

A historical black and white photograph of a crowded ship deck. In the foreground, a wooden walkway with a rope railing runs diagonally across the frame. A large group of people, including men, women, and children, are gathered on the deck behind the railing, looking towards the camera. The scene is set on the deck of a large vessel, with various pieces of equipment and structures visible in the background.

Twentieth Century Stories

THE ART SHOW

FORUM
GALLERY

Twentieth Century Stories

THE ART SHOW

October 30–November 2, 2024

Booth C10

October 30, 12pm–7pm

October 31, 12pm–7pm

November 1, 12pm–7pm

November 2, 12pm–6pm

Opening Night Benefit for Henry Street Settlement

October 29, 5pm–9pm

Location:

Park Avenue Armory

643 Park Avenue at E.66th Street

New York, NY 10065

For inquiries, please contact Marjorie Van Cura, marjorie@forumgallery.com
or call (212) 355-4545



Ernie Barnes

(1938–2009)

Born in Durham, North Carolina in 1938 at the height of the Jim Crow era, Ernest Eugene Barnes, Jr. (“Ernie”) is known for his paintings depicting Southern life and Black Joy in which he animated the lyricism of the human body at sport, work, and play. Barnes’ characters—stylized and sinuous—were expressive of the soul and spirit of the South described by the Artist as the “spiritual currency of the ghetto.” His neo-mannerist style was influenced by Italian masters and 20th Century American artists including Thomas Hart Benton, Andrew Wyeth and Charles White.

Ernie Barnes attended North Carolina College on a football scholarship, but he studied art. Drafted by the National Football League, Barnes played for six years before retiring in 1965 to concentrate on his art. In the 1970s, Barnes’ paintings became known across the country when his work was featured on the cover of Marvin Gaye’s 1976 album, *I Want You*, and in the credits of the groundbreaking television series, *Good Times*. His impact on popular culture has led the art of Ernie Barnes to become synonymous with contemporary African American creative expression for multi-generational audiences from all walks of life.

Created in 1972, *No Time for Church* was made at the time Barnes’ series *The Beauty of the Ghetto* embarked on a seven-year tour of major American cities hosted by dignitaries, athletes and celebrities. The series was Barnes’ response to the “Black is Beautiful” cultural movement of the 1960s and the iconic 1968 James Brown song, *Say it loud: I’m Black and I’m Proud*. His focus shifted towards the beauty and joy of mid-century Black Southern life at a time that dismissed the work of Black artists, and when Black culture was not represented in the pictures hanging in public collections. Barnes remarked, “I am providing a pictorial background for an understanding into the aesthetics of Black America. It is not a plea to people to continue to live there (in the ghetto) but for those who feel trapped, it is...a challenge of how beautiful life can be.” With the simple act of instilling his canvases with positivity, earnestness, striving, celebration and pride, Barnes’ depiction of Black life imparted a principled, even defiant, message accessible to all.

No Time for Church is a self-portrait portraying Barnes with eyes closed. Describing the symbolism of this expression, Barnes explained “...I began to see, observe, how blind we are to one another’s humanity. Blinded by a lot of things that have, perhaps, initiated feelings in that light. We don’t see into the depths of our interconnection. The gifts, the strength and potential within other human beings. We stop at color quite often. So one of the things we have to be aware of is who we are in order to have the capacity to like others. But when you cannot visualize the offerings of another human being you’re obviously not looking at the human being with open eyes.”

Legendary film actor Burt Lancaster (1913-1994) was the first owner of *No Time for Church*, acquiring the work in the year it was made. Lancaster gifted the painting to screenwriter and frequent collaborator Roland Kibbee (1914-1984) and his wife Lucille Meredith Kibbee. Together with Lancaster, Roland Kibbee notably worked on films including *The Crimson Pirate* (1952), *Vera Cruz* (1954), *The Devil’s Disciple* (1959), and *Valdez Is Coming* (1971). Earlier in his career, Kibbee was a radio writer, with impressive credits that included *The Fred Allen Show* and *The Groucho Marx Show*.

