



GALLERY  
NOTES®

*from*

JOHN MITCHELL  
FINE PAINTINGS

EST 1931

MAY 2019

## FORTHCOMING SUMMER EXHIBITIONS:



**London Art Week 27 June – 5 July**

### ***From Fjord to Forest:***

Nineteenth Century Northern Landscapes,  
including paintings from the collection of Asbjørn Lunde.

**MASTERPIECE  
2019 | LONDON**

**Masterpiece London 27 June – 3 July**

Stand B41

EUPHÉMIE CAMILLE MURATON (1836-1914)

*Still life with peaches, pomegranates, grapes, gladioli and a jewel casket*  
oil on canvas, 35 x 45¾ in. (89 x 116.5 cm.), signed and dated 1868

### Exhibited:

Paris, Palais des Champs-Élysées, Salon, 1868, no. 1845, *Pêches, raisins et glaïeuls sur une table*

The opportunities for women to become professional artists in nineteenth century France were restricted. Up until 1897 when women were granted access to the free training at the state sponsored École des Beaux-Arts., the only option was to seek instruction from established artists in private studios where the curriculum offered a diluted form of that taught in the academies. It was often prohibitively expensive. Study of the human form from nude models, so central to the French academic system and to a successful career in history painting, was denied to women in both public and private institutions through much of the century. The nude model was deemed inappropriate and, as a result, female artists focused instead on genre, landscape and still life painting. Although an ability in drawing and watercolour was indeed considered part of a good *formation*, formal careers for women remained elusive. Those few who did enjoy acclaim in this period were generally helped by a close male connection in the art world. Rosa Bonheur, for example, was taught by her father, while Berthe Morisot's husband, Eugène Manet (Edouard's brother) was exceptionally supportive of her work. Euphémie Muraton was no different; she married and trained under Alphonse Muraton (1824-1911), a painter from Tours who specialised in religious scenes and portraiture. Euphémie became a successful and prolific painter and exhibited at the Salon nearly every year from 1864 to 1911. She took part in exhibitions in Moscow and St Petersburg as well as winning medals in 1880 and at the *Exposition Universelle* in 1889. She became a member of the Société des Artistes Français in 1888.

With its abundant fruits and opulent setting, this still life is both a homage to the realism of the Dutch seventeenth-century artists and an archetypal 'Second Empire' painting. Whilst the painterly style is reminiscent of pictures by Antoine Villon, Germain Ribot and Francois Bonvin, the tapestry under the lace and the gladioli laid above the goblet of grapes add a wealth of colours in contrast to the more sombre and seventeenth-century Spanish palettes of the former painters.

Euphémie Muraton, together with Philippe Rousseau (see overleaf) tended to include flowers in her compositions and it is no coincidence that these two still life specialists now feature together in this *Gallery Notes*.



PHILIPPE ROUSSEAU (1816-1887)

*The Fox and the Stork*

oil on panel, 12¼ x 7½ in. (31 x 19 cm.), signed

*'But now the dame, to torture him, Such wit was in her, Served up her dinner  
In vases made so tall and slim, They let their owner's beak pass in and out,  
But not, by any means, the fox's snout! All arts without avail,  
With drooping head and tail, As ought a fox a fowl had cheated,  
The hungry guest at last retreated, You knaves, for you is this recital,  
You'll often meet Dame Stork's requital.'*

EXTRACT FROM JEAN DE LA FONTAINE'S FABLES, BOOK 1, FABLE 18

*The Fox and the Stork* is the third vulpine 'fable' painting by Philippe Rousseau to have featured in *Gallery Notes*, the others being *The Fox and the Grapes* and *The Fox and the Raven*. The similar dimensions of the panels would suggest that Rousseau worked on a 'fox' series. In this instance, the theme follows the maxim: 'Do to others what one would wish for oneself.'

From the mid-1840s to his death in 1887, Philippe Rousseau was one of the leading *peintres animaliers* of his time. As well as specialising in pure still life paintings, by introducing animals into anecdotal scenes, Rousseau secured a name for himself in nineteenth century French painting. Although he has often been overshadowed by his namesakes, the Barbizon artist Theodore, and the 'naïve' painter, Henri 'le Douanier', his success is inseparable from the movement now called by art historians the 'Chardin Revival'. The French Revolution swept away the *ancien régime* so thoroughly that it was almost subversive to admire the great French artists of the eighteenth century, Jean-Simeon Chardin (1699-1779) included. Nonetheless, critics such as Theodore Thoré, the champion of Vermeer and realism, successfully campaigned against the oblivion of Chardin and by 1852, the Louvre had acquired three examples and added gradually to their holding after that.

Rousseau based many of his paintings and watercolours on the *Fables* of Jean de la Fontaine (1621-1695). Since the first six books appeared in 1668 the *Fables* were a great success both in France and abroad. Further collections appeared in 1678-9 and in 1693. The earlier books adhered closely to the classical tradition of fables, beginning with Aesop and the Roman writer, Phaedrus, and offer countless opportunities for combining the two subjects at which Rousseau excelled – still life and animal scenes. In 1845 Rousseau began exhibiting his *Fables* at the Salon in Paris with *Le Rat de ville et le Rat des Champs* and in 1852 his version of *Le Rat qui s'est retiré du monde* (Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts) won him the Légion d'Honneur and considerable public acclaim.

An exhibition about Philippe Rousseau, accompanied by a scholarly catalogue, was held at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam in November 1993 and included several of his well-known fable pictures.

<sup>1</sup> McCoubrey, John W., *The Revival of Chardin in French Still-Life Painting, 1850-1870*, 'The Art Bulletin', Vol. 46, No. 1 (March 1964), p. 46



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