

Basic Detail Report



Title: French Vaudeville

Date: 1937

Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@3ef1d

Medium: Oil on canvas

Description: "French Vaudeville", one of the countless theater subjects that dominated Shinn's production after 1900, is ostensibly a Paris scene executed in New York late in his career.(1) Essentially a reworking of a earlier pictures, such as "The Orchestra Pit", "Old Proctor's Fifth Avenue Theatre" (c. 1906-07; private collection), "Footlight Flirtation" (1912; private collection), and "Dancer in White before the Footlights" (1910; Butler Institute of Art, Youngstown, Ohio), it portrays a beautiful young chanteuse during a performance. The heads of several musicians and audience members can be seen at the bottom in semidarkness and partially obstruct our view of the stage, as if we were actually in attendance ourselves. The singer seductively lifts one side of her gown to reveal a long stockinged leg and

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directs her gaze toward the bass viol player, who gazes up with rapt attention. The curled head of his instrument echoes the curves of her body and fan, just as his plucking the strings of his instrument echoes her skirt lifting gesture. Shinn's subjects are similar to those of earlier French painters who depicted the theater and cafe entertainments.(2) Like a number of Shinn's depictions of the stage, "French Vaudeville" uses a variety of compositional devices derived from Degas's views of the Paris cabaret: the flattening of space, the jarring juxtaposition of the stage performers with members of the audience or orchestra, the use of the edge of a stage or balcony as a prominent design element, the jutting heads or instruments that break the plane of the stage, and the glaring footlights blurring the performers' costumes and illuminating faces. While Shinn's views of the theater are not charged with the sexual tension, ambiguities of social class, and sense of modern spectacle that characterize many of the works of Degas and his French contemporaries, (3) he was a deft and popular chronicler of his time and its entertainments. MAS

Bibliography: Edith DeShazo, "Everett Shinn, 1876-1953: A Figure in His Time" (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1974); Linda Ferber, "Stagestruck: The Theater Subjects of Everett Shinn," in Doreen Bolger and Nicolai Cikovsky Jr., eds., "American Art around 1900: Lectures in Memory of Daniel Fraad" (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art 1990), pp. 51-67; Elizabeth Milroy, *Painters of a New Century: "The Eight and American Art"*, exhib. cat. (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Art Museum, 1991); Barbara C. Rand, "The Art of Everett Shinn," Ph.D. diss., University of California at Santa Barbara, 1992; H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, "American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life", 1885-1915, exhib. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994); Rebecca Zurier, Robert W. Snyder, and Virginia M. Mecklenburg, *Metropolitan Lives: "The Ashcan Artists and Their New York"*, exhib. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art, 1995). NOTES: 1 . Shinn to Mrs. William H. Bentley, NBMAA, letter, September 7, 1950, NMBAA files. 2. Ferber, "Stagestruck," p. 61. 3. H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, "American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life", 1885-1915, exhib. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), pp. 204-19.

Dimensions: Sheet: 25 1/8 x 30 1/8 in. (63.8 x 76.5 cm) Frame: 31 5/8 x 36 3/4 x 3 5/8 in. (80.3 x 93.3 x 9.2 cm)