

Royo

Born in 1945 in Valencia, Spain, Jose Mateu San Hilario, "Royo", began demonstrating his artistic talent early. At the age of 9 his father, a prominent physician and avid art enthusiast, employed private tutors to instruct Royo in drawing, painting, and sculpture. When Royo turned 14 he entered the San Carlos Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Valencia. Upon turning 18 Royo continued his artistic studies privately with Aldolfo Ferrer Amblat, Chairman of Art Studies at the San Carlos Academy. He also visited the major museums in Europe at this time to study the famous masters-Velasquez, Goya, Renoir, Monet, and Sorolla among others.

During the mid-60's-early 70's Royo added more dimensions to his skills creating theatre sets and doing graphic illustration and restoration work. He also participated in prestigious competitions gaining major distinctions. In 1968 he began to exhibit in Spain, specifically Lisbon, Madrid and Barcelona. With positive reception of his works in Madrid, Royo received commissions to paint the royal portraits of King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia. He received subsequent commissions to paint the Judges of the High Magistrature and the Court of Justice, as well as prominent political and society figures.

At the age of 25 Royo began feeling a growing desire to paint the land of his birth; to convey the light, the color and the intensity of Valencia and the Mediterranean. This meant a new focus and change of style in his work; he needed to perfect new ways to capture the light, the shadow and to work on classical composition styles. Through the 1980's Royo perfected his style of painting the Mediterranean and exhibited abroad, notably in London, Brussels, Copenhagen and Paris. He also participated in the International Geneva Art Fair.

Beginning in 1989 and continuing until today we see the development of Royo's "matured" style. His dramatic use of color and "texturing" capture his subject matter with unique flair. Parallels can be drawn to the work of the European masters; for example, with Royo's "homage to the female form," we see the distinct influence of Renoir. It is the similar, almost portrait-like treatment of the female model, caught in a serene, contemplative moment, with the surrounding "bursts" of color from the floral landscapes where we see the "Renoir" in Royo's work. In fact, critics have concluded, "If the artwork of Renoir were blended with that of the 'Valencian painters' you would arrive at the canvasses approaching the uniqueness of the impressive work of Royo."

Impressive parallels can also be drawn between Royo's work and that of the Spanish master, Joaquin Sorolla. Both were born in Valencia, both were classically trained, both "matured" into styles of painting capturing the dramatic visual essence of their homeland-Valencia and the Mediterranean Sea. They have both been described as "painters of the Light"; some have said, "of the Light of the South," that is, the southern coast of Spain. It is the overwhelming influence of Sorolla blended with his own style that make Royo's masterful treatment of the Mediterranean subjects both haunting and mysterious, yet full of raw power at the same time. The sweeping brush strokes, bold swaths of color, and heavy impasto capture the eye and draws one inward until that final absolute moment of awareness that one is actually there in the scene feeling the light and heat of the sun, the salt and sea spray, and hearing the crashing surf. Royo conveys not merely image, but mood and atmosphere as well. This is rare in today's art world; hence the connoisseur is compelled to compare with the old masters. Thus, the appeal of Royo's work for today's collector becomes obvious. With pride we offer the art work of today's Spanish master painter, Royo, to the art connoisseurs of the world.

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