

Saint-Germain-en-Laye: the exhibition tribute to Pierre Bosco, the painter of sport and horse racing

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He has almost 6,000 paintings scattered in private collections and museums around the world. Almost thirty years after his death, the painter of Italian origin Pierre Bosco is honored in Saint-Germain-en-Laye (Yvelines), the town where he settled in the 1930s. He completed his days in Vernouillet, where the cultural space and a street bear his name. A tribute exhibition bringing together nearly 270 paintings and drawings is to be discovered at the Manège Royal until Sunday.



Pierre Bosco lived almost all his life in Saint-Germain-en-Laye. He died in Vernouillet in 1993 at the age of 84.

This retrospective of the artist's work was imagined by his son, Stéphane, who wanted "to rediscover his father's painting". Principal of the Jean-Moulin high school in Chesnay-Rocquencourt, he put his students to work for the scenography and associated two other general-purpose establishments in setting up the exhibition: the Jean-Perrin high school in Saint-Cyr-l'École and Garamont high school in Colombes (Hauts-de-Seine).



The exhibition was designed by high school students from specialized courses.

Cockfights, platoons and footballers

The pieces exhibited are essentially from “family background”, or lent by individuals. The panel is large enough to grasp the evolution of the work of the man known to the general public mainly for his horse races, his cockfights or his pelotons of cyclists.



We thus discover that Pierre Bosco went through many pictorial styles. His first paintings are indeed directly in line with the Nabi movement, a current carried by another illustrious inhabitant of Saint-Germain, a certain Maurice Denis.

But it was through abstract painting just after the Second World War – a style he later abandoned – that Bosco really found his mark: a particularly dense impasto with thick layers of paint spread with a knife to create the movement and give relief to certain subjects. “Subjects that are often the same, but what interested him was the way to deal with them,” notes Stéphane Bosco. Part of the artist’s palette is on display: a veritable heap of solidified oil with period tubes and their caps trapped in the material. There are “several kilos of paint” there which “gives an idea of the way he worked”.



The artist's palette, exhibited to the general public, testifies to his working methods. LP/Sebastien Birden

An artist prized by Hollywood in the 1960s

Pierre Bosco, partner of “a very great art dealer”, knew how to make himself known during his lifetime on all continents. Prized in particular in Sweden, “because his paintings correspond well with the very refined Nordic design”, the artist sold many works in Japan but especially in the United States where his work was particularly “fashionable”, especially in the 1980s. 1960 after a resoundingly successful exhibition. Witness the paintings that joined the collections of some of the great Hollywood stars of the time, such as Robert Mitchum and Kirk Douglas.



However, Pierre Bosco's work could have had more impact, especially in France, if the painter had lent himself a little more to the game of society life at a certain time. At least that's what his son thinks, who "fought with him for a long time" to get the artist to make concessions. But Pierre Bosco "wanted to remain free", not hesitating to refuse an exhibition, and seemed to prefer by far his studio to the salons. "His work deserves more public recognition," concludes Stéphane Bosco. This is the meaning of this tribute".

Until Sunday (1 p.m. to 7 p.m.) at the Manège Royal in Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Free admission.