



Let's Talk Art!

Camille Corot and his Models at the Musée Marmottan ©

by Catherine Sarrazin

This is Catherine Sarrazin and this week on 'Let's talk Art' we'll visit the Marmottan museum and its current exhibition on Corot's portraits. Known for his landscapes, Camille Corot also painted many figure paintings throughout his career, most of which he never exhibited during his life.

Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot was born in Paris in 1796, in a family of bourgeois who had a flourishing business and so, unlike many of his artistic colleagues; he never felt the need of money and was able to pursue his career as an artist. Corot is a pivotal figure in landscape painting; his work simultaneously references the Neo-classical tradition and anticipates the plein-air innovation of Impressionism. He was indeed much admired by Money, Pissaro and Degas for his landscapes, but also his figure paintings.

With the exhibition, the museum wants to explore this hidden aspect of the artist with paintings such as 'Woman with Mandolin', 'Interrupted reading' or 'Greek Girl', all portraying women in a melancholic state and lost in their thoughts. Although many paintings come from various museums in the United States and countries across Europe, three of his masterpieces are on loan from the Louvre.

The 'Lady in Blue', considered as his most accomplished portrait, presenting a woman in profile dressed in a magnificent blue gown. This is Corot's last figure painting which was first exhibited at the Universal exhibition of 1900, twenty five years after the artist's death. The Louvre has also lent for this event 'Woman with a Pearl', a painting inspired by Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa. Just like the famous portrait, Corot's model sits facing the viewer in a three quarter position crossing her hands on her lap. And a romantic painting of a young woman peacefully reading a book surrounded by nature titled 'The Reader crowned with flowers' where the artist combines figure and landscape painting, mixing Modern and Neo-classical styles.

The exhibition on show until the 8th of July brings together about 60 pieces and is a great opportunity to see another aspect of the artist.

You can then continue your visit by exploring the permanent exhibition on Monet's work, with the famous painting 'Impression Soleil Levant' which gave the name to the art movement, but also 'Le Pont de l'Europe' and 'Gare St-Lazare' among others. A section of the museum is also devoted to Morisot's work with portraits of young girls.