

Chapter 57 : Prince Eugene (I) (1865-1905) – “Prince of Painters”.

August 1, 1865, was born Eugene Napoleon Nikolaus Bernadotte, Prince of Sweden & Norway, Duke of Närke and 5th in line to the throne. The birth took place at Drottningholm Castle. There is little to say about his school days. He kept a low profile during the semesters & blossomed during the holidays:

The youngest of them, “Little Ten”, was the age of my uncle Gunnar [Nyblom]. One was black-haired, the other flaxen-coloured. But both of them small curly and good-hearted angels - and at the same time inveterate pranksters. It is still told in the family legends, how they let their rabbit pups run about in the castle library and how they fed the swans in the park's romantic ponds with the Queen's best cupcakes. All that had colour and “beauty” was for them a delight - it was really hard to prevent them from razing the flower gardens. The most fun of all, however, was when the two siblings found themselves old cloths and props. So decked they sang and acted on the old stage - with or without an audience. However, when they performed historical tableaux in front of their parents and the court, they were quite severely scolded.. They ended it with the newly erected statue kings of “Kungsträdgården”. The somewhat exaggerated portrayal of Charles XII as a lion surrounded by four crocks was acceptable, but their hilarious depiction of Charles XIII as a crock between four lions was considered particularly inappropriate and irreverent.¹

Like the brothers, he first attended the Royal Castle School, then from 1874 three years in the Beskow School, then again in the Royal Castle School under the philologist Johan Otto von Friesen (1834-1913). The teaching included dance, fencing, riding, botanical excursions and (for Eugene who was considered to have talent) drawing & painting. His first art lessons were during the winter holidays of 1876 and 1877, when he spent time in Germany with his mother. His Swedish teachers in these subjects were the artists Geskel Saloman & Gillis Hafström who both let him practice fundamentals: Blocks, shadows, trees, landscapes, body parts, watercolour & oil. There was no attempt to make him an artist. In the manner of Charles XV the painting was considered a hobby. On 9 December 1881, he was confirmed in the chapel of the castle by bishop Anders Beckman. He has never shown any religious beliefs, but he enjoyed organ music.

von Friesen quit his job in 1881, so the last two years of Eugene's high school period consisted of self-studies under the direction of special teachers: Swedish, German, French, English, Logic, Mathematics, Physics, Political Science & History. Eugene was intellectually precocious and managed well without too long homework sessions. In 1883, he was sworn in. In November 1884, he fell ill with jaundice, and the baccalaureate – with the usual crowd of Swedish and Norwegian councillors - was postponed until February 26, 1884. Censors were Professor Carl Georg Björling, Professor Daniel Sundén & Academy Professor Per Adolf Geijer. They interrogated him in constitutional law, Swedish & the French language. Eugene was the best in modern languages. Worst in Latin. As an adult, he was the best in French, worst in English. He also spoke “tourist Italian” and Norwegian.

Since Eugene never threw anything away, the source situation is superlative. There are three long biographies (Wennerholm 1982; Zachau 1989 & 1991; Brummer 1998a) and 24 short biographies, memories & features (Almén 1893: ss. 335-338; Jaya 1913: ss. 51-61; Nyblom 1922: ss. 314-320; Swahn 1930: ss. 243-254; Lundberg-Nyblom 1931: ss. 136-145;

¹ Posse 1948: ss. 63-64.

Lundberg-Nyblom 1933; Lindgren 1944; Pauli 1944; Strömbom 1945; Lindgren red. 1948; Arvidsson 1951; Hildebrand 1953; Gerhard 1957: ss. 222-232; Asplund: ss. 235-243; Strömbom 1965; Elgklou 1978: ss. 141-145; Ohlmarks 1980: ss. 126-127; Weibull 1991: ss. 110-115; Elgklou 1995: ss. 205-211; Skott 1996: ss. 220-239; Söderholm 2003; Lindqvist 2010: ss. 83-85; Christensen 2013; Norlin 2015: ss. 163-170; Meister 2018).

