



Jean Baptiste Discart

Orientalist paintings and
Dutch portraits

Theo P.G. Kralt



English Edition
September 2020

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Theo P.G. Kralt, *Jean Baptiste Discart (1855-1940), Orientalist paintings and Dutch portraits*

During the early decades of the twentieth century, Austrian-French painter Jean Baptiste Discart (1855-1940), who has unjustly remained unknown, worked in The Hague. He painted several portrait series on behalf of prominent, mostly noble Dutch families. Most of these portraits have been preserved only in private collections. The members of these families were related through marriage, and a number of them held positions at the Dutch royal court. Discart remained in touch with these families over the years. This book includes brief biographies of those portrayed as well as photographs and portraits made by earlier or later painters when available. Compared to the latter, Discart's work stands out for its sense of modesty and austerity.

Discart's career started in Paris and Tangier with orientalist paintings. These depict everyday life in Morocco, including the practices, trades and traditions of the local population. Discart's orientalist paintings are characterised by realistic representations, a uniform effect of light, great composition and excellent use of colour. Because he was born in Modena, which belonged to Austria at the time, and received his education at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Discart is considered a part of the Austrian Orientalist school, along with his fellow students Ludwig Deutsch and Rudolf Ernst. Discart continued to refine his own portrait painting techniques while still adhering to this school. This book consists of a biography and a discussion of 40 works from his first period and 61 Dutch portraits, followed by a full-colour catalogue. With this work, the oeuvre of a largely forgotten painter has been brought back to life.

Theo Kralt (Rijnsburg, 1959) studied law and public administration, economics and international relations. Next to his work for the Dutch government and civil society organisations, he has published on Wielbergen House and the Brantsen family, the churches of Utrecht's inner city and the Domkerk restoration.

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