

## Antoine Blanchard

Antoine Blanchard was often introduced to collectors as the foremost artist of Parisian street scenes of his day. Like his predecessors, the French masters Galien-Laloue, Cortes, Loir and Utrillo, Blanchard has made an impact on contemporary art.

Born in 1910 in a small village near Blois in the Loire Valley, Blanchard was encouraged at a young age to enter the arts. His parents first sent him as a young boy to an art school in Blois, and then relocated the entire family to Rennes in Brittany so that young Antoine could study there at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Three years later, in 1932, the young artist moved to Paris in order to study at its world famous Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Upon completion of his studies, Blanchard was awarded the Prix de Rome, an honor rarely given to an artist of his young age.

The following years were spent in Paris recording scenes of the city's bustling streets characterized by glowing street lamps, flower vendors pushing carts full of brilliantly-colored bouquets and fashionable pedestrians crowding the sidewalks. The artist, whose works were an immediate success, favored the styles of Eugene Galien-Laloue and Edouard Cortes. Indeed, critics have compared his works to the traditional Paris street scenes painted in the late 1800s and early 1900s in both style and subject matter. It is, however, important to note that Blanchard's pieces are more delicate in brushwork, more generous in color and more alive in movement than those of his predecessors.

Combining his years of classical training with innovative techniques of the 20th century, Blanchard was a trendsetter. The artist's works executed throughout his fifty-year-long career are witness to his gradual development in technique, moving from heavy and dark tones similar to those of the old masters, to a new style using numerous strokes of color lightly applied to the canvas. With immense imagination, profound understanding of color and light and accuracy in architectural detail, Blanchard has continually delighted the art world with his compositions.

In 1979, his large canvas *Le Café de la Paix* won the Premier Grand Prix at the first art competition held in Paris' famed Café de la Paix on the bustling Boulevard des Capucines. That work is now part of a major collection in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Spanning five decades of ceaseless hours spent in front of the easel, Blanchard's career was fired by a pressing goal to continually excel. This strict discipline did not, however, harden his work—it proved only to refine it. Along with Utrillo, Loir, Guys, Galien-Laloue and Cortes, Antoine Blanchard is one of the great impressionists of modern times.

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