

Dreams of France

LEON DABO (1864–1960) was a French-born American painter who had an extraordinarily long career, from the early 1890s through 1954. His father, Ignace Schott de Dabo was a mural painter and stained-glass artist who emigrated with his family to America in 1870 to escape political unrest in France, settling in Detroit. Leon Dabo became a muralist, too, working on ecclesiastical and other public commissions under the direction of John La Farge in New York. In the first years of the 20th century, Dabo gained recognition as a painter, pri-



During World War I, Dabo returned to France as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Army, and when he returned to the U.S. after the war, thoughts of his birthplace were never far from his mind. Throughout

the 1920s and '30s, he exhibited frequently at top New York galleries such as Knoedler & Co.—a total of over 200 canvases in 42 shows. His work from this period was strongly influenced by

Van Gogh. In 1937, Dabo moved to Paris in search of inspiration and was still there in 1940 when the Germans invaded. He and his wife, who was Jewish, had to flee the country, bringing with them around 300 canvases, Dabo's life work

as well as a few by his friends Fernand Léger and Walter Sickert. Via Spain and Portugal, the Dabos managed to get back to the U.S. safely, and in 1941, Feragil Gallery in New York held an exhibition titled "When I Last Saw France," by which

Dabo intended to call attention to the sufferings of the French people under Nazi rule.

The ever-energetic Dabo continued painting into his 91st year, and the works he created from 1937 through 1954 are a final phase that was also a

estate of the artist, will be on view through March 28 and is timed to coincide with the Santa Barbara Museum of Art's exhibition "Through Vincent's Eyes: Van Gogh and His Sources." The Sullivan Goss show is accompanied by a hardcover publication on the artist.

Among the works on view at Sullivan Goss, *Dernières Roses* (circa 1937), a floral still life, shows the flowers in the vase bathed in the cool white light that streamed in from the large windows in Dabo's Paris studio. *Mont Sainte-Victoire en Hiver* (1940), places purplish mountains against a lemon-yellow sky, while the latest work in the exhibition, *Untitled (Red Roofed Farm Village)*, is a painterly rendition of the red-roofed village that shows deep reverence for the landscape and people of France. It was painted circa 1954, when the artist was 91 years old.



renaissance. He opened up his brushwork, started using the palette knife, and, stimulated by the light of France, introduced yellow and other colors that had not figured prominently in his painting before. These fresh

and luminous late works are the subject of an exhibition at Sullivan Goss, An American Gallery in Santa Barbara, Calif. "Leon Dabo: En France Encore," the gallery's fifth focused exhibition from the



marily of landscapes in the Tonalist style. In 1913 he exhibited in and helped organize the famous New York Armory show, which introduced Americans to European Post-Impressionism and modernism.

