

PAUL
DURAND-RUEL



AND THE TWILIGHT OF
IMPRESSIONISM

Fundación
MAPFRE



Paul Durand-Ruel “created the most marvellous museum of contemporary painting that exists in France”

GUSTAVE GEFFROY

Pierre-Auguste Renoir
Paul Durand-Ruel, 1910
Oil on canvas
Private collection

The emergence of Impressionism in France from the second half of the 19th century, soon to be followed by Post-Impressionism at the turn of the century, substantially changed the rules of the art market. In the face of the prevailing academic art, which had defined official taste until that moment, both of these more artistically liberated trends made successive headway largely thanks to the new theories on light and colour which these artists set out to apply to their canvases for different purposes. From his Paris gallery on rue Laffitte, Paul Durand-Ruel (1831-1922), a gallerist, collector and one of the most important art dealers in the context of French culture, devoted much of his life to fostering and defending modern art. While the outset of his career he championed the landscape painters of the “Barbizon School”, his fame largely rests on his unconditional support for and promotion of the 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, Durand-Ruel began a new (and less well known) undertaking which would be continued by his children, supporting and disseminating



Façade of the Durand-Ruel gallery on rue de Rome, 37, Paris (detail).
Durand-Ruel Archive, Paris



Joseph Durand-Ruel's dining room and drawing room, rue de Rome, 37, Paris (detail).
Durand-Ruel Archive, Paris

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 different innovative trends were opening up new directions, coexisting and establishing dialogues, and the rich complexity of this artistic climate undoubtedly had a liberating effect on all of them. 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.

Paul Durand-Ruel and the twilight of Impressionism firstly aims to introduce the general public to the remarkable art dealer and patron Paul Durand-Ruel. It also aspires to present the work of these artists, who were less famous than some of their contemporaries. This may



Albert André
Montmartre, View of the Boulevard de Clichy, c. 1921
Oil on canvas
Private collection

be due to the fact that Durand-Ruel himself did not live long enough to ensure their success as he died in 1922, and also because the early avant-gardes were at the height of their powers at this period and the art of these five painters might have seemed less innovative.

The exhibition, which features more than sixty works, thus opens with an introduction to the figure of Paul Durand-Ruel and his innovative working methods (block purchases of artists' output, monthly payment of their income and support for them at auctions and through the organisation of individual and group exhibitions at his galleries), while casting light on his professional and personal relationships with the five artists in question. The exhibition continues with a section devoted to each of them, in which their individual careers are reassessed and their preferred themes highlighted: with Loiseau, the atmospheric effects on the banks of the Seine and its tributaries; with Maufra, his singularly powerful depictions of seascapes and cliffs; with Moret, compositions

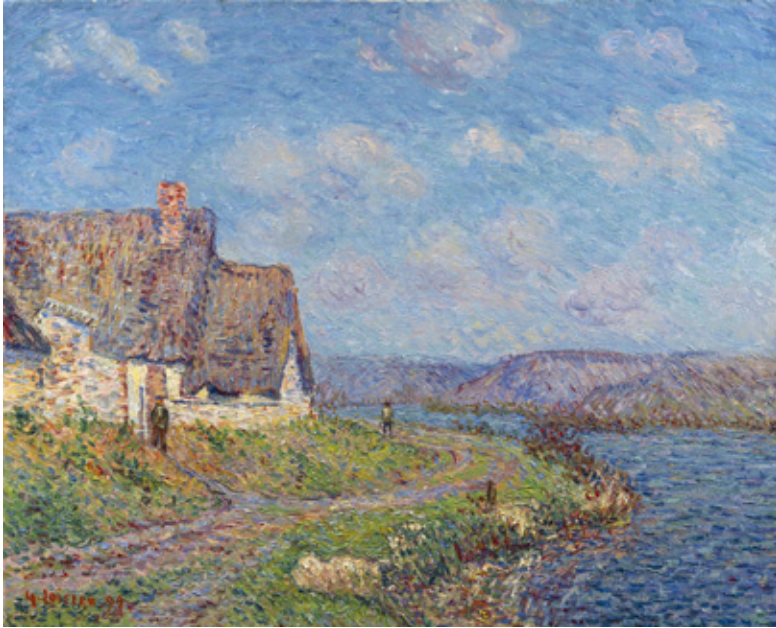


Georges d'Espagnat
Suburban Station, c. 1896-1897
Oil on canvas
Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Donated by Bernard d'Espagnat,
son of the artist, 1979 / Inv. RF 1979 21

inspired by the simplicity of Breton life; with André, a type of decorative painting of Nabis inspiration; and with D'Espagnat, the intimacy and intensity of colour transmitted by his canvases.