The exhibition catalogues & art criticism contain much biographical information (Levertin 1905; Brising 1908; Gauffin 1915; Fåhraeus 1925; Nordensvan 1925: ss. 395-399; Pauli 1934; Silfverstolpe 1935; Waldén & Jonsson red. 1935; Lindgren 1939; Lindgren 1948; Serner 1948; Lindgren 1962; Lindwall 1979; Widman 1986; Lindwall 1994; Widman 1995; Brummer 1997a & 1997b; Brummer 1998b & 1998c; Hallén 1998; Brummer 1999; Wistman 2002; Wistman 2003 & 2004; Brummer & Smoliansky 2004; Brummer 2005a & 2005b; Sidén 2014; Rydberg 2014; Meister & Sidén red. 2015).

There are also special studies of Eugene's reading habits, painting technique, patronage etc. (Gram 1995 & 1998; Andréasson 2001; Jensen 2001; De Geer 2008; Wistman 2008). Eugene has written a travelogue (Bernadotte et al. 1886), published two collections of letters (Prince Eugene 1942; Prince Eugene 1945) and there are some miscellaneous forewords, speeches & articles. Eugene's artistic production, some 3000 works, were listed and digitized 1996-1998 within the SESAM project. Also 11 thousand letters & documents to, from, of & about Eugene were listed.

Eugene's collections of letters have been criticized: "The difference between the original version and the published version may be considerable, as the dating. A more complete and scientifically edited edition of Prince Eugene's extensive correspondence is part of my personal a wish list."² A comparison with the originals shows that Eugene liked to present himself as more far-sighted and balanced than he was, which has been taken note of. However, the greatest difficulty in depicting Eugene's life is his restless activity, which makes it difficult to distinguish the large from the small. The narrative often degenerate into a chronicle, abstract or statistics. My own narrative is a selection of what I consider to be large or representative. It makes the presentation slightly jerky.

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After his late baccalaureate, Eugene and the brothers were to study at Uppsala University. Some overzealous court official approached the management to arrange a fitting reception. The embarrassing thing happened that the Södermanland & Närke student nation refused to accept him as an honorary member with the votes 43-28. In it self entirely correct since Eugene had done nothing to deserve it.³ Eugene instead enrolled in the Stockholm Student Nation and a few days later also at the University of Kristiania with the lawyer Ludvig Aubert & the political scientist etc. Yngvar Nielsen as mentors. Aubert was responsible for ensuring that his education was not too partisan. He listened to lectures on Norwegian history by professors Ludvig Daae and Ernst Sars. Sars' modern mix of nationalism, positivism, and Darwinism made a deep impression. There were no student contacts. Eugene & his adjutant was the only audience. During his free time, Nielsen walked them through Kristiania's institutions & attractions.

² Gram 1998: s. 12.

³ Dagens Nyheter 1884-01-30.

The result of the Södermanland & Närke Student Nation vote was greeted by the Uppsala students as a welcome rebuke to the royal house and the student leaders resigned. The same discussion took place at the Stockholm nation, but there the decision, after a heated debate, was passed with 228-111.⁴ To avoid further controversy, Eugene decided instead to study for his officer's degree. As in the Castle School, he had private teachers. December 20 he graduated and after Christmas his parents as a reward invited him on a trip to Nice-Cairo-Jerusalem-Constantinople-Bucharest. He was not back in Sweden until May 1885. During the trip he met his brothers Oscar & Carl and together they wrote a book about their experiences. It is a travelogue with interspersed biographical passages of Eugene enthusiastically shopping in the Cairo bazaars.⁵

During the journey, Carl fell ill with typhoid fever and remained bedridden in Istanbul. His parents came down to comfort him. The father went home when he had convinced himself there was no danger. Eugene and mother Sophie toured in Istanbul and Eugene handed the Sultan the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Olav. After Carl's recovery, his mother accompanied her sons on their return journey through Romania, where they met their half-cousin Queen Elisabeth of Wied. Eugene was back in Sweden in mid-May and then began a service in the Royal Guard Hussar Corps where he for some time drilled recruits. Eugene later portrayed this as at the time, like his brother Carl, considering a military career but abandoning the idea. This seems to be an afterthought. He enjoyed riding as a physical exercise but did not pursue it, participated every two years in the drills at Sannahed because it was expected of him and in 1898 transferred into the reserve. He did not make friends with his fellow officers.

