

WILLOW GALLERY



Promenade en Bord de Rivière sous la Neige

Pierre Eugène Montézin (1874 - 1946)

Oil on canvas, stamped Montézin.

Canvas size: 20 x 24in / 51 x 61cm

Frame size: 29 x 33in / 74 x 84cm

PROVENANCE

Galerie Bailly, Paris

LITERATURE

This work will be included in the forthcoming Catalogue Raisonné being prepared by Monsieur Cyril Klein Montézin.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Although Pierre Eugène Montézin was a painter of landscapes, he spent most of his life in Paris. He loved the open air and the country areas of the Ile-de-France, yet he was born on a narrow street in the French capital. In his vigorous old age, still producing beautiful landscapes, he remarked to the famous French critic, Louis Vauxcelles, "The subjects of the landscape painter are less in front of the artist's eyes, than in his heart."

Pierre Eugène Montézin was born in 1874 in the very heart of Paris. His father was a lace artist, but also a lover of nature who took his young son on expeditions to the country. These trips were to have a profound effect on his later life and work.

Montézin's father apprenticed his son to the workshop of a decorator specialising in murals. However, Montézin also studied under the painter Ernest Quost (1844-1931) and it was Quost together with Montézin's interest in the Impressionists that persuaded him to embark on a career as a painter.

In 1893 Montézin made up his mind to gain acceptance in the Salon. For ten years he painted ceaselessly and sent his work to the Salon, and was regularly turned down. At last, he was accepted in 1903, and his career began in earnest.

When war broke out in 1914, Montézin enlisted and fought at the front, receiving the Médaille Militaire after the battles of the Meuse. At the end of the war, he returned to Paris and resumed painting, spending a year at Dreux and Moret-sur-Loing, concentrating on the rivers, villages, and agricultural scenes of the region. Montézin spent very little time in his studio; he could really work only from nature.

Montézin began to win honours as early as 1920 when he received the Rosa Bonheur Prize. In 1923 he was named a Chevalier of the Legion d'honneur, and in 1932 he received the Medal of Honor at the Salon des Artistes Français. Critical reaction to this nomination was explosive. For thirty years no landscape had received the Medal of Honor which, since 1897, had been awarded only to figure painters and painters of compositions. For three decades landscapes had been considered a minor form of painting, a fact which made Montézin's triumph all the more exceptional.

In 1932 the painters of the Salon unanimously elected Montézin president of the Salon jury. The same year he had a great exhibition in Paris to which the public flocked. 237 canvases were shown, all landscapes, and similar successful exhibitions in Paris followed in 1936, 1938 and 1943. Montézin painted to the end of his long life, dying suddenly in 1946 while he was painting during a trip to Brittany.

Monday - Friday 9:30am - 6pm or by appointment

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