Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Luigi LOIR (Gorritz 1845 - Paris 1916)

The Grand Palais, Paris

Watercolour and gouache, over a pencil underdrawing, on card.
Signed LOIR. LUIGI. at the lower right.
271 x 372 mm. (10 5/8 x 14 5/8 in.)

It was as a painter of the modern urban Paris of the latter half of the 19th century that Luigi Loir was best known. As one contemporary writer noted of Loir, 'One can say of this master that he created a genre: 'parisianism'...he is, in effect, the painter of Paris par excellence; no different aspects of the city, often momentary and fleeting, and none of its successive transformations, is any secret to him.' And, as the 19th century French poet and writer Théodore de Banville aptly noted, '[Jean] Beraud painted the Parisians of Paris and Luigi Loir the Paris of Parisians.'

Built for the Exposition Universelle of 1900, the Grand Palais des Champs-Elysées in Paris was a large exhibition hall in the Beaux-Arts style; the work of four different architects. Construction began in 1897 and the building was inaugurated in May 1900. Dominated by a 240 metre long central exhibition space or nave under a barrel-vaulted glass roof, the Grand Palais was used mainly for art exhibitions and Salons.

As the Loir scholar Noé Willer has written of the present drawing, 'The Grand Palais with its magical lights stands in the foreground but the crowd with its different costumes and the tenderness of the children dominate the picture.' Another watercolour view by Loir of the Grand Palais, seen from the opposite end of the building and much freer in handling than the present sheet, depicts the scene at night.

Provenance:

Simic Gallery, La Jolla, California
Private collection, Middleburg, Virginia.

Literature:

Noé Willer, Luigi Loir (1845-1916): Peintre de la Belle Epoque à la Publicité. Catalogue raisonné – Vol.1, Carmel, n.d. (2004?), illustrated p.47, fig.37 (incorrectly as the Petit Palais).

Artist description:

Born in Austria to French parents who served the exiled French Bourbon royal family, Luigi Aloys-François-Joseph Loir moved with his family and the Bourbons to the Duchy of Parma in 1847. In 1860 his family returned to Paris following the explusion of the Bourbons from Parma, but Luigi remained in the city, having had enrolled, at the young age of eight, at the Accademia de Belle Arti. He eventually rejoined his family in Paris in 1863. There he studied with the decorative painter and set designer Jean Pastelot, making his Salon debut in 1865. He painted mainly views of Paris, in all seasons and at different times of the day or night. Loir's interest in the urban cityscape remained a constant of his career, although he also painted the suburbs of the city; exhibiting views of Bercy, Auteuil, Puteaux and Neuilly. It was as a painter of the modern urban Paris of the latter half of the 19th century that Loir was best known, and for which he was much admired. As a contemporary writer noted of Loir, 'One can say of this master that he created a genre: 'parisianism'...he is, in effect, the painter of Paris par excellence; no different aspects of the city, often momentary and fleeting, and none of its successive transformations, is any secret to him.' And, as the 19th century French poet and writer Théodore de Banville aptly noted, '[Jean] Beraud painted the Parisians of Paris and Luigi Loir the Paris of Parisians.' Loir's paintings proved very popular and commercially successful, and by the end of the 1880s several had been acquired by the State, as well as both French and foreign museums

Loir also worked as a commercial graphic artist and illustrator, theatrical and poster designer, book illustrator and lithographer. He continued to exhibit at the Salons until 1914, also winning a gold medal at the Exposition Universelle of 1889, and was commissioned to design the cover of the official catalogue of the Exposition Universelle of 1900. A member of both the Société des Aquarellistes and the Société de Peintres-Lithographes, as well as a jury member of the Société des Artistes Français and the Société des Arts Décoratifs, Loir rose to a position of some prominence in the Parisian art world. Paintings by Luigi Loir are today in the Musée d'Orsay, the Hôtel de Ville, the Musée Carnavalet and the Petit Palais in Paris, as well as in the museums of Bar-le-Duc, Bordeaux, Chicago, Le-Puy-en-Velay, Marseille, Moscow, Nancy, Nice, Prague, Rouen, St. Louis and Vienna, among others.