On September 29, 1885, Eugene for the 2nd time arrived in Uppsala together with his governor etc. Gunnar Wennerberg (1817-1901) & his chamberlain baron August Stiernstedt (1812-1880). This time the reception was unremarkable. He was received at the railway station by both the governor, the archbishop, the university rector, the faculty deans and a number of teachers & student union representatives. On the pitch outside, the student choir performed the patriotic "Our Country". The newly elected president of the Student Union, Professor Trygger, gave a speech:

Y.r.h.

On behalf of the Uppsala Student Union, I welcome you to the main seat of Swedish learning. The joint effort to make us worthy king and country will, we hope, forge an inseparable bond between you and the Uppsala student union. Uppsala students, raise a fourfold hail for the Duke of Nerike, Prince Eugene!⁶

Eugene thanked them for the reception and, like the brothers, moved into the Prince's House on Bäckens gränd 6. A few days later he was courted by the Stockholm nation's curator, the future prime minister Karl Staaff. He had previously expressed himself as the kingdom being a relic of the Middle Ages, but this day he stayed in line. Eugene thanked him with an invitation. Södermanlands & Närke's nation had now regretted its previous position and wanted to choose Eugene as an honorary member. The offer was made to Oscar II, who declined on his son's behalf.

Eugene spent three terms in Uppsala. The schedule was initially much like the brothers': Philosophy for Professor Erik Olof Burman, History for Professor Harald Hjärke & associate Professor Claes Annerstedt, Political Science for Professor Oscar Ahlin and Literature & Art

⁴ Dagens Nyheter 1884-02-12.

⁵ Bernadotte m.fl. 1886.

⁶ Dagens Nyheter 1885-09-29.

History for Professor Carl Rupert Nyblom. Burman & Nyblom gave individual instruction at Prince's House so that Eugene would feel free to ask questions & have opinions. On Wennberg's initiative he also socialized in Nyblom's home and the wife of the house the writer Helena Nyblom (1843-1926) came to have a lasting influence on his artistic life. In contrast to mother Sophie, Helena Nyblom was familiar with artistic problem, warmly considerate and looked at him as a person - a welcome contrast to mother Sophie's more flinty attitude of putting the royal house's interests first. Otherwise, Eugene had honorary assignments for the Stockholm nation, fêted, danced, participated in sleigh and riding parties, skated & hunted. The latter mostly to get out into nature - a Nimrod he was not. The balls were simple bordering on barn dances. Eugene had no voice, was not even interested in music, but was none the less elected honorary member of the student choir OD and allowed to listen to the rehearsals. He was also an honorary member of the Science Society.

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Once or twice a week Eugene trained for landscape painter Wilhelm von Gegerfelt - mainly watercolour painting of still lifes. Gegerfelt was in Uppsala to avoid his French clients and for some time paint according to his own desire. The full list of participants was: Ellen Thalén (1864-1956; 1888 m. von Bahr), law student Gunnar G:son Wennerberg (1863-1914; son of Eugene's governor), law student Otto Croneborg (1863-1951), professor Nyblom's daughter Ellen Nyblom (1869-1933; 1893 m. Lundberg) and term two also Eugens adjutant Gustaf Nyblæus (1853-1928). The wife and daughter have each given us a depiction of Eugene as budding artist.⁷ Eugene was extremely timid but at the same time stubborn, ambitious and analytical.

