

BRANGWYN, Sir FRANK FRANCOIS GUILLAUME (1867 - 1956), painter

Name: Frank Francois Guillaume Brangwyn
Date of birth: 1867
Date of death: 1956
Spouse: Lucy Brangwyn (née Ray)
Parent: Eleanor Brangwyn (née Griffiths)
Parent: William Curtis Brangwyn
Gender: Male
Occupation: painter
Area of activity: Art and Architecture
Author: Evan David Jones

Born in Bruges, Belgium, 12 May 1867, the third son of William Curtis Brangwyn (died 1907 in Cardiff) and Eleanor (née Griffiths) his wife who hailed from Brecon. His father was a church architect and manufactured church furniture in Bruges but the family returned to London in 1875. Frank Brangwyn, who had very little formal education, learnt drawing in South Kensington Museum and entered the workshop of William Morris in Oxford Street in 1882. After two years there he earned his living as a travelling artist in England before going to the continent, the Middle East and South Africa. In 1896 he married a nurse, Lucy Ray (died 1924), and settled in Hammersmith, London, but they had no children. He died in Ditchling, Sussex, 11 June 1956.

He was regarded as the greatest decorator of his time, particularly of large buildings such as the Royal Exchange in London and the Missouri State Capitol, U.S.A. He specialised in painting large murals but also designed carpets and tapestries. In 1924 Lord Iveagh gave him a commission to paint murals for the House of Lords to commemorate the sons of peers who had lost their lives in World War I. After experimenting with scenes of war, which he found too morbid, he had the idea of depicting the wealth of the British Empire for which they had died, but when the work was barely half done the panels were rejected by the Lords and the large colourful pictures now adorn Swansea civic centre where the Brangwyn Hall was designed to accommodate them. A large collection of the drawings and cartoons which were made in the preparation of this work is in the Glynn Vivian Gallery, Swansea, but his pictures are to be found in many European cities, including Bruges where there is a gallery dedicated to his work, and in Australia. There is also a large collection of his work in the National Museum of Wales. He was the author of *Belgium* (1916) and *The way of the cross* (1935). He received many high honours both in the United Kingdom and on the continent; he was knighted in 1941.

Author

Evan David Jones, (1903 - 1987)

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

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William de Belleruche, *Brangwyn talks* (London 1946)

William de Belleruche, *Brangwyn's pilgrimage* (London 1948)

V. Galloway, *The oils and murals of Sir Frank Brangwyn R.A. 1867-1956* (1962)

Trivium, 8, 1973, 121-6 for a reappraisal of the British empire panels

Further Reading

ODNB: Brangwyn, Sir Frank William (1867-1956)

Wikipedia Article: Frank Brangwyn

Images

National Portrait Gallery: Sir Frank Brangwyn (1867-1956), Painter

Works

Art UK: Frank Brangwyn 1867-1956

Additional Links

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