

SAMUEL JOHN PEPLAE (RSA) (1871-1935)

Samuel John Peploe was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1871. He was the oldest artist in the group of artists known as the Scottish Colourists. Peploe had good ability in drawing and painting. By 1893, he had enrolled for art classes in The Trustees' Academy, which later became the Edinburgh College of Art. The following year he was in Paris, at the Academie Julian, studying art.

From 1901, Peploe began a lifelong habit of taking painting trips to Northern France and to the Scottish Hebrides (mainly Iona), with artist J.D. Fergusson. He often exhibited paintings at the Royal Scottish Academy, and had his first one-man show at the Scottish Gallery in 1903. His second one-man exhibition was in 1909.

He is best known for his Still Lifes of tulips, fruits, vases and household objects. He concentrated on a few simple objects: Chinese vases, a black fan, a book, fruit, fabric and flowers - and in particular, tulips or roses. Peploe's 1905 painting "*Still Life with Coffee Pot*", sold in May 2011 at Christie's Art auction in London, for £937,250. It holds the record for the most expensive Scottish painting sold at auction. The previous record for a work by Peploe was £623,650 for "*Tulips*", sold in 2010.

Peploe chose to paint still life, figures, landscapes etc. His landscapes from 1914 onward were often painted in Iona and in Kirkcudbright. He began to use paler colours such as: greys and pinks. This was partly due to a move to a new, lighter painting studio in York Place, Edinburgh, and his visits to France.

In 1910, he married Margaret MacKay. They met on a painting trip to Barra. They moved to Paris, France to work and live. Living in France changed his use of colour, which became brighter and more vivid. He saw the work of the French Fauve artists (Fauve = the Wild Beasts). He was very impressed by the colourful, daring paintings by Henri Matisse, the leader of the Fauves. Influenced by the work of Matisse, Peploe began to use simpler shapes, brighter colours, definite light, dark and middle tones, and bold outlines around shapes in his paintings.

For the next fifteen years Peploe painted in brilliant colour, developing a style containing some new painting techniques, such as use of tonal ranges/ brilliant colour/ dry-brush technique/ trying to give objects a simple 3D form in his paintings etc. He was most interested in the balancing of tone, colour and use of simplified shapes in his paintings.

By the late 1920's he returned to a tonal style of painting, in a cooler colour scheme. Influences on his work were artists Cezanne, Manet, and the Dutch masters (artists). Peploe died in 1935.