The art work impacted Eugene's studies and the last semester he had only time for aesthetics (=analysis of individual artists' themes & technology) for Nyblom & History for Annerstedt. Eugene managed to thoroughly annoy Annerstedt by asking him to prove all his claims about ancient times. Eugene's motto at this time was "I doubt everything including Oscar the Other." (A pun on Oscar II.) There was much discussion about the good and bad of academic history painting. Wennberg & Professor Nyblom greatly admired the academics' attention to detail. Eugene, wife and daughter preferred the self-perceived - "reality seen through a temperament" as Zola put it. The daughter tells about a discussion at home where Wennberg at length described his thoughts on good art:

County Governor Wennberg - about whom one of my brothers jokingly said, that "he still clings to the Bronze Age" - praised the old ideals and especially history painting. He criticized everything else. One night I remember, when he coldly stared at us youngsters with his white blue eyes, slammed the table and said: "Just don't come to me and claim that it is as much art to paint a cheese, so that it looks real, as to paint Gustaf Adolf in the Battle of Lützen". But his intense sallies, his overpowering voice, did not deter us. It was blank ammunition.⁸

The mother apparently belonged to the youngsters:

Wennerberg and my husband admired history painting as one of the highest expressions of art. The Prince and I represented the opposition and couldn't agree less, but we were not supposed to speak our mind. The Prince felt he was too young to take a stand. And I myself thought like the madam in Andersen's story, "Heartbreak": "I am but a woman." You had to keep quiet when the maestros talked

⁷ Nyblom 1922: ss. 314-320; Lundberg-Nyblom 1931: ss. 136-145.

⁸ Lundberg-Nyblom 1931: s. 139.

and definitely not oppose them. Thus the prince and I crawled away into a corner of the room, where we whispered our views.

...

Prince Eugene, like me, did not admire historical paintings, but was inclined to art as long as free from its academic shackles. However, he began to take an interest in music, and he is to me a proof that a person can have a lot of aptitude for music without himself being a practitioner and that this aptitude can appear quite late in life. It now seems to me, as if music had the same importance for the prince, as it should have for all artists. I remember that after hearing a quartet of César Franck, played by the Brussels Quartet, Prince Eugene said: “Now I know how to paint! When I heard the scherzo in César Franck's quartet, it was made clear. Infinitely varied but in a limited range of colours.”⁹

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Even though Eugene arrived in Uppsala from Norway with a reputation as a liberal freethinker, he was certainly not a rabble rouser. His nickname, the Red Prince, dates from later. There is a lost letter from March 1884 to his brother Oscar in which he seems to have expressed radical views, unclear whether they related to parliamentarianism or his scientific social philosophy: Charles Darwin (that the struggle for survival is the driving force of evolution), Ernst Hæckel (German Darwinist who argued that society could be explained by the biology of the inhabitants), Herbert Spencer (English Darwinist, who argued that society could be explained by groups' struggle for survival - that class differences were inevitable, and because they were inevitable they were desirable) & Peter Kropotkin (that cooperation is the driving force of evolution, not conflict). In Uppsala, Wennerberg read the Bible to him every morning, but it seems to have made scant impression. Eugene later landed in Harald Høffding's utilitarian philosophy that human actions should lead to “as much prosperity and success for as many conscious beings as possible”. Magdalena Gram has analysed Eugene's library for further insights:

With regard to the stock of art and fiction, it can be inferred from surviving letters that Prince Eugene was anchored in his youth's intellectual experience, that is, the break from idealism to materialism and realism, later in the nineties moderated by tributes to beauty and imagination, memories and dreams. Although far from disinterested in the problems of form, the Prince never embraced modernism wholeheartedly, and saw it rather as an intellectual duty to try to understand the intentions of the pioneers. ... Prince Eugene's reading of fiction was intense and included mostly contemporary French, Russian and Nordic prose. The literature of the 1880s, based on problems to be debated, and the more introvert, form based poetry of the 1890s appear to have influenced him the most. Modernism, not at all.

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Prince Eugene's interest in politics is perhaps less well known to the visitors of Waldemarsudde, where the “painter prince” and the “flower prince” have long dominated the scene. Politics, however, was a constant topic of conversation in dealings with Prince Eugene, who lived intensely with the revolutionary, ideological and political events of his time. The library also includes books on a number of day-to-day political issues, among other things, one finds a collection of titles, which addresses the Union issue that was so burning around the turn of the century.¹⁰

⁹ Nyblom 1922: ss. 314-320.

¹⁰ Gram 1998: s. 3.

