



## **Lluís Graner**

Barcelona, 1863 – 1929

### *Man at the tavern*

1898

Oil on canvas

93 x 120 cm; 36 5/8 x 47 1/4 in

### **Awards**

**1888** Medal at the Barcelona Universal Exposition

**1889** Mention at the Paris Universal Exposition

**1894** Queen Regent's Extraordinary Award at the Exposición General de Bellas Artes de Barcelona

**1895 and 1901** Medals at the Exposiciones Nacionales

**1901** Member of the French Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts.

### **Museums**

Museo nacional del Prado, Madrid

Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid

Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona

Montgomery Museum de Alabama

Delgado Museum, Nueva Orleans

Hispanic Society, new York

The Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC

Graner's beginnings in the art world were atypical. In 1878, at the age of fifteen, he travelled to Puerto Rico to work in the retail trade. Due to health issues he had to return to Barcelona and, upon his recovery, went back to Puerto Rico. From there to Havana, where he ended up living poorly until one day he found a family friend, who took care of him and brought him back to Spain in 1873, at the age of twenty. He then enrolled at the Llotja school in Barcelona. During his studies he won all the awards, and in 1886, he obtained a scholarship from the Diputació of Barcelona, the programme included spending three months in Madrid and seven in Rome. The short stay in Madrid was totally decisive in his artistic future, since he studied the masters of the Spanish "Golden Age", such as Zurbarán, Ribera and, especially, Velázquez.

On his return, Graner opened a private art academy in Barcelona, which students like Joaquín Mir or Isidro Nonell passed through, later going onto become great painters themselves. He decided to close the academy shortly after to focus on participating to international exhibitions. He became very successful in Barcelona, particularly with paintings of night scenes and their light effects. Graner regularly attended the Campo de Marte society exhibitions in Paris, and the Ajuntament de Barcelona acquired "La Fragua", a work that would have won first prize at the Barcelona Fine Arts Exhibition.

Graner participated in the Nacionales de Bellas Artes and the great European competitions, including Paris in 1889, Berlin in 1891, Munich in 1892, and Düsseldorf in 1904. From 1901, he focused on the production of monumental paintings, such as "The Red Committee", now in the Prado Museum, and also poetic studies of landscapes and marine scenes, such as *Boats on the sand*, c. 1895, another work of his in our exhibition. He was a skilled painter of multiple genres: seascapes, landscapes and interior scenes, both in daylight and night light. Nobody equaled him in the treatment of artificial lights.



Fig. 1 Lluís graner I Arrufi, *Boats on the sand*, c. 1895, Oil on canvas, 60 x 102 cm

He excelled in portraits, where the influence of Velázquez is clear, as in our work, *Man at the tavern*. From the hand of the Parisian dealer Edouard Berrandus, Graner started an American period that any artist would have wanted. In 1910, he inaugurated the exhibition "Lluís Graner and Gisart" at the Edouard Berrandus Gallery, on Fifth Avenue in New York. In early April 1911, he presented another exhibition with 76 works at the California Club of San Francisco. This was the largest single-artist show to date, in the city that was devastated by 1906 earthquake. During the San Francisco exhibition, the President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt, praised the work of the Catalan painter; Graner took advantage of those long stays to portray the American high society. In fact, the portrait of Roosevelt Jr. and his wife was displayed at this show. Graner held two more exhibitions in New York and moved in circles at the exclusive New Port casino, while he continued exhibiting in New Orleans, Santiago de Chile, Rio de Janeiro, Mar de Plata, Montevideo, and Chicago. He, evidently, made strong night landscapes in the vicinity of the Hudson River and New Orleans port. He dived in California and painted the chromatic variety of the seabed. After twenty years in America, he returned to Barcelona in 1928, and died a year later.



Lluís Graner i Arrufi, *Portrait of an old man*.