

Basic Detail Report



Title: Spanish Girl of Segovia

Date: 1912

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Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@28625

Medium: Oil on canvas

Description: Although Robert Henri was clearly the leader and key personality of The Eight, he was in many ways the group's most traditional artist. Although he had painted Paris and New York cityscapes early in his career, Henri had chosen by 1908 to focus his efforts almost entirely on portrayals of what he came to describe as "my people" individuals from different cultural and national backgrounds whom he felt captured their culture's or nation's spirit: Every nation in the world in spite of itself, produces the occasional individual that does express this . . . element in people which is the essence of life, which springs out away from the institution, which is the reformation upon which the institution is founded, which laughs at all boundaries and which in every generation is the birth . . . of all genius, all true progress.(1) To paint representative human types is to paint broadly, avoiding details of feature and appurtenance that might individualize the sitter and focusing instead on costume, color, and gestural and facial expression. To paint broadly was Henri's preference in any event, since he deliberately chose to work within in the painterly figurative tradition of Frans Hals and Edouard Manet. Like Manet and his American friend and colleague William Merritt Chase, Henri frequently turned to Spain for his subjects. Beginning in 1906 Henri regularly took his New York art class to Madrid for summer study; "Spanish Girl of Segovia" was painted in his Madrid studio during such an excursion in 1912. Henri's notes on this painting in his "Record Books" emphasize its vibrant palette of red and green. As early as 1909 he had become intrigued by a new color wheel and set of pigments developed by the American color theorist Hardesty Maratta. Maratta argued that the traditional painter's colors were irregularly dispersed across the spectrum and needed to be replaced by twelve basic hues that were instead distributed systematically, at even intervals. Maratta's system created color relationships that were analagous to the notes on a musical scale. As John Sloan, who was also influenced by Maratta's theories, observed: "The palette is an instrument that can be orchestrated to build form."(2) In creating the spirited, almost fugual conversation among fundamental hues that enlivens "Spanish Girl of Segovia", Henri clearly took full advantage of Maratta's new palette. BWC Bibliography: William Yarrow and Louis Bouché, eds., "Robert Henri: His Life and Works" (New York: Boni and Liverwright, 1921); Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit*, comp. Margery Ryerson (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1923; reprint, New York: Harper and Row, 1984); William Innes Homer, "Robert Henri and His Circle" (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969); Bennard B. Perlman, *Robert Henri: Painter*, exhib. cat. (Wilmington: Delaware Art Museum, 1984); Bruce W. Chambers, "Robert Henri (1865-1929): Selected Paintings", exhib. cat. (New York: Berry-Hill Galleries, 1986). Notes: 1. Henri, "Art Spirit", p. 149. 2. Bruce St. John, ed., "John Sloan's New York Scene, from the Diaries, Notes, and Correspondence, 1906-1913" (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 318.

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Dimensions: 40 3/4 x 33 1/8 in. (103.5 x 84.2 cm) Frame Dimension: 48 5/8 x 40 3/4 x 3 1/2 in. (123.5 x 103.5 x 8.9 cm)