In February 1886 the Wennberg family decided that their son Gunnar should be allowed to study art in Paris and in April he travelled there. Eugene wanted to follow. On April 29 and 30 he wrote two long letters to his mother about his desire to make art his mission in life. “Mom shall not believe that this is a hasty decision. Nor, as I suspect that Mom suspects, a decision provoked by Gunnar's departure. Because when I decided last autumn to start painting at G. [Gegerfelt] it was to seriously test whether I really had the skills and desire to become a painter. ... However, I had a long conversation with the governor, who completely liked my decision. He said that if I had asked him last autumn he would have been very doubtful, as he then considered me to have only what he called a “prince's talent” an excellent word that precisely expressed what I thought myself. He also realized that I can never learn anything properly at home, partly in keeping with my position as a prince, but also for the sake of the teaching. Paris was the only place that could be considered. He only doubted that Mom and Dad would be persuaded to support such a plan.”¹¹

It has since been portrayed that the parents initially disapproved of Eugene's artistry, but this does not seem to have been the case. However, they wanted him to finish his university courses. Oscar II consulted both Wennberg, Nyblom & Gegerfelt before he decided. Wennberg's response on June 11 was: “I knew before that he was artistically inclined, and neither were his closest ignorant of it. However, I always thought that the aptitude was only one side of his many other happy qualities. When, however, after his studies for Gegerfelt, he showed an entirely unmistakable sense of colour, and a sharp, though still inexperienced sense of form, I began to change my judgment about him. Here was something more than the promise of a dilettante. The prerequisite for artistic development was indeed clear. Gegerfelt, without any request from me, held the same opinion and pronounced it [to the Prince].”¹²

Eugene later claimed that his aunt Eugénie had persuaded her mother to let him go, but this seems like a post-construction. Besides his undeniable talent, the single most important factor seems to have been that Gustaf had two children so that Eugene was now only 6th in line for the succession. No risk then to allow him freedom of choice. In addition, he had throughout school received the best teachers who all had encouraged him to paint. If the parents had said “A”, they should reasonably also say “B”.

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Eugene spent two years in Paris and managed to get three works admitted to the 1889 World's Fair that received friendly reviews. Since the emphasis of narrative is on Eugene as a cultural person, I will be brief about his artistic development. He was of his time. First detailed outdoor paintings, then national romantic mood paintings. After the turn of the century, he turned to public art and a rather aimless painting in different styles. His best works include *The Forest* (1892), *The Old Castle* (1893), *The Cloud* (1895) and *The Still Water* (1901). The number of motifs were limited, skies, houses & landscapes, but performed in a variety of techniques as to colour, size and depth. The limited number of motifs was probably the reason for doing his most important works at the beginning of his career and then having difficulties continuing. Brummer categorizes his 1890s art as aesthetic nationalism (to distinguish it from more openly politicized National Romanticism or cultural patriotism):

A classless people stands in devotion to nature revealed by the all-seeing artist. Gone are the works of the kingdom, the hierarchies and the symbols. Gone is the notion of the nation as an army, representing mass, number and strength, but not a collection of free people, where individuals derive their value from themselves. The vision was

¹¹ Zachau 1989: ss. 38-39.

¹² Zachau 1989: ss. 41; Michanek 1993.

an expression of the belief in a national awareness liberated from patriotism, of a community conjured into existence by an ancient spirit of nature.¹³

[Or, as Karin Boye put it in her poem “A Painter's Wish” (Clouds 1922): “I wanted to paint a wooden spoon so that the people knew God!”]

Eugene biographer Eric Wennerholm interviewed art historian Sixten Strömbom about the matter:

- You think that in a biography of Prince Eugene the painter should be put first?
- No, not at all! He was certainly technically skilful, artistic. He sought harmony, and the real feeling in his work is not to be mistaken, there was no fakery. In summary, Prince Eugene's art could be described as a synthesis of Nordic romance and classical design. But his essential, truly significant effort was as a free-minded cultural being! Through his belief in the importance of art and culture to all people, through his noble mindset, his freedom of prejudice and, of course, through his position in society, he gave social prestige to the art and artists in Sweden.¹⁴

