



financial depressions, he was able to find beauty in everyday things. This concept is thoroughly explored in *Raoul Dufy: A Celebration of Beauty*, which presents more than 200 works of art by the artist.

Widely known as a painter, especially in recent years, Dufy was actually a master of many crafts, including painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, textiles, and commercial design. His oeuvre consists of thousands of drawings and paintings, hundreds of ceramics, theater and commercial designs, and nearly 5,000 patterns designed for fabric. In fact, while Dufy was famous for his traditional artwork, he had a profound impact on the textile and fashion industry that continues today.

An established artist by the turn of the twentieth century, Dufy was already working with other well-known artists on creative projects. Around 1910, leading French couturier Paul Poiret became fascinated with Dufy after seeing some of his wood-block prints. The two men quickly became friends and business partners, joining forces at their "Petite Usine," or Little Factory, to create a number of fabric designs for Poiret's fashions. Shortly after their meeting, Dufy continued a partnership with the poet Guillaume Apollinaire, working to create complementary woodcut illustrations for the book *Le Bestiaire, ou Cortège d'Orpheus*. The book was a collection of poems and illustrations on a number of animals as well as the Greek character of Orpheus, a master of the lyre and known for his ability to charm nature. In the Petite Usine, Dufy transferred his beautiful woodcut patterns into decoration for fabric and even tapestries.

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Charles Bianchini, a founder of the leading French silk manufacturer Atuyer, Bianchini et Férier (later, Bianchini-Férier), soon learned of Dufy's designing fabric for Poiret, and in an effort to progress his own business contracted Dufy in 1912 to work exclusively with his company on fabric design. Among the first and most successful patterns to come from the Lyon-based company were those from the series based on Dufy's *Bestiaire* woodcuts. Animals like the elephant, leopard, and turtle were soon printed on or woven in silk, and this fabric was used for anything from home furnishings to high fashion. These contributions are still influential today in high fashion and in mainstream fashion. In fact, Bianchini-Férier has continually produced Dufy-designed fabric, and in addition to producing fabric designed by the artist, the company's Brochier Soeries brand now offers ties and scarves featuring the beloved patterns.

One wonderful quality of Dufy's artwork is that his unique style is distinguishable no matter the medium in which the artist worked. Raoul Dufy began creating and studying art as a teenager, during the time of the impressionists. And while he became infatuated with the expression of light in his art, he was much more concerned with the passage of time than he was with portraying a fleeting moment. He combined his fascination with light with the bold, colorful strokes he employed as a fauve to create a unique, almost whimsical style. He was not concerned with copying nature, but he internalized scenes before recording them on paper or canvas, making sure to capture the essence or feel of a subject more than details. As a result, the color of a subject often appears somewhat off-register with its outline, as if the hue is trying to catch up with its still-moving owner. Beyond stylistic consistency, there is consistency in theme in the artwork of Raoul Dufy. Throughout his long career as an artist, he focused on subjects that interested him in his daily life. Most pervasive are the themes of boating, horse racing, florals and still lifes, music, and threshing or countryside scenes.

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Raoul Dufy: A Celebration of Beauty offers an incredible chance for viewers to see a large body of work by one of France's most beloved artists. The exhibition at the Mississippi Museum of Art includes about 100 paintings, about 100 fabric designs, and more than ten dresses created from Dufy fabric. The majority of the works on display are from a private collection in Belgium or from the archives of Bianchini-Férier in France, and have never traveled to North America. Visitors to the exhibition can expect a broad selection of paintings and drawings as an introduction to the artist's style. The expansive show culminates with numerous gouache designs for fabric alongside actual, large swatches of the finished Bianchini-Férier textiles and dresses, both vintage and contemporary. Highlights include paintings with well-known Dufy themes, such as *The Yellow Console* from 1949, *Decorated Boats* from 1946, *Paddock at Nice* from 1927, and sketches from large mural commissions for the steamliner *Normandy* and for *The Electricity Fairy*. In the textile portion of the exhibition, viewers can observe designs, fabrics, and a dress that use the *Bestiaire* designs; whimsical fabrics that focus on bullfighting, tennis playing, and the like; and an original shawl presented to Madame Poiret by the artist himself.

The Museum has planned a number of accompanying programs for *Raoul Dufy: A Celebration of Beauty*. Before ever entering the galleries, visitors will be surrounded with Dufy-designed fabrics used for installations in the Museum's public spaces, and products made from Dufy fabric may be purchased in The Museum Store. The Museum offers an Acoustiguide audio tour free with paid admission that will feature informative narration as well as commentary by the exhibition's curator Shirley Reiff Howarth. The exhibition includes two Family Corners and one Closer Look Gallery that offer an in-depth look at various themes related to Dufy. One particular education space presents actual wood blocks from the Bianchini-Férier factory and photographs illustrating the process of printing fabrics. Beyond the ongoing offerings at the Museum are a number of entertaining and educational programs for the Dufy exhibition, like exhibition-inspired versions of "Museum Reads" and "Unburied Treasures," and a new, free, midday discussion of works in the galleries called "Déjeuner with Dufy." For more information on programs, see the calendar section of this newsletter, and for more information about *Raoul Dufy: A Celebration of Beauty*, Dufy programs, or other happenings at the Museum, call 601.960.1515 or visit our web site at www.msmuseumart.org.

The Dufy exhibition has been organized by the Humanities Exchange, Montreal, Canada, and the exhibition tour is managed by Landau Traveling Exhibitions, Los Angeles, California.