

Frederick Dielman

Artist Frederick Dielman was born in Hanover, Germany, on December 25, 1847. Mr. Dielman left behind a legacy in his work as an artist achieving renown with the allegorical murals and mosaic murals he created for the different state buildings in the United States. Mr. Dielman also leaves an equally great legacy as a human being. The inspiration Mr. Dielman instilled in others is perhaps best expressed by one of his students shortly after the artist's death in 1935.

“When Professor Dielman lectured to us he was already well over 60. But he had a buoyancy of spirit and a twinkle in his eye which belied his years... The lectures were absorbingly interesting and sank deeply into our consciousness. The appreciation he gave us for the artistic heritage of the ages has, in consequence, remained with us, and has helped to make life richer for those fortunate enough to have been his pupils.”

Law and History in the Library of Congress, were perhaps Mr. Dielman's best known mosaic murals. Mr. Dielman also fashioned the mosaic work in the Albany Savings Bank; six mosaic panels in the state capitol in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and Des Moines, Iowa, and, seven mural paintings for the Evening Star building in Washington, D.C., that were destroyed in 1902.

Mr. Dielman was brought as a child to Baltimore, Maryland, from Germany, and his artistic ability showed itself early in life. According to records, he published his first drawing at age 16 entitled, *A Confederate Raid in Maryland*. He received his formal education at Calvert College in Baltimore, Maryland, graduating in 1864. Mr. Dielman then became a topographer with the United States engineers from 1866 to 1872, participating in a survey of the canals in the Allegheny Mountains of Virginia. Mr. Dielman then returned to Germany in 1872 to receive his formal art training at the Royal Academy of Munich, where he studied under Wilhelm von Diez (1839- 1907), a genre painter and illustrator known for his historical depictions of the Thirty Years War. The detailed realism of the 19th century Dutch and Flemish painters appealed to Mr. von Diez, as well as the spirited and daring brushwork of Frans Hals and Velasquez, an appreciation he passed on to his students.

The strict academic tutelage Mr. Dielman received from Mr. von Diez, is evident in the technicality of Mr. Dielman's drawings, etchings, and portrait paintings, yet the brushwork in his murals had a modern, unspoiled boldness. Mr. Dielman was well versed in multimedia techniques, including pencil, ink, etching, watercolor, oil, and even painting on ceramic tile.

Mr. Dielman maintained an art studio from 1881 to 1889 and again from 1900 to 1906, in the Tenth Street Studio Building at 51 West 10th Street in New York. He shared that building with friends and colleagues many of whom had also received their art training in Munich or Paris.

Mr. Dielman was a member of many art clubs and organizations that arose out of the network of artists who occupied the Tenth Street Studio Building. Mr. Dielman also held several administrative positions in the organizations as well. Mr. Dielman was a founding member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the American Water Color Society, the Salamagundi Sketch Club, the Etching Club, the Mural Painters, and the Tile Club. Mr. Dielman was also President of the National Academy of Design and President of the Fine Arts Federation of New York.

In 1883, Mr. Dielman married Lilla Marion Benham, the daughter of Major General Henry

Washington Benham, U.S. Engineers, a graduate of West Point in 1837. Together they had three children, one of whom followed in his father's footsteps as an artist. Ernst Benham Dielman became a painter and sculptor. Mr. Dielman died at age 87 on August 15, 1935, at his home in Ridgefield, Connecticut, the oldest member of the National Academy of Design. Although Mr. Dielman lived in Connecticut for 35 years and maintained a studio in New York for 50 years, he was buried in New Windsor, Maryland, northwest of Baltimore.

A much cherished art professor, Mr. Dielman retired from teaching at the ripe age 84. It was thought that Mr. Dielman taught more American art students than any other art professor. Two years before his death, at age 85, Mr. Dielman was asked in a personal interview what he considered the best recipe for a happy, well-rounded life, the artist said: "I think if a man tries to ascertain what is his probable function in life and then carries it out honestly, sincerely and with as little pretense as possible, he is pretty sure to come out right." This quote was a testimony to Dielman's character as a human being and an artist. As the late great writer, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) once wrote, "The purpose of life...is to have it make some difference that you lived and lived well." One can surmise that Dielman did just that.

More information:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/TB/15430.pdf>

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