Both Lancaster and Kibbee had social progressive backgrounds, and Kibbee was named as a Communist by several witnesses before the House Unamerican Activities Committee in the early 1950s. Forced to testify (or lose his livelihood), Kibbee reluctantly appeared, and later said he named only those that had named him. He retained his friendship and association with Lancaster, who was a vocal critic of the Committee and its effect on the business of Hollywood.

ERNIE BARNES

No Time for Church, 1972

acrylic on canvas

18 x 14 inches

signed lower right “*ERNIE BARNES*”

Provenance

The Artist

Collection of Burt Lancaster, 1972

Roland Kibbee and Lucille Meredith Kibbee
(gift from the above)

Jefferson Kibbee

(by descent)

The Estate of Ernie Barnes

Private Collection, Rye, New York

(purchased from the above)



ERNIE BARNES

In high school, Ernie Barnes found a mentor in his high school masonry teacher, a weightlifting coach and former athlete, who encouraged the emerging talent he observed in Ernie's drawings. Barnes became an accomplished athlete in college and, after graduation was drafted by the National Football League playing for the Baltimore Colts, Titans of New York, Denver Broncos, and Canadian Football League.

After six years playing in the National Football League, Barnes retired in 1965 to concentrate on his art. In his lifetime, Barnes credited his years as an athlete and advice from his college art instructor Ed Wilson with helping him understand the importance of painting from his own life experiences. Barnes acknowledged Wilson saying, "He told me to pay attention to what my body felt like in movement. Within that elongation, there's a feeling, an attitude and expression. I hate to think had I not played sports what my work would look like."

Shortly after his final football game and with the endorsement of San Diego Chargers owner Barron Hilton, Barnes crashed the 1965 American Football League owners' meeting in Houston to make a pitch to become the first official painter of a professional sports franchise. New York Jets owner Sonny Werblin was impressed with Barnes as an artist and person and offered to pay him a player's salary to become the team's official painter. Sooner after, Werblin financed the transportation of Barnes' paintings to New York and brought three art critics to view them, who agreed that Barnes was "the most expressive painter of sports since George Bellows." Soon thereafter in November 1966, Grand Central Art Galleries in New York debuted Barnes' first solo exhibition, which was critically acclaimed and rapidly sold out.

His experiences as an athlete served as rich fodder for Barnes' subject matter, and he later received two Sports Artist of the Year awards in 1984 and 1985. In addition, Barnes was commissioned to produce paintings for the Los Angeles Olympic Committee (1984), the Los Angeles Lakers basketball team (1987), and the Carolina Panthers football team (1996).

In 1996, the National Basketball Association commissioned Barnes to create a work for its 50th Anniversary on the theme "Where we were, where we are, and where we are going." Barnes' answer to the challenge was *The Dream Unfolds* which hangs in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts. The graphite and acrylic work, *Study for The Dream Unfolds*, was created in preparation for the commission, and features the last names of notable NBA players, such as Elgin Baylor, Julius Erving, Larry Bird, Magic Johnson and Michael Jordan.

ERNIE BARNES

Study for The Dream Unfolds, 1995
graphite and acrylic on paper
37 ⁷/₈ x 25 ³/₈ inches
inscribed and signed lower right
"Study: For NBA / Ernie Barnes"

