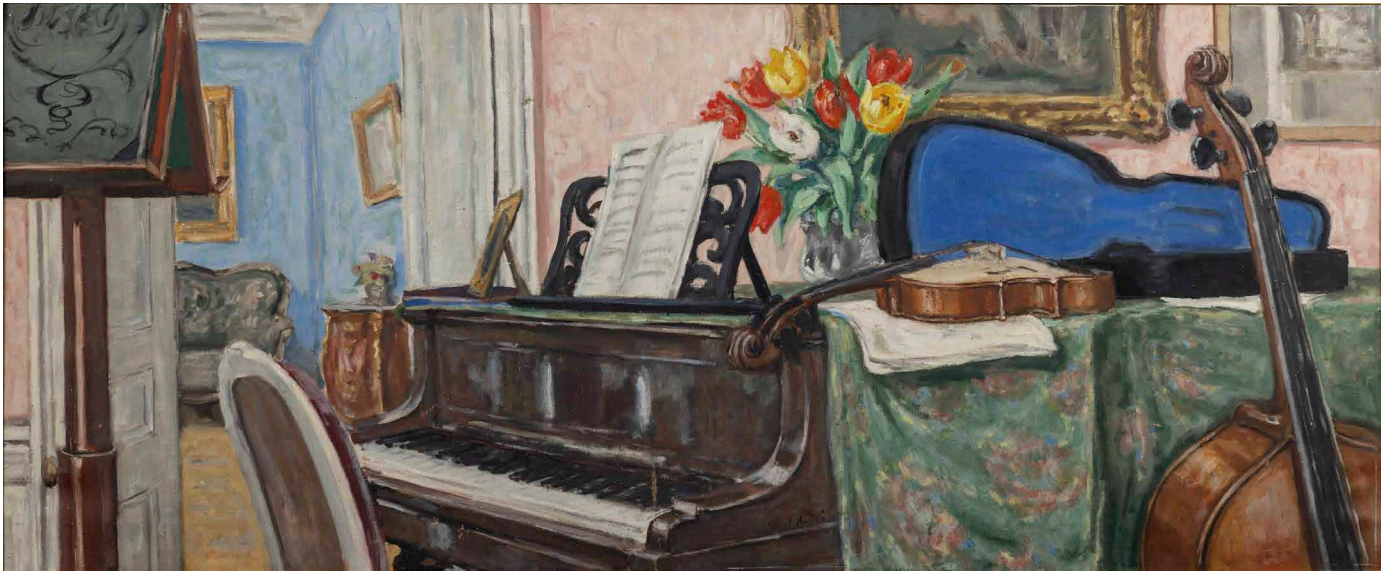
ALBERT ANDRÉ

Woman with Peacocks

1895

Oil on canvas

Although Albert André never joined the Nabis he shared tastes and interests with those artists, such as the use of a decorative style, the absence of depth and a preference for bright colours, as evident in *Woman with Peacocks*. The manner of treating the subject also corresponds to Nabis Symbolism: the use of a curved line, which gives the work a dreamlike air, and the exotic note created by the lush vegetation and the peacocks' plumage evoke the garden of Eden.



ALBERT ANDRÉ

Interior with Piano and Violin

c. 1925-1930

Oil on canvas

Albert André was a friend of the Nabis painters Édouard Vuillard and Pierre Bonnard and shared their taste for interior scenes. In addition, and in a way comparable to Edgar Degas in his compositions, André habitually located the principal motifs (in this case the piano, violin and lamp) in the immediate foreground, abruptly truncating them in order to immediately introduce the viewer into the scene while also creating greater depth. Intimist themes began to replace the purely decorative approach of André previous paintings, which had gradually evolved towards classicism.



ALBERT ANDRÉ

On the Quayside of the Old Port, Marseille

1917

Oil on canvas

In 1917 Albert André rented a house with his wife Maleck in Endoume near Marseille. There he focused on the depiction of the surrounding landscape and also on the daily life of the city, as in this scene which evokes the bustle of a normal day in the port of Marseille. At this period André's painting left behind his avant-garde experiences and moved towards a new classicism in which he returned to the use of traditional perspective, which he had previously abandoned.

Private collection

GEORGES D'ESPAGNAT

Like Albert André, throughout his career Georges d'Espagnat was interested in genre scenes and interiors rather than landscape. A self-taught painter, his works are the result of a forceful, liberated art indebted to Impressionism, as evident in *The Train Engine*.

D'Espagnat's paintings, which were not always executed outdoors as he often used large canvases, acquired an increasingly decorative character in line with the art of the Nabis, as evident in *Autumn Afternoon*. That work and *Bay at Le Lavandou* and *The Reins* are examples of how D'Espagnat used bright, intense colours, thus anticipating some of the aims of the Fauve painters. As such, his work assimilated the lessons of the Impressionists and the Nabis and heralded the freedom of Fauvism.

D'Espagnat's palette, however, became more muted after his trips to the South of France in the late 19th century, where he frequently visited Auguste Renoir. There, the light and atmosphere of the Mediterranean coastline differed from that of the north, as he himself noted in 1901: "Here the light is implacable. [...] Here everything is light-filled: colours or drawings. Works like *Simone* or *The Reprimand*, with their strongly constructed compositions, limited number of figures and simplified backgrounds, reveal D'Espagnat's progression towards a greater intimism. The portrait of his sleeping son Bernard, a work of this type, undoubtedly refers to the joy and solidity of Renoir's forms in his late phase.



GEORGES D'ESPAGNAT

Suburban Station

c. 1896-1897

Oil on canvas

In the second half of the 19th century the Impressionists and their followers particularly favoured the motif of train stations, together with busy streets and the Universal Exhibitions, all seen as symbols of modernity and progress. In this work by Georges d'Espagnat an elegant woman accompanied by a child (the painter's wife Eva Holmes and their son Jean) wait at a station on the outskirts of Paris for the arrival of the train, visible in the distance. The pale colours and the brushstroke that models the figures create a sense of calm and everyday reality.



GEORGES D'ESPAGNAT

Bay at Le Lavandou

c. 1899

Oil on canvas

At the end of the century Georges d'Espagnat travelled to the Côte d'Azur where he painted landscapes in which he experimented with the “incandescent” sunset light and with simplification of forms and pure colour. As a result and almost instinctively he came close to the Fauvist experimentation which would make its first powerful appearance at the 1905 Salon d'Automne in Paris. In this view of Le Lavandou the impact of the light on the rocks and water and the fiery tones of the sky give the work an energy characteristic of some of the Fauve painters, such as Maurice de Vlaminck and Henri Manguin.

Private collection



GEORGES D'ESPAGNAT

Autumn Afternoon

c. 1899

Oil on canvas

While experimenting with extreme light and colour in his landscapes Georges d'Espagnat retained an interest in intimist scenes of a decorative nature. Nonetheless, in this depiction of an autumn afternoon the reds of the leaves and the different shades of the flowers bring to mind his experimentation with colour in his landscapes while the figures of the girls, which are more classical in nature, transmit a serenity that recalls those by his admired Renoir.

Private collection



GEORGES D'ESPAGNAT

Simone

c. 1907

Oil on canvas

This painting, which accurately reproduces a drawing that Georges d'Espagnat made to illustrate a book of poems by Rémy de Gourmont entitled *Simone* (published 1901), reveals the artist's move towards greater compositional simplification, with a limited number of figures in more constructed spaces of a decorative nature. An heir to Impressionism, during this new stage D'Espagnat applied its lessons with regard to the depiction of light in order to give his scenes a warm atmosphere and emphasise the figures' inner existence; a type of "silent life."