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| Pettoruti, Emilio (1892-1971) |
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| Emilio Pettoruti was born in the city of La Plata, Argentina, the modern, geometric layout of which would make appearances in his art later in his life. In 1913, Pettoruti received a scholarship from the government of Argentina and travelled to Italy. He studied Italian art of the fourteenth century and also got to know a number of avant-garde artists involved with Futurism. Pettoruti decided to extend his time in Europe by working in different countries. In Paris, he became acquainted with artists such as Pablo Picasso, Kees van Dongen, and Juan Gris, who had a major influence on his artwork. He participated in an exhibition in Herberth Walden’s famous Der Sturm Gallery in Berlin in 1923 and became a well-known modern artist. The avant-garde magazine *Martín Fierro* defined Pettoruti’s artwork (as they did the art of Pettoruti’s friend, Xul Solar) as *Criollismo*, a term from literature, which entails the use of a realist style to portray scenes and customs of one’s native country. Pettoruti’s style is a modern concept of harmony, order, geometric forms, and a combination of science and the spiritual. Technique, light, colour, and movement are the most important characteristics of his art. |
| Emilio Pettoruti was born in the city of La Plata, Argentina, the modern, geometric layout of which would make appearances in his art later in his life. In 1913, Pettoruti received a scholarship from the government of Argentina and travelled to Italy. He studied Italian art of the fourteenth century and also got to know a number of avant-garde artists involved with Futurism. Pettoruti decided to extend his time in Europe by working in different countries. In Paris, he became acquainted with artists such as Pablo Picasso, Kees van Dongen, and Juan Gris, who had a major influence on his artwork. He participated in an exhibition in Herberth Walden’s famous Der Sturm Gallery in Berlin in 1923 and became a well-known modern artist. The avant-garde magazine *Martín Fierro* defined Pettoruti’s artwork (as they did the art of Pettoruti’s friend, Xul Solar) as *Criollismo*, a term from literature, which entails the use of a realist style to portray scenes and customs of one’s native country. Pettoruti’s style is a modern concept of harmony, order, geometric forms, and a combination of science and the spiritual. Technique, light, colour, and movement are the most important characteristics of his art.  Pettoruti did not want his art to be categorised as one specific style; he constantly changed his style throughout his career. He is well-known for his paintings, but the artist also made theatre costumes, set designs, stained glass windows, and mosaics. An example of his mosaic is *Meditazione* (1915), which shows a woman at the front of the mosaic and an abstract colour field landscape in the background.  File: Pettoruti\_Meditazione\_1915.jpg  Figure : Pettoruti, *Meditazione* (1915). <http://www.epdlp.com/cuadro.php?id=687>.  In 1924, Pettoruti decided to go back to Argentina due to family circumstances. He created a scandal with his exhibition at the Witcomb Gallery at Calle Floridain October 1924 because modernist art had not yet been accepted in Argentina. The art collectors, mainly rich landowners, preferred paintings with gauchos, cattle, and landscapes in the reigning impressionist style. Pettoruti’s cubist paintings threatened the existing cultural order. However, some welcomed him with open arms. With this exhibition in 1924, Pettoruti tried to expand the freedom of expression by introducing aesthetic modernity in Argentina, and opened doors for many Argentine painters.  Musicians are the main subject of Pettoruti’s paintings. He displayed musicians alone or in a group, always with their eyes hidden. The musicians depicted were often associated with the tango, which represented Argentine culture, as seen in his painting *Bailarines* (1918). This painting also shows Pettoruti’s abstract style and his use of colour fields.Another subject of his paintings were harlequins, again depicted with their eyes covered by masks, to present the human being as anonymous and lacking individuality. Pettoruti also painted still-lifes, like *Sombras en la Ventana,* which were characterised by colour fields used to flatten forms and light to magnify the flattening effect.  File: Pettoruti\_Bailarines\_1918.jpg  Figure : Pettoruti, Bailarines (1918). Oil on canvas, 77 x 55 cm. Musei Emilio Caraffa <www.museocaraffa.org.ar>.  In 1930, Pettoruti was named director of the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes in his hometown, La Plata. He modified the collection of the museum, adding many modernist artworks. He remained director until 1947. He experienced success as an artist during this period, with his first solo exhibition in the United States in 1942 and many other exhibitions in Europe, as well.  In the 1950s, Pettoruti almost only painted fully abstract paintings in which he used the communicative power of colour and the order of forms. His futuristic and cubist style and his use of colour and light led him towards the creation of abstract art. An example of this style is the painting *Farfalla*, where he used the colour yellow and simplistic forms in the centre of the canvas.  In 1952, Pettoruti and his family decided to go back to Europe because President Juan Perón’s government limited his freedom as a modern artist. Pettoruti settled down in Paris and wrote his autobiography *Un Pintor ante el Espejo* [*A Painter before the Mirror*] in 1968. He died three years later in Paris. List of Works: *Meditazione* (1915)  *Bailarines* (1920)  *Sombras en la ventana* (1925)  *Arlequin* (1928)  *Vino Rosso* (1940)  *Sol Argentino* (1941)  *Winter in Paris* (1955)  *Farfalla* (1961) |
| Further reading:  (Colección de Arte Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat)  (Fundacion Pettoruti)  (Giunta)  (Lucie-Smith)  (Pettoruti)  (Sullivan) |