

Lovis Corinth 1858 - 1925

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1858 – Born in Tapiaw, East Prussia son of Franz Heinrich, successful tanner and farm manager, and his first cousin Amalia who already has 5 children from previous marriage. Adores his father who encourages his early drawing.

1866-73 – Attends lyceum in Königsberg. Adores literature, mythology and biblical stories.

1873 - Death of his mother. Leaves school with the intention of becoming a painter. Very ambitious and energetic but also prone to frequent bouts of melancholy and depression.

1876 – Enrolls at Königsberg academy of fine arts.

1880-84 – Arrives in Munich, the artistic Mecca of 19c Germany. Studies first with von Defregger and then the more modern von Löfftz. Learns the Dutch painting manner of “wet on wet”, that allies old master glazing with Impressionist impasto and sketchiness. Discovers the realism of Leibl (1844-1900) and Trübner(1851-1917).

1884 – Trip to Antwerp and Paris where he enrolls in the prestigious Académie Julian. He studies under the salon master William Bouguereau (1825-1905) and Robert-Fleury. Learns the Ingresque and French academic manner. Sees works by the popular realist Bastien-Lepage (1848-1884) but not the Impressionists.

1887– Disappointed by his reception in the Paris salon leaves for Berlin. Meets Walter Lestikow (1865-1908) and Max Klinger (1857-1920) among other artists. Adopts nickname of “Lovis” replacing “Louis”.

1888 – Paints his father on his deathbed.

1889 – His inheritance after his father’s death assures his financial independence. Settles in Königsberg where he exhibits with von Lenbach (1836-1904) and Böcklin (1827-1901).

1891 – Moves to Munich for next 9 years. Settles in bohemian/artistic neighborhood of Schwabing.

1892 – Co-founder with other young painters (Liebermann, Thoma, von Stuck) of the Munich Secession in rebellion against the conservative and nationalist art establishment (von Lebach). Corinth’s work balances in between the contradictory currents of the day: academic art, symbolism, realism. Will later found an even more liberal artists’ association the Freie Vereinigung which will get him excluded from the Secession.

1895 – First sale in Berlin for the considerable sum of 1350 marks of the “Descent from the Cross”; winner of gold medal in Berlin exhibition.

1897 - Visits Italy. In the circle of radical review Simplicissimus and new Schwabing writers (Halbe, von Keyserling, Wedekind).

1898 – Founding year of the Berlin Secession by Max Liebermann. Closer association with Liebermann and Leistikow in Berlin. Obtains many portrait high society commissions in the capital.

1900 – Exhibits Salome at second show of Berlin Secession. Solo show at Paul Cassirer’s, most influential Berlin art dealer. Beginning of annual self portraits.

1901 – Moves to Berlin, joins Secession now presided by Cassirer. Taken up with enthusiasm by Berlin society as a genial bear, caricatured as the “butcher-painter”. Founds school for lady painters. Meets 20-year old Charlotte Berend (1880-1967) from wealthy Jewish family. She will remain his muse and favorite model for the rest of his life.

1902 – Travels to Paris, Antwerp, Holland.

1903 – Marries Charlotte.

1904 – Birth of son Thomas. His family becomes increasingly one of his main subjects (80 paintings 100’s of drawings and prints). Discovers Cézanne in Cassirer exhibition. Cassirer declares him with Slevogt and Lieberman part of the “German Impressionist triumvirate.”

1906 – Discovers Manet in Cassirer exhibition. Begins his autobiography (published by Charlotte in 1926).

1907 – Teaches (until 1911) in new Berlin art school launched by sculptor Lewin-Funcke. Takes under his wing the future Expressionist August Macke.

1909 – Birth of daughter Wilhelmine.

1910 – Climax of his career. Shows at Munich Secession and Venice biennale.

1911 – After Liebermann's resignation he is elected president of Berlin Secession. Growing anti-French sentiment in artistic circles gathers force when the Bremen kunsthalle buys a Van Gogh. Though Corinth deeply admires Manet and Cézanne he has little patience with the experiments of the new Expressionist generation much indebted to French Post-Impressionism and Fauvism. Grave cerebral attack paralyzes temporarily left side of his body.

1912 – Convalescence with Charlotte in Bordighera in Italy. Paints “Samson Blinded”.

1913 – Retrospective of 228 works at Berlin Secession organized by Cassirer. Increasing conflicts, however, within organization will lead to resignation of Liebermann, Slevogt and Cassirer himself. Corinth remains as main power. Named president of Secession he will retain the title until his death. He signs on with new dealer Fritz Gurlitt. Shown in numerous personal and group exhibitions across Germany. Book on him by Georg Biermann is published.

1914 – Fervently patriotic at declaration of war.

1916-18– Frequent visits to home town Tapiau and Königsberg damaged by war.

1918 – Solemn banquet for this 60th birthday at Secession. Named professor at Berlin academy of art.

German defeat and revolution will profoundly shaken and depress him.

1919 – Escapes Berlin with family for Bavaria where Charlotte builds chalet on lake Walchen. Elected member of Berlin Academy of art and doctor honoris causa by University of Königsberg.

1923 – Honored with great retrospective at Kronprinzenpalais in Berlin.

1924 – Second great retrospective for 200th anniversary of Emmanuel Kant at Königsberg. More exhibitions in Zurich, Bern, and Hamburg in 1925.

1925 – In his final year he will paint 150 pictures including 60 views of lake Walchen. Visits Amsterdam to see Rembrandt and Hals. Catches pneumonia and dies in Holland on 17 July. He will be buried in Berlin.

1926 – Memorial exhibitions at National Gallery and academy.

1936 – Nazi regime invents a second cerebral attack to explain “degenerate” quality of post-1918 works thereby preserving earlier art for admiration in German national pantheon. 295 of his later works confiscated and excluded from national collections.