

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS



Jacques-Émile Blanche (1861 - 1942)

Peonies in a blue and white porcelain vase

oil on canvas

31 1/8 x 24 3/4 in. (79 x 63 cm.)

signed

Literature:

J. Roberts, *Jacques-Émile Blanche*, Gourcuff Gradenigo, Paris, 2012, P.180 (illustrated)

Jacques-Émile Blanche deserves recognition as a prolific and gifted painter, a writer of distinction and, especially, as an invaluable representative of the 'Fin de siècle' in Paris and in London which was his second home. He was rich, well connected and self-assured. He mixed in many different circles and counted Marcel Proust, André Gide, Thomas Hardy and Jean Cocteau among his very best friends. He encouraged young artists and intellectuals whom he painted, often before they had attained fame and fortune.

As a writer and critic, he found time to write thirty volumes, hundreds of articles and nearly two thousand letters. He travelled ceaselessly in France, the wider Continent and England, and in the rare places he didn't go to he saw to it that his paintings did.

When he was fourteen, Jacques-Émile visited Manet's studio and from that time onwards, Manet was his idol. At the end of his life, Blanche's collection included twelve paintings by him in addition to those by Renoir, Cézanne, Corot, Francois Bonvin, and Courbet, and, of course many drawings.

He also studied Chardin and was advised by Fantin-Latour at the outset of his career, which explains his delight and skill in painting flowers.

The present example is a handsomely sized still life and shows the artist's debt to, and reverence for, Manet and Chardin. The varying textures of the glazed blue and white porcelain, the peonies and tea pot are loosely painted with a deceptive simplicity, gained from a long experience and understanding of still life.