Provenance

The Artist
The Estate of Ernie Barnes
Private Collection, Rye, New York



FULKS · ZASLOF

MIKAN · MARTIN

PETIT · COUSY · RU

JONES · SHARON

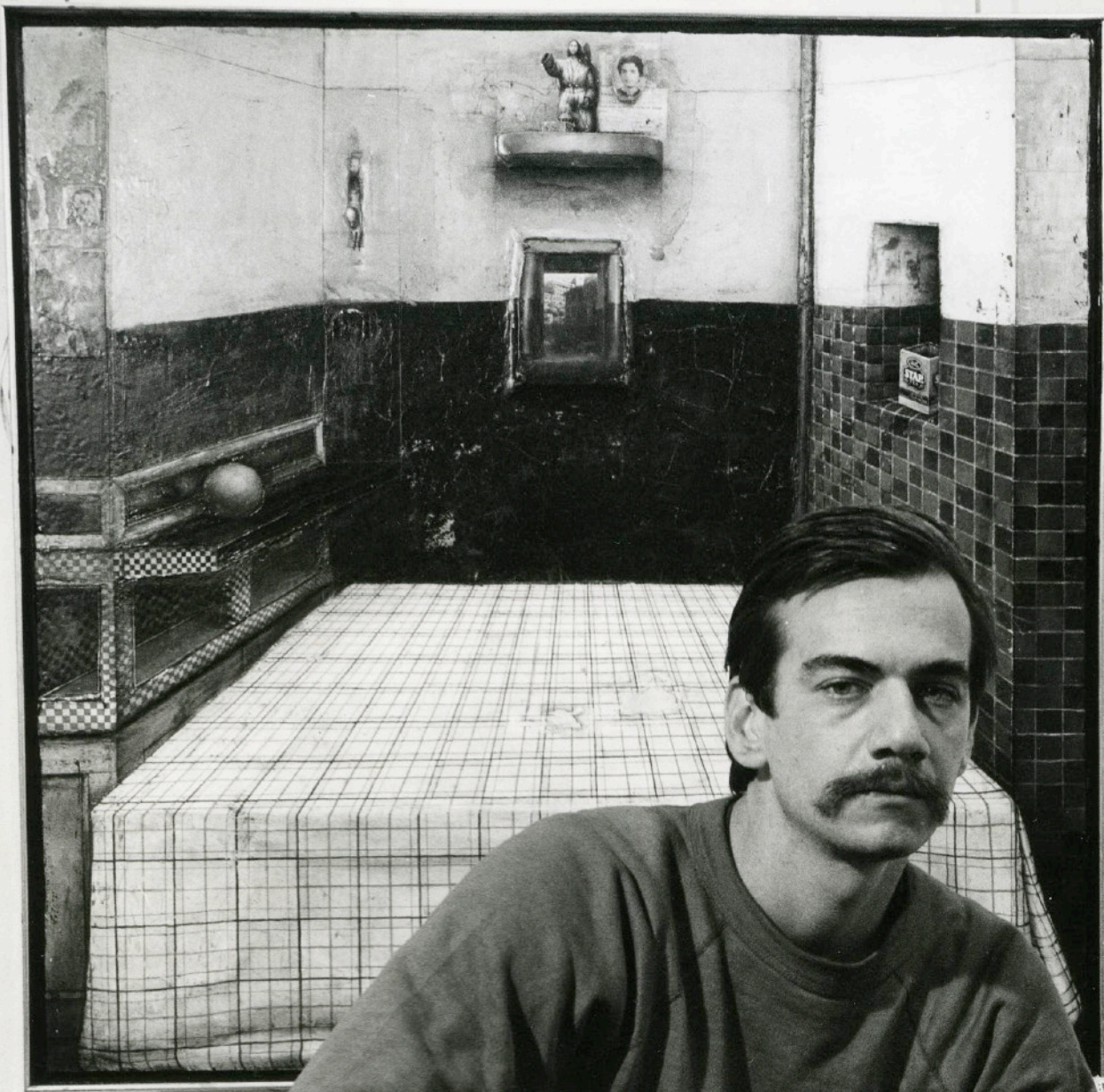
LICEK · LUCAS · RO

BERLAIN · BAYLOF

WEST · ERVING ·

BIRD · MAGIC · JOE

Study for NBA
ERIC ROBERTS



Gregory Gillespie

(1936–2000)

