Raoul Dufy 1877 - 1953

1877 - Birth of Raoul Dufy in Le Havre on June 3 in a family of 9 children. His father is in the metals business and a keen organist.

1891 - Forced to leave school at 14 after winning first prize in drawing. Works for Swiss import firm of Brazilian coffee. Learns German at work.

1892 - Takes evening classes at the municipal school of fine arts, copies antique casts. Studies under Charles Lhullier pupil of Cabanel and friend of pre-Impressionist painter Eugene Boudin. Meets young painter (born 1879) Othon Friesz. They share a studio in rented maid's room.

1895-98 - Practices plein-air painting on Sundays (Le Havre, Honfleur, Falaise.) Studies older masters in museums of Le Havre and Rouen.

1897 - Othon Friesz moves to Paris.

1898 - Military service for a year.

1900 - Wins scholarship to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris under Léon Bonnat. Discovers modern painting in Durand-Ruel (Impressionists) and Vollard (Post-Impressionists) galleries. In Louvre most admires Giorgione and Claude Lorrain. Lives rue Cortot in Montmartre; his early drawing style closest to Toulouse-Lautrec and his painting to the Impressionist painter Guillaumin.

1901 - Shows view of Le Havre at Salon.

1903 - Exhibited in group show at Berthe Weill gallery and shows 2 pictures at Salon des Indépendants, one bought by Nabi painter Maurice Denis. Moves to rue Victor Massé. Paints in Martigues in the south.
1904 – visits Fécamp (Normandy coast) with painter Albert Marquet. Georges Braque arrives in Montmartre and joins Dufy-Friesz circle. Studio at Quai de Bourbon.

1905 – Discovers Matisse’s painting in famous “Fauve” room at Salon d’Automne. Beginning of his Fauve style, paints in Marseille.

1906 – First solo show at Berthe Weill’s. Works with Braque, Marquet and Friesz in Normandy. Shows two Rues pavoisées at Salon d’Automne.

1907 – Spends summer in Sainte-Adresse near Le Havre and the autumn in Martigues and Marseilles. Great Cézanne retrospective at Salon d’Automne.

1908 – Paints with Braque at L’Estaque near Marseilles; abandons Fauve colors for a Cézannesque palette. Experiments with deliberately naive, child-like style.


1911 – Commissioned by couturier Paul Poiret to decorate Pavilion de Butard and his notepaper. Experiments with textile printing in Ecole Martine and Petite Usine; founded by Poiret. Paints awning for Poiret’s; marries Emilienne Brisson.


1914 – War breaks out, drives van for military postal service.

1915 – Produces 100 fabric designs until 1919 assisted by Gabrielle Fournier.

1916 – art moderne en France exhibition at Poiret’s Barbansanges gallery organised by poet André Salmon.

1917 – Supervises art at the Musée de la Guerre under Camille Bloch.

1919 – Meets writer and critic Paul Valéry. Works for Poiret’s Oasis theater.

1920 – Scenery with Fauconnet for Jean

1921 – Seven fabrics exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs (participates through 1920's to 1940's.) First solo show at Galerie Bernheim-Jeune (regular exhibitions until 1932).

1922 – Meets his greatest collector, Dr Roudinesco, through art critic Gustave Coquiot. Sets for ballet Frivolant.


1923 - First ceramics in collaboration with Artigas (until 1930.). Successful exhibitions at Galerie Barbazanges, Paris and at Galerie Le Centaure, Brussels.


1930 – More exhibitions, paints in England, (commission for Kessler family portrait) begins collaboration with Marie Cuttoli for tapestry designs (to 1940) and Maison Onondaga, New York for fabric.

1931 – More monographs on his work commissioned by Dr Roudinesco to illustrate Daudet's Tartarin de Tarascon (works on project until 1937), shows in Brussels, Zurich, Prague.

1932 – First furniture exhibition at Bernheim-Jeune and portrait of world leader.
heavy weight boxing champion Primo Carrera in London.


1934 – First Châteaux de la Loire watercolors (until 1938.)

1935 – Proposes to decorate swimming pool of ocean liner Normandie. Withdraws after project is thrown open to competition.


1937 – La Fée Electricité mural for the Palais de la Lumière of the Paris World’s Fair. Travels to Pittsburgh as member of Carnegie Prize Jury. First attack of polyarthritis. Beginning of mural for Palais de Chaillot theatre bar. Subject is course of the Seine from Paris to the estuary at Le Havre.


1939 – Decorative panels for monkey house at Jardin de Plantes, Paris (famous explorers, Kipling).

1940 – Moves to Nice and then Ceret in the south. Meets Gertrude Stein while on cure in Aix-les-Bains. Increasingly crippled. He settles in Perpignan where he keeps a studio until 1946.

1941 – Meets dealer Louis Carré, shows watercolors at his gallery. First copies of Renoir’s Moulin de la Galette.


1945 – First Cargo noir paintings.


1948 - Publication of Cocteau monograph on Dufy. Tapestry show at Carré.


1950 - Exhibits in Fauve retrospective that travels across Europe and to New York. Sails to Boston to be treated at the Jewish Memorial Hospital.


1952 - Greatest retrospective to date at Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva. 41 paintings at Venice bienalle, awarded the prestigious Grand Prix. Donates the prize money to younger artists (Lapicque, Vedova.)