



Lluís Graner

Barcelona 1863–1929

Boats on the sand

c. 1895

Oil on canvas

60 x 102 cm

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

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.

Lluís Graner is not only one of the masters of realism in Catalan painting towards the end of the 19th century, but also the painter of light, which he captured in all its forms, from natural light in *plein air* to domestic interiors bathed in the orange light of oil lamps. He was trained at the School of Fine Arts in Barcelona ('La Llotja'). Thanks to a grant from the Barcelona Provincial Council, he travelled to Madrid and Paris. His relationship with the Catalan painter Simó Gómez and the admiration he felt for the work of Velázquez and Zurbarán must have encouraged him to paint along the lines of social realism. He was also a theatre impresario and well-off enough to be admitted as a member of the city's wealthy intellectual elite, which he portrayed with great skill.

Graner was also interested in landscapes, especially night views. Lights twinkling on the waters of a harbour in the middle of the night, the flickering light of a lamp illuminating a dark room – an element in common with 17th-century naturalism – or misty atmospheres achieved by a combination of thick brushstrokes not unlike Impressionist techniques, make up the suggestive aesthetic universe of this unique artist.

Beyond the modernity of his work as a painter, Graner's artistic personality is an unquestionable example of the restlessness and creativity of Modernisme. He was an active member of such institutions as the Cercle Artístic, the Cercle de Sant Lluc and the Artistic and Literary Society of Catalonia. His eagerness to experiment with the Wagnerian concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* ('total work of art') led him to devise theatrical productions that combined various forms of artistic expression, including painting, music, literature and even cinema.

This is why in 1904 he abandoned painting to open and direct the Gaudinian Sala Mercè – where he produced and released his unique "musical visions" and "intimate films" – and, shortly afterwards, the Espectacles i Audicions Graner. Great names from the contemporary cultural scene collaborated in his efforts, such as Adrià Gual, Joan Maragall, Segundo de Chomón and Enric Morera. However, the financial failure of Graner's most ambitious project forced him to return to painting and leave for America, where he painted beautiful seascapes. He did not return to Barcelona until 1924, where he died five years later.



Lluís Graner i Arrufi, *Port at night*, 1900 ca. Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid



Lluís Graner i Arrufi, *Boats in a Harbour*



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