



Léon Devos (Petit-Enghien 24 mars 1897 - Précy-sous-Thil 18 avril 1974)

L Devos – Inv.311 – n.d.

Artist description:

Léon Devos is a painter born in Petit Enghien in 1897. He left school at the age of 12 to work as an apprentice mechanic. He lived in Haine-Saint-Pierre until 1914 when he enlisted as a volunteer at the age of 17. In 1918, he enters the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Mons, where followed the teachings of Alfred Duriau, among others, before going on to study at the Brussels Academy, where he was taught by Constant Montald and Jean Delville, leading figures of Belgian symbolism. Léon Devos was a freedom-loving painter, careful not to be at the mercy of artistic trends and art dealers. In order to maintain his independence, he became an insurance agent, but his nervous nature prevented him from staying long. In 1920, he left for Paris with Léon Navez, where he studied the art of engraving. In company of his friend, they became decorators for various stores and designed numerous projects for postal stamps. They also crossed paths with Amedeo Modigliani. The most important aspect of this trip was their wanderings through the city, capturing its present and its reality. In 1927, back in Brussels, Léon Devos sent a large decorative composition to the Antwerp Triennial and was noticed there. The following year he joined Anto Carte, Louis Buisseret, Pierre Paulus and Rodolphe Strebelle in the Nervia group, alongside young people his age: Léon Navez, Frans Depooter, Taf Wallet and Jean Winance. In 1932 he won the Prix du Hainaut before embarking on major projects: the vast history painting of the swearing in of Leopold III and a portrait of Princess Paola. He then became a professor at the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in 1939, before becoming its director in 1948. Léon Devos then received various distinctions, including the Carnegie Prize, which he was awarded in 1950. After these years of consecration of a well-established career, he died in 1974 in France, in Côte d'or.