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RAOUL DU GARDIER (Wiesbaden) 1871 – 1952

Sailing Regatta at Pornic

oil on canvas

64.8 x 54.6 cm

signed lower right: Raoul du Gardier

Raoul du Gardier was a pupil of éobald Chartran, Jules-Elie Delaunay and trained with Matisse under Gustave Moreau. He exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français in 1894 and received his first honourable mention in 1897, becoming a member in 1900. He participated in the Salon d'Automne created in 1905 as a founding member.

He was a keen explorer, travelled the world and received a bronze medal at the l'Exposition Universelle of 1900 for his painting of the Kabyles women of Algeria. The exotic nature of Mauritius, Karnak, Madagascar, and the Comoros and Reunion Islands had a powerful effect on his painting, just as they had on Gauguin before.

In 1920 he was honoured with the Cross of Knight of the Legion of Honour, and in 1923, was awarded the title of *Peintre de la Marine* by the French Government.

He is best known for his atmospheric depictions of life on or by the sea. *Sailing Regatta at Pornic* on the Atlantic coast, where he lived, encapsulates Du Gardier's command of capturing reflections on water and sailing. Although reminiscent of Monet's paintings of sailing boats in Argenteuil, this painting epitomises the originality of Du Gardier's compositions and the angles at which he depicts the sailing boats. His Impressionistic technique and sense of colour, infuse the painting with light and a sense of atmosphere.

Raoul du Gardier was born into a family of diplomats, but knew from an early age that he wanted to be a painter. He was a pupil of Théobald Chartran, Jules-Elie Delaunay and trained with Matisse under Gustave Moreau who encouraged them both to express themselves freely. He was also passionate about the sea and spent time in an area of vineyards owned by his family in Ain el Amerur in Algeria, where he found inspiration for painting.

He exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français in 1894 and was to receive his first honourable mention in 1897. He had a studio at 12 Boulevard de Montparnass and became highly regarded as a painter and engraver. His painting of the *Woman in white on the beach* was acquired by the state in 1904 for the Museum in Luxembourg and now hangs in the Museum Petiet Limoux. He was honoured with the Cross of Knight of the Legion of Honour in 1920.

Du Gardier was a keen explorer and travelled around the world twice receiving a bronze medal at the l'Exposition Universelle of 1900 for his work of the Kabyles women of Algeria. The countries he visited included Mauritius, Karnak, Madagascar, and the Comoros and Reunion Islands. These exotic lands had a powerful effect on his painting, just as they had on Gauguin before him and he produced a number of very beautiful paintings during this period.

He also illustrated several books, one of which was *les Grandes Croisieres* by Paul Chack. Du Gardier went on a three month journey to Mauritius with the French Navy on the cruiser General Duquesne in the late 1920's. This allowed him to visit the East and Indian Ocean and again record the landscapes and peoples he encountered.

Today Du Gardier is best known for his wonderfully atmospheric depictions of life on or by the sea. In 1923 the French government awarded him the title of *Peintre de la Marine* in recognition of the quality of his paintings. The title was on the whole bestowed upon only one artist a year in France and previous holders included famous artist like Paul Signac and Maxime Maufra. This charming painting of a Sailing Regatta at Pornic on the Atlantic coast encapsulates Du Gardier's skill at painting reflections on water and his love of sailing. Although reminiscent of Monet's paintings of sailing boats in Argentueil, this work is typical of Du Gardier in terms of the original composition and the angles at which he depicts the sailing boats. His Impressionistic technique and beautiful colouring infused his pictures with a wonderful quality of light and sense of atmosphere.

He exhibited his work in London, Munich, Amsterdam, Rome, Montreal and America. Today his work can be found in numerous museums, including the Louvre, Museum of Modern Art Strasbourg, Museum of Fine Art Orleans and the Telfair Museum, USA.