



VERSAILLES



Press release October 2023

**Alexandre-Jean Dubois-Drahonet
(Paris 1790 – Versailles 1834)**

Rediscovery of a talent

**25 November 2023 to 25 February 2024
Lambinet Museum**

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Alexandre-Jean
**Dubois-
Drahonet**

Paris 1790 – Versailles 1834

Un talent retrouvé

Exposition du 25 novembre 2023
au 25 février 2024 au Musée Lambinet

54 Boulevard de la Reine, Versailles
Du mercredi au vendredi de 12h à 19h
Du samedi au dimanche de 10h à 19h
Entrée payante pour les + de 26 ans



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This first retrospective of the painter Alexandre-Jean Dubois-Drahonet (b. Paris 1790 – d. Versailles 1834) celebrates the work of this little-known artist. The very fine quality of his painting, with its “porcelain-like” effect and attention to detail and costumes, is what makes him a great 19th-century portrait artist. He had an international career, working in the royal courts of France, Holland, and Great Britain.

With 79 paintings loaned by French and foreign museums as well as private collectors, this exhibition illustrates his work as a portraitist and highlights his connections with Versailles. The historian, Ronald Pawly, in partnership with Alain Pougetoux, former chief curator of paintings at Château Malmaison, are the curators of the exhibition. A catalogue for the exhibition has been published by Snoeck.



Église Saint-Symphorien in Versailles / oil on canvas / 1816 / Galerie L. Koenigswarter Collection
© Alberto Ricci, Paris

Distributed among the four exhibition rooms on the ground floor of the museum, the exhibition presents Dubois-Drahonet's early years and his integration in the artistic and social environment of Versailles, where he had his workshop. Thus, he painted numerous portraits of members of the military, artists, and residents of Versailles. The refined painting technique, the intricate details of fabrics and jewellery, and the psychology of the expressions are the artist's hallmark. The last exhibition room contains the artist's most beautiful portraits, painted for the Bourbons during the Restoration period in France, but also in Italy and for the Dutch royal family. Thanks to the loans by foreign and French museums and private collectors, the exhibition is the first retrospective of his rediscovered talent.



Portrait of Marie-Anne-Amélie Lefuel, née Vizet (1789-1865), wife of Alexandre-Henri Lefuel oil on canvas / 1817 / Private collection - © Thierry Ollivier



Portrait of a young officer from the Garde Nationale / oil on canvas / Private collection - ©Thierry Ollivier



Portrait of M. L***, making his children read a letter, light effect / oil on canvas / 1822 / Private collection - ©Thierry Ollivier

Alexandre-Jean Dubois

A descendant of a dynasty of haberdashery merchants, Alexandre-Jean Dubois was born in Paris in 1790. He went to the Imperial Academy where he became a pupil of the painter Jean-Baptiste Régnault (1754-1829). In 1807, he took up portrait painting, in which he rapidly showed a lot of ease. Alexandre-Jean Dubois obtained his first recognition when he took part in the 1812 Art Salon (in which he continued to take part until the end of his career when he was awarded a medal of encouragement (1827)).

Then his life took a different turn, with substantial consequences for his future career as a painter. He joined the Garde Impériale as a volunteer and in 1813 he entered the Second Regiment of Light-Horse Lancers (also known as the Red Lancers) whose headquarters were in Versailles. While the war waged on, Alexandre-Jean Dubois painted portraits of senior officers and residents of Versailles in his workshop there.



Full length portrait of the H.R.H. the Duchess of Berry, Oil on canvas, H.224 x W71.5 cm. - Museum of Picardie, Amiens, INV M.P.1875.71 © Irwin Leullier

It was in 1817, when he married the daughter of the painter-decorator Pierre Drahonet of Versailles, whose name he took on, that he began to sign his paintings as A.J. Dubois-Drahonet, the name under which he is still known today. Alexandre-Jean Dubois-Drahonet led an international career as a portraitist, working in the royal courts of France, Holland, and Great Britain. He painted portraits of the Duchess of Berry and her son, the Duke of Bordeaux. In Holland, he was commissioned to paint the portraits of King William II and his children.

This exhibition is the first to bring together the works of this artist, whose talent was recognized by the great patrons of his time.

This unique collection is a tribute to his exceptional skill as a painter and observer, whether of military men or royal families. The event is naturally hosted by the Lambinet Museum, Versailles' Museum of art and history that owns two paintings by this excellent artist, and is a reminder of his work in the royal city.



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Practical information

Wednesday to Friday from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Closed on public holidays

Entry fee for over 26 year-olds

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