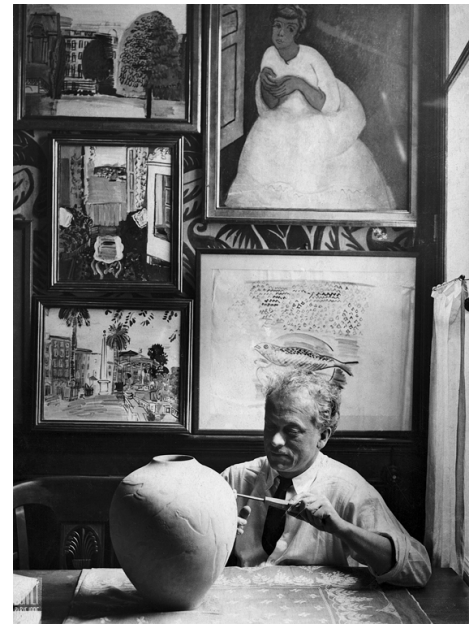


RAOUL DUFY (Le Havre, 3 June 1877 – Forcalquier, 23 March 1953)

Raoul Dufy was born on 3 June 1877 in the Normandy town of Le Havre. He was the second of ten children of a family of modest origins. Dufy's father, an accountant in a metallurgy company, was passionate about music and passed on this interest to his children. Having obtained his baccalaureate, Dufy decided to abandon his studies and started working for the Brazilian coffee importers Luthy & Hauser, supervising the merchandise as it arrived by ship, which would have a notable influence on his subsequent artistic activities. "I have spent my life on the bridge of ships: it's an ideal training for a painter. I breathed in all the smells that came up from the holds. From the smell I could already tell if a ship was coming from Texas, the Indies or the Azores, and this heightened my imagination."

Having realised that art was his true vocation, in 1893 Dufy continued working but also enrolled at the evening classes at the École municipale de Beaux-Arts where the painter Charles Lhullier gave classes that principally focused on drawing. In Rouen, Dufy first saw Delacroix's painting *The Justice of Trajan*, describing it as "one of the strongest impressions of my life". During this period he painted family members and self-portraits and also worked outdoors, particularly on the quaysides at Le Havre and Honfleur.



Raoul Dufy working on a vase with bathers in his studio in Paris, c. 1925
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Having been excused from military service in 1899 as his brother enlisted at the same time, he received an annual grant of 600 Francs from the city of Le Havre, which allowed him to enrol at the École National des Beaux-Arts in Paris where he trained in León Bonnat's studio. During his time in Paris, Dufy assiduously visited the painting galleries of the Louvre and thus discovered the work of Gauguin, Cézanne, Pissarro and Monet. From 1901 onwards he began to exhibit with various galleries including that of his friend Berthe Weill, which also showed the work of Picasso, Matisse and Derain. Two years later Dufy started to produce woodcuts.

From 1905 onwards Dufy was notably active with regard to showing his work, particularly at the Salon des Indépendants, where he encountered Matisse's painting *Luxe, calme et volupté*: "In front of this painting [...], I grasped all the new reasons for painting and Impressionist realism lost its charms when I contemplated the miracle of the imagination in line and colour. I suddenly understood the new mechanic of painting." In 1906 Dufy held his first solo exhibition at the Weill gallery and presented his work for the first time at the Salon d'Automne. The following year, when that Salon held an important retrospective on Paul Cézanne, Dufy showed three oils there. In 1908 he moved to L'Estaque where George Braque visited him and the two artists worked together outdoors. In 1909 Dufy met the designer Paul Poiret and was thus introduced into the world of fashion, a field in which he became active, working for some years as a textile designer for the Atuyer-Bianchini-Férier company.

In 1910 Dufy accepted a commission to illustrate *Bestiary or The Parade of Orpheus* by his friend Guillaume Apollinaire. At the Salon d'Automne he presented four independent prints (*The Dance, Love, The Hunt and Fishing*) and part of the *Bestiary*. The following year Dufy married Eugénie Bisson in Paris and showed a work at the Berlin Sezession, exhibiting alongside Braque, Picasso, Derain and others.

In 1913 two of Dufy's paintings were included in the *Armory Show* exhibition of modern art held in New York, Chicago and Boston, an event that marked a turning point for American art and artists. On the outbreak of World War I, Dufy returned to his native city where he founded *Imagerie Raoul Dufy*, a small firm that he used for the dissemination of patriotic propaganda images. Dufy's desire to be a designer for the French army led him to enlist as a volunteer in March 1915.

In 1921 Dufy exhibited for the first time at the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs, while that same year the first retrospective of his work was held at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery. A year later he met the Spanish sculptor Paco Durrio, who introduced him to the Catalan ceramicist Josep Llorens Artigas, giving rise to a close collaboration between the two. Shortly after this Dufy met Alexandre Roudinesco, a French doctor who became one of his principal collectors. After spending time with Paul Poiret in Morocco where he produced a series of watercolours, Dufy returned from Africa via Spain, stopping off in Seville to see bullfights and in Madrid to admire the Titians in the Museo del Prado.

In 1929 the Dudensig gallery devoted the first solo exhibition to Dufy in New York. A year later he began to work for the Onondaga textile company in New York and also undertook various commissions for ceramics,



Raoul Dufy painting outdoors in Le Havre, c. 1925
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textiles and paintings, including portraits of family members for the Dutch oil executive August Kessler. In 1934 the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels presented the first museum retrospective on Dufy.

In conjunction with the Exposition Internationale of 1937, Dufy was commissioned to produce the mural of *La Fée Electricité* [The Electricity Fairy] for the Pavilion of Light designed by the architect Robert Mallet-Stevens. Over the following year and with the help of his brother Jean and of André Robert, Dufy painted the 600 square metres of this

mural in a former power station made available to him in Saint-Ouen to the north of Paris. While executing this ambitious project he noticed the first symptoms of the rheumatoid arthritis that would affect him for the rest of his life. That same year Dufy and other artists including Matisse signed the Jewish-German art critic Paul Westheim's protest against the *Degenerate Art* exhibition organised by the Nazis. With the advance of the invading German forces, Dufy left Nice with his wife and went to Céret in the Rousillon in search of a milder climate for his health. At the height of the German occupation, the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels organised an exhibition on his work. Dufy was officially invited by the occupying government to visit various German museums in the company of other French artists but declined the invitation.

In 1952 Dufy represented France at the 26th Venice Biennial, showing 41 paintings and receiving the Grand Prix for Painting. In June that year the Musée d'Art et d'histoire in Geneva held the largest exhibition devoted to the artist during his lifetime. Having travelled to a number of cities around the world including Boston and Paris in order to try out different health treatments, Dufy decided to move to Forcalquier in the Haute Provence in the hope that the dry climate would help his delicate state of health. A year later, on 23 March at 5 in the morning, just after the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen had inaugurated an important exhibition entitled *Raoul Dufy*, the artist died in Forcalquier.