

Henri Caro-Delville (1876 - 1926) - The pink divan



Oil on canvas signed and dated 1912, lower left

Dimensions : H. 130 x W. 126 cm (with frame: H. 144 x W. 140 cm)

Henry Caro-Delville, a Frenchman of Spanish origin, was an important painter in the social life of the early 20th century. His real name was Delville ("de la Vallée" in Spanish) but he signed Caro-Delville because his mother, with whom he had a close relationship, was called Caroline. From childhood, Henry Caro-Delville was curious about art, observed his surroundings and drew. His mother, a writer and poet, was his first guide.

After studying from 1895 to 1897 at the Bayonne School of Fine Arts, Henry Caro-Delville became a student of Léon Bonnat at the Paris School of Fine Arts. He exhibited for the first time at the Salon de la Société des artistes français in Paris in 1899. A member of the Société nationale des beaux-arts from 1903, he became its secretary in 1904. In 1905, he won the great gold medal at the Munich International Exhibition. The same year, his friend Edmond Rostand entrusted him with the decoration of his villa in Cambo. He then made a name for himself as a portrait painter and received numerous commissions. He was made a knight of the Legion of Honour in 1910. His painting can be compared to that of Carolus Duran (1837-1917), a famous painter of the belle époque.

Henri Caro-Delville emigrated to the United States in 1913 and settled in New York, moving towards a more Art Deco style. He was a central figure in artistic, literary and musical circles on both sides of the Atlantic, from Paris to New York. Much of his work can be found across the Atlantic today.

Our painting is an important work by Caro Delville. It is a very large format, probably commissioned to decorate a literary salon. The posture of the very elegant young woman is superb: the line of the body draws a diagonal which allows a perfect composition. It is also worth noting the care taken with the skin tone and the details of the hands and face. Finally, the transparencies of the clothes are much more

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accomplished than in Caro-Delvaile's classical family portraits. This picture was painted by Henry Caro-Delvaile on the eve of his departure for the United States, most probably in Paris.

The provenance:

This painting decorated a mythical bar-restaurant, "Le Mathis", run by Gérard Nanty. Along with Castel and Régine, Nanty was the third king of Parisian nights from the 1960s to 2010. He frequented the fashion designers Valentino, Saint-Laurent and Gaultier, writers like Sagan, artists like Bernard Buffet, and showbiz stars from Amanda Lear to Manouche or Thierry le Luron. Its fashionable clubs were the "Club 65", the "Bronx", the "Colony" and finally the "Mathis" on rue de Ponthieu where, until its closure in 2017, people, actors and the French audio-visual landscape met.



The 'Mathis' in the 90s