
Dagnan-Bouveret, P(ascal-)A(dolphe-)J(ean)

(b Paris, Jan 7, 1852; d Quincey, Haute-Saône, July 3, 1929).

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French painter. He refused to leave France when his father Bernard Dagnan moved to Brazil in 1868, and he remained with his maternal grandfather in Melun (nr Paris). Later he added the maternal surname Bouveret to his own in gratitude for his grandfather's support, which enabled him to study in Paris.

In 1869 Dagnan-Bouveret entered the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and studied in the atelier of Alexandre Cabanel. After a few months he joined the atelier of Jean-Léon Gérôme, where he trained as a draughtsman and painter. In 1875 his first works, a painting entitled *Atalante* (purchased by the State; Melun, Mus. Melun) and two drawings, were accepted at the Salon. The next year Dagnan-Bouveret received a second place in the Prix de Rome for *Priam Asking Achilles for the Body of his Son* (untraced) and a first prize for painting the human figure at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. In 1878 he won a third-class medal at the Salon and left the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, along with his friend the genre painter Gustave Courtois (1853–1923). They went to the Franche-Comté, Courtois's native region, where Dagnan-Bouveret met and eventually married Courtois's cousin Maria Walter. The provincial life of the Franche-Comté provided numerous themes for many of Dagnan-Bouveret's landscape, still-life and genre paintings and sketches. Some of these reflected an interest in atmosphere, while others explored the effects of light and shade in a manner reminiscent of 17th-century Dutch masters. *An Accident* (exh. Salon 1880; Baltimore, MD, Walters A.G.), depicting a village doctor tending the injured hand of a peasant boy, established Dagnan-Bouveret as a naturalistic painter of great exactitude, interested in psychological character and intent on recording the customs of the region.

Like his friend Jules Bastien-Lepage, Dagnan-Bouveret painted mythological scenes and portraits of his friends and family for the Salons. The anecdotal *Wedding Party at the Photographer's Studio* (1879; Lyon, Mus. B.-A.) displayed an almost photographic realism and was an early example of the artist's interest in photography as a theme for painting.

In 1885 Dagnan-Bouveret's large naturalistic canvas *Horses at the Watering Trough* (purchased by the State; Chambéry, Mus. B.-A.) was shown at the Salon and established him as a major figure of the Salon naturalistic school. Critics commented on the painstaking exactitude of the composition and the photographic realism of both horses and handler. For the horses, Dagnan-Bouveret had used a series of photographs (taken in the Franche-Comté). Although he never revealed this device to his public, it aided him in effectively capturing natural poses and detail.

In the same year Dagnan-Bouveret made his first visit to Brittany. *Pardon—Brittany* (1887; New York, Met.) is a naturalistic rendering of a peasant religious celebration based on scenes from Breton folklore. Again he combined preliminary sketches with photographs of models to achieve his effects. To translate the composition from one medium to another he traced photographs of his posed models, dressed in traditional Breton costume, for his colour studies.

During the 1890s Dagnan-Bouveret turned from naturalistic genre compositions to concentrate on portraiture and themes of religious mysticism. His fashionable, idealized portraits were popular with wealthy patrons and provided him with a high income, enabling him to work on religious paintings, including a *Supper at Emmaus* (1896–7; Pittsburgh, PA, Carnegie Mus. A.). The later canvases confirmed Dagnan-Bouveret's fame and importance at the Salons of the 1890s. During the rest of his life he developed numerous large-scale religious themes, which suggest conversion to intense Catholicism and owe much to Italian Renaissance prototypes, such as Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*. Dagnan-Bouveret selected his models from the people of his local town, Vesoul; by dressing these models in appropriate historical garments and then photographing them, he was able to reconstruct an image of the past while maintaining a naturalist's inclination for exact detail within a mystical setting.

Dagnan-Bouveret received numerous awards, including nomination as Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur (1885) and as a member of the Institut de France (1900).

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