Others have been less respectful and pointed out the sterility of a postcard art completely devoid of living beings. Judgments such as “his life was his most beautiful work of art”¹⁵ makes one also wonder what his clique actually thought of him. Ferdinand Boberg, for example, thought that Eugene deserved the praise, but wondered if he understood what help he had had of his position.¹⁶ Eugene himself was unsure and regarded all praise as flattery. What his mother and aunt thought of his production we do not know but there is a story about his father:

Among the people whose judgment Prince Eugene valued most was his father. King Oscar II sometimes spelled out his thoughts and expressed his opinion of the son's paintings in a manner more crude than hearty. Gunnar G:son Wennerberg told his parents about such an occasion in the Prince's studio [circa 1890]. His mother, Hedda Wennerberg, then passed the story on to one of her daughters, Signe Taube:

The king sat in front of it [the painting] for a few seconds and said: “Yes, my dear Eugene, one looks at nature in different ways. You see it in one way, I see it in another. Your way is not mine and God is it ugly”. And after a few more words about the atelier etc. he rushed out.¹⁷

Although Oscar II did not share Eugene's vision of art, he was eager to put his son to work. At the 1897 Stockholm Exhibition he made sure that Eugene was responsible for the Art. Eugene did well and as a reward he escaped the officer's commission. However, he continued with the representation. In court circles he was perceived as odd but not in any way provocative. Although he to the outside world was known as “head of the opposition within the royal court” - he sympathized with both the suffrage and the labour movement - it stayed at words. Eugene was by no means a Republican or even Parliamentarian. He supported a strong royal power, but did not through oppose his own government in the way of his brother Gustav V. If you did that, nobody knew where it would end. He was “the red prince” and the rest was silence.

¹³ Brummer 1998a: s. 94.

¹⁴ Wennerholm 1982: s. 218.

¹⁵ Gerhard 1957: s. 217.

¹⁶ Nyström 1992: s. 287.

¹⁷ Zachau 1989: s. 249.

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Wistman¹⁸ divides Eugene's role as a cultural celebrity into four “arenas”: collector|patron, chairing committees, public opinion setter, renown artist concluding that Eugene as a collector|patron supported modern figurative art in general, as a social mixer & chairman of committees had a mediating role, as a public opinion setter supported the liberal values of the Artists' Association and that he distinguished between his public & private self: As a public figure, he was neutral. As an artist & private person he reserved the right to take a position. This was often difficult to manage. His position as a royal gave a disproportionate weight to his private views - which sometimes bothered him, sometimes served his interests - and he was subject to criticism.

During Eugene's stay in Paris The artists were divided into two camps: The Academy of Art| National museum (the establishment) & the Artists' Association (the opponents, the Parisian boys). The Association was founded in 1886 and then had 85 members. With the formation of the competing Swedish Artists' Society in 1890, the number of members of the Association fell to 26. Eugene had difficulties handling the political radicalism of the Association and in 1889 he became a member of the Artists' Club and in 1890 of the Society, both of which were less politicized. Eugene's continued relation with the Association was through the private company the Artists' Consortium (1891-c. 1900) which organized the Association's exhibitions. His connection with the establishment camp was that in February 1889 he was elected 1st honorary member of the Academy, sworn in October 26, 1889, and January 25, 1890, elected the Academy's representative in the State Purchase Committee for Art. Until 1908 he regularly participated in these purchase meetings and pushed for the Association. Although he never sat on the Association's board, his position within it was such that he was consulted on important issues. In 1900 the Association's entire board joined the Liberal Club, which caused Eugene still more difficulties in his political tightrope walking.

