Augustin Němejc

Augustin Němejc (1861–1938) is best known as a painter of everyday people in the Plzeň region. He originally trained as a watchmaker and only began his artistic career at the age of twenty-two, when he enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague under František Sequens. That same year, however, he left for Munich to train at the studio of Nikolaos Gyzis and became a very active member of the Škréta association of Czech artists there. From 1889 to 1902, Němejc lived in Plzeň and nearby Nepomuk, and afterwards settled permanently in Plzeň. From 1907 to 1925, he also taught drawing at the local lyceum for girls. Early in his career, he was already awarded a one-year scholarship to Paris for his painting *Hopeless Love*, which had been exhibited at the General Land Centennial Exhibition in Prague in 1891. In Paris, he studied under Vojtěch Hynais – an influence clearly visible in his *Curtain at the Plzeň Theatre* (1899–1902), which depicts the city of Plzeň welcoming the arts at the threshold of its new theatre. Němejc's decorative works for public buildings in Plzeň are also noteworthy, including the lunette paintings in the Jubilee Hall of the Museum of West Bohemia and monumental canvases for the Higher Business School in Plzeň-Lochotín. His sense of colour is highly distinctive and idiosyncratic – his colour harmonies rest on light, discreet, and gently muted tones, finely balanced and ideally suited for decorative purposes in the broadest sense. His simple figures, even when part of a decorative scheme, rise above mere realistic representation of the model.