KEY THEMES IN THE EXHIBITION

The Paris Salon. The Salon, or official art exhibition, was first held in 1737 as a private, biannual event in the Salon Carré [Square Hall] of the Louvre, from which it derives its name. The origins of the Salon lie in the exhibition organised in 1667 to mark the founding of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, established by the French monarchy to emphasise the role of the sovereign in the protection and promotion of the arts. The Salons became more important over time, with the result that they were extended from a few days to a month and were held annually rather than biannually. After the French Revolution (1789-1799) art and its enjoyment ceased to be the almost exclusive domain of the monarchy and the



Gustave Loiseau
Tournedos-sur-Seine, 1899
Oil on canvas
Private collection

aristocracy and the Salon became the most visible manifestation of this change, given that one of its most notable consequences was the gradual democratisation of art. The Salon determined taste and also fashion, encouraged opinion and led to the publication of reviews in the printed press. In addition, the taste that prevailed at the Salons was the one dictated by a bourgeois academic jury, heir to an important tradition and responsible for selecting the works, while the academic painters were the ones “entrusted” with the continuation and dissemination of that tradition.

From the Salon to the art gallery. In the 1870s the art world in France was confronted with a growing number of issues, one of which was the celebration of the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874, inaugurated just two weeks before the official Salon. It brought together a group of artists who aspired to show their independence from academic norms, which had led to their works being largely rejected by the Salon jury.



Maxime Maufra
Corner of the Drawing Room with a Vase of Flowers, 1909
Oil on canvas
Private collection

From that moment on, salons other than the official one were held in increasing numbers: the Salon des Indépendants, the Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, the Salon d'Automne, and others. Contributing to the dissolution of the official Salon and to the rejection of the academic painting that it displayed was the new proliferation of galleries and art dealers, independent entities which organised individual and group exhibitions. This was the case with the Durand-Ruel, Georges Petit and Vollard galleries, private initiatives that supported artists such as Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Gustave Caillebotte, Paul Cézanne, Georges Seurat, Paul Signac and Pablo Picasso, and also the five artists who are the subject of the present exhibition.

Post-Impressionism. The term “Post-Impressionism” was coined by the British artist and critic Roger Fry in 1910 to refer to the trends which emerged from the 1880s in reaction to Impressionism and survived until the emergence of the avant-garde movements.



Henry Moret
Waiting for the Fishermen, 1894
Oil on canvas
Association des Amis du Petit Palais, Ginebra
Inv. 395

Although the term did not define a group as such as it brought together very heterogeneous artists, all of them practised a type of pure, sincere and expressive painting which aimed to arouse the viewer's emotional reaction and in which the influence of mysticism, philosophy and religion was not uncommon. Post-Impressionism thus encompassed the experiments of Seurat and Signac, the brilliant colouring of Vincent van Gogh, Cézanne's desire to become "a museum painter", Paul Gauguin's search for purity in Pont-Aven, his and Émile Bernard and Paul Sérusier's subsequent Synthetist investigations which led to the formation of the Nabis group ("prophets of new art"), and the Symbolism of Puvis de Chavannes, among others. Henry Moret, Maxime Maufra, Gustave Loiseau, Georges d'Espagnat and Albert André's artistic experimentation can also be associated with Post-Impressionism.

Curator

Claire Durand-Ruel Snollaerts

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Dates

19 September 2024 to 5 January 2025

Opening times

Mondays (except public holidays):
2 pm to 8 pm
Tuesdays to Saturdays:
11 am to 8 pm
Sundays and public holidays:
11 am to 7 pm
(Last entry: 30 minutes
before closing time.
Visitors must leave the gallery
10 minutes before closing time)

Ticket prices

Standard: 5 €
Reduced: 3 €
Free: Mondays (not public holidays)

Guided tours

7 €

Times and booking: on this website

Educational tours for schools and families

Times and booking: on this website

Audio guide

Spanish and English: 4 €

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Cover:

Georges d'Espagnat

Cove at Le Lavandou, c. 1899

Oil on canvas

Private collection

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