The Association existed 1886-1920 why Eugene's role as a mediator had a beginning and an end. By 1920, the rest of society had caught up with the Unions artistic views. In the beginning the “mediation” consisted of meetings at the Club, bowling at Lidingöbro Tavern & Stallmästargården and joint summer parties at Balingsta. February 15 to March 15. 1893, the Association held a retrospective exhibition of Ernst Josephson's production. One of the works was *The Nixie*. Eugene believed he had such a position that he could make the National Museum's purchasing committee to at least accept the painting as a gift:

The *Nixie* was a version painted in 1884. Eugene saw it for the first time when it September 1885 was exhibited at Blanche's art salon as part of the “Opponents' exhibition”. It had since its creation in 1884 acquired iconic status but seems to have been controversial even within the Artists' Association and was at the exhibition hung so high that it took a while before Eugene even noticed it. His comment was: “Do you need to admire that painting?” Eventually he changed his mind, bought it for his own money and wanted to donate it to the National Museum as part of their permanent exhibition. The National Museum refused to accept it on those conditions.¹⁹ Eugene was furious. As a prince, he wasn't used to being rejected:

It is strange that I have been able to write anything at all this evening because I am really so furious that I occasionally have to pace the floor and swear woe and ruin to the museum committee, which, according to what I have heard, does not want to accept Josephson's *the Nixie*, which I offered to donate. Yes,

¹⁸ Wistman 2008.

¹⁹ Strömbom 1965: s. 69; Wählin 1912: ss. 257-260.

they will probably receive it, if I insist & if they do not have to put it up for the time being, but store it in the attic!!!! What do you say? They will regret both this and other old sins. Hopefully I will keep my cool tomorrow when Upmark arrives!²⁰

The purchasing committee of the National Museum at the time consisted of Nils Fredrik Sander (1828-1900), Fritz von Dardel (1817-1901), Gustaf Upmark Sr. (1844-1900), Per Åke Holm (1835-1903) & Baron Johan Nordenfalk Jr. (1830-1901). As the entire board 10 years later was dead and replaced by Eugene supporters. In 1915 they accepted the 1882 version. The 1884 version became part of Eugene's radical image, was given a place of honour in his villa Waldemarsudde, was heavily borrowed and became emblematic of the new painting style, although Josephson's colleagues were continued being ambivalent. For example Karl Wåhlin expressed it as: "The Nixie belongs to that rare category of works that are without predecessors and without successors."²¹ He considered the 1882 version to be a more solid work.

After that Eugene became more cautious, taking on only those battles he could win, and preferred to work in the background by supporting like-minded. However, as chairman 1895/97 for the art section of the Stockholm Exhibition, he could not entirely avoid conflicts:

The exhibition included contemporary English, Russian, Continental & Nordic art: Ilja Repin's "Barge Haulers on the Volga" was the big draw. Two Tahiti paintings by Paul Gauguin were considered too daring to be exhibited. Eugene spent several months on trips personally persuading various artists to send contributions. The Swedish section contained 667 works by 175 artists, including the Nixie. Eugene also presided over a three-day Nordic artists' meeting, the first since 1866. He is said to have attempted once again to impose an unwanted work on the National Museum - a plaster copy of Rodin's "La voix intérieure". When Upmark refused to accept this as well, he and the rest of the museum's purchasing committee were summoned to an audience with Oscar II for a personal scolding.²²

The Artists' Association had the principle of never exhibiting in the same premises as others but this time had to give in. Their selection was handled by a separate jury. The sample included six works by Eugene which were thus exhibited under their banner, not under the Swedish Artists' Society.

The members of the official committee were Carl Anton Ossbahr (Royal armoury; Secretary), Gustaf Oscar Björck (Academy; Commissar), Gustaf Olof Cederström (Academy), Johan Theodor Lundberg (Academy), Johan Georg Otto von Rosen (Academy), Richard Berg (the Association), Anders Zorn (the Association), Gustaf Ferdinand Boberg (architect), Erik Gustaf Folcker (Swedish design and Crafts). The committee was at one time close to dissolving - especially Zorn was fond of undiplomatic outbursts - but Eugene managed to keep it going.²³ Eugene's mix of compromise and overruling gave offence. He was both then and later criticized for bias and weak leadership.²⁴

²⁰ prins Eugen 1893.

²¹ Wåhlin 1912: s. 258.

²² Strömbom 1965: ss. 116-118.

²³ Strömbom 1965: ss. 101-102; Wistman 2008: ss. 267-268; Björk 2015: ss. 160-161.

²⁴ Wistman 2008: ss. 267-268.

