



Jean-Georges Chape

1913–2002

Jean-Georges Chape was born on August 9, 1913, in Paris, and trained at the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris. From the earliest years of his exhibition career, Chape demonstrated both ambition and resilience: his first submission to the Salon des Artistes Français in 1933 was refused; his second, a self-portrait submitted in 1934, was accepted, only to be destroyed in the years that followed.

His exhibition record through the late 1930s and 1940s traces the contours of a serious Parisian career interrupted by war. He showed at the Salon d'Automne in 1938 and at the Exposition Franco-Polonaise in Angers in 1939. In 1946, he participated in the Exposition des Artistes Libérés, a significant post-Liberation group exhibition, and in 1948 showed at the Galerie Saint-Placide in Paris, where he was selected for the Prix Hallmark. His work entered the collections of the French State and private collectors in Belgium, Germany, and Tunisia.

The early 1950s marked a period of expanding ambition and civic engagement. In 1952 Chape contributed to the fresco program at the Pavillon du Mexique at the Cité Universitaire in Paris, producing an exterior stone relief of approximately 125 square metres, a monumental undertaking that demonstrated his range well beyond the easel. He returned to the Galerie Saint-Placide in 1958, the same year he participated in the notable group exhibition 42 Peintres Français en Autriche. In 1959 he was included in the Salon des Peintres Témoins de leur Temps, held at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, for the theme L'âge mécanique. He participated in Salon Comparaisons in 1960, 1961, and 1962, returned to the Salon d'Automne in 1962, and contributed to the Exposition-Vente of the Fédération Mondiale des Anciens Combattants at UNESCO. In 1964 he again appeared at Salon Peintres Témoins under the theme L'Amour.

His later career was anchored by the Galerie Art-Service in Paris, where a mini-retrospective was held in 1973 and further exhibitions ran from 1975 to 1979. The gallery described Chape as “ce peintre de la souffrance,” the painter of suffering, who inhabited the territory of abandoned bodies, tormented flesh, and wandering souls. His figurative canvases, including the Série des Amants (1955), Nu au divan (1961), Les Baigneuses (1963), and Femme à la Guêpière (1965), navigate an expressively charged figuration, the human form rendered with psychological weight and visceral directness. His work also encompassed abstraction and landscape, among them Paysage à la Vallée Bleue and the peasant subject Automne.

Jean-Georges Chape died in 2002. His work continues to appear at auction in France, with his auction record set in 2025 at Gros & Delettrez for Les Baigneuses. He remains a singular figure in the generation of Paris-trained painters who bore witness to the upheavals of the twentieth century and channeled them into a body of work of unflinching human intensity.