During a stay in Paris in April 1900, Eugene contracted a flu that developed into pneumonia, and he spent October 1900 - May 1901 at a sanatorium. He also believed he had rheumatism, but it was an abscess in his left hip joint. January 7, 1903, he underwent surgery²⁵ and spent a long time in bed. When he got up he was in bad shape and during the summer he wore an iron rack to relieve the back. By the autumn he was restored. However, it was the end of the riding that was replaced with cycling, long walks, parlour dancing, bowling, golf & tennis.

Mother Sophia first believed the pneumonia to be tuberculosis, which rumour grew to Eugene suffering from a tubercular tumour in the spine that had two-thirds eroded one of the vertebrae and an abscess continued through the chest and out on the other side. The culprit seems to be Richard Berg's wife Gerda.²⁶

Otherwise Eugene was in good health, although he suffered from increasing deafness. He did not smoke but was overweight and seems to have drunk a lot. In 1943, he underwent surgery for prostate cancer. The cause of death August 17, 1947 appears to have been heart failure. During the last years he had difficulty with stairs and had to be worn.

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Eugene's personal development 1885-1905 has been discussed under two headings: On the one hand, how his social position made it difficult for him to become a member of the art collective, and on the other hand how he handled his emotional life when he chose to live in celibacy. He complained to Helena Nyblom:

... the worst part was, that I noticed that I was still sitting on my "prince pedestal", even though I thought that I had managed to crawl away. I am tormented to feel that I am basically not homogenous with the circle where I would like to and need to belong. I thought I'd come further in that regard ... The worst is when people, especially those whose judgment I value, perceive the work of a lifetime as a hobby.²⁷

Dag Widman has found further letters of the same nature and considers the conflict to be the driving force of Eugene's artistry. When he reconciled himself to his situation, it was over:

It is striking how the Prince's mood during his youth swings between dark and light. He feels at times without a firm foundation to stand on, "cut off from the world", as he expresses it in a letter. "I've been working for a long time to get away from my old life, and I don't think I'll ever feel at home there again. And in my new life I will always be a stranger". [To Helena Nyblom May 23, 1893.]

In the summer of 1893, he expressed his disharmony and sense of loneliness in a large painting that is now part of the Swedish national consciousness – *The old castle*. It was also the work closest to his heart over the years.²⁸

That Eugene initially had difficulty being taken seriously as an artist is partly related to his low production, 1885-1905 on an average 4.3 works/year (n=91, min=1, max=8). He exhibited once a year but refused to sell. If he hadn't had the appanage, he would have starved. If you count sketches and drafts, the production was significantly higher but the business definitely had something of lieutenant painting, hobby and occupational therapy

²⁵ Svenska Dagbladet 1903-01-08.

²⁶ Wennerholm 1982: s. 128, 1903-02-19.

²⁷ prins Eugen 1942: s. 111, 1891-11-02 eller 03.

²⁸ Widman 1995: s. 24.

over it. It was not that he was lazy - for long periods he lived in the studio and neglected his hygiene - but he had difficulty finding his way, experimented a lot and had no financial incentive to pull himself together. He is even said to have become physically nauseous at the mere thought that a painting was made for economic or other lowly reasons and not for "internal necessity".²⁹

Eugene neither seems to have been very easy to socialize with as he demanded respect for his position while being treated as a member of the gang - a rather impossible equation. It worked best with older friends like Richard Bergh (1858-1919), Georg Pauli (1855-1935) & Anders Zorn (1860-1920) - all successful people with good self-confidence, aware of Eugene's birth but devoid of flattery. When these were replaced by others in the 1920s, it became more difficult: "He never forgot that he was a royal person. Above a certain limit, intimacy was forbidden, the crown appeared from nowhere, when the royal dignity was in danger. Those in the art gang who misunderstood his democratic conduct for being one of the boys were soon side-lined."³⁰ Picking a fight with Eugene also had its risks. Judging by the incidents recorded, mainly when the affair with the Nixie, Eugene was able to keep a conflict going indefinitely.

²⁹ Zachau 1989: s. 321.

³⁰ Gerhard 1957: s. 231.