Gregory Gillespie was born in New Jersey, studied at New York's Cooper Union (1954-60), then at the San Francisco Art Institute where he earned his MFA in 1963. It was soon apparent he would not follow in the footsteps of New York's Abstract Expressionists nor in those of the Bay Area Figurative painters, but that his art would always remain fully individualist, highly personal, and outside the parameters of the critical mainstream. Some saw his artistry as the contrivance of an art world contrarian; others recognized that Gregory was painstakingly progressing through his own personal demons and, in so doing, flabbergasting an attentive audience with the painterly results. Estrangement, entrapment, isolation, anxiety, repression, guilt, violence, and a heightened, even pornographic sexuality, consumed his Italian period work and divulged his psychic pain.

As the United States intensified its involvement in the war in Vietnam, Gregory Gillespie landed in Rome as the recipient of a Chester Dale Fellowship and a Fulbright Grant. His grant project was to study the work of the early Renaissance master Masaccio, however, it is fitting that he was most captivated by that of Carlo Crivelli, a mid-to-late 15th century painter with an intense, haunting neo-Gothic sensibility. Gillespie commented of Crivelli that he was one of the few artists skillful enough to seamlessly incorporate sculptural elements with those of painting, and to do so deftly enough to mask what one perceives as reality versus illusion. Such was the schizophrenic sphere of contradictions which Gregory Gillespie sought and succeeded in occupying.

No painters of the decade came close to Gillespie's graphic nature and explicit scenes. A small coterie of 1960s Italian filmmakers, however, shared his capacity to transform life observed into the hallucinatory. Like Gregory, these independent, outsider artists were interfacing with reality and sanity.

Although it is doubtful that Gregory Gillespie knew them personally, he may well have seen the controversial work they produced, precisely concurrent with his own: Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Theorem* (1968) in which an enigmatic male visitor has consensual sex with every member of a bourgeois Italian family before disappearing; Liliana Cavani's *Year of the Cannibals* (1969) where the streets of Milan are laden with the corpses of ill-defined state enemies while indifferent pedestrians walk past; and Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blowup* (1966), an existential mystery thriller whose bizarre, unrelated events terminate in a mimed tennis match with imaginary rackets and ball, the protagonist dematerializing just as the sound of the ball becomes audible. Although Gillespie did bring his phantasmagoric universe back with him to the United States (to rural Massachusetts), never was it so potent as in his Roman days of the mid to late 1960s.

During these formative years, Gillespie painted a series of interiors of Italian kitchens and trattorias. His so-called “shrine” paintings carried the emotional weight of religious or sacred spaces. Although he had left the Catholic Church of his youth, Gillespie described how he “rejected all religious doctrines and became free of them” intellectually, but how “emotionally there’s still a twenty-year impact on your feelings and on the way your mind works unconsciously—repression, and fears, and guilt.”

Watching the Vietnam war unfold from abroad, Gillespie must have been deeply affected by the shocking reports of the violent conflict and civil unrest that resulted. His response in 1966 was to create *Fragment (Vietnam Shrine)*, in which the pinnacle of human suffering presented goes far beyond the contemplative nature of the isolated spaces of Gillespie’s interiors. That the subject is an African American man broadens the context of the work further to become a commentary on the disproportionate effect of wartime upon underprivileged and poor communities. The violence of *Fragment (Vietnam Shrine)* is transformed by Gillespie into a reliquary for modern times, a relic of life and against war to be revered and honored.

Unlike any artwork done previously or since, the rawness and brilliance of Gillespie’s work remains a mystery to the mentally sound. Ultimately, Gregory was overpowered by his demons and took his own life on April 26, 2000.



Carlo Crivelli, *Saint Peter of Verona (Peter Martyr)*, circa 1475
(coll. National Gallery, London)



Pier Paolo Pasolini, film-clip from his *Teorema (Theorem)*, 1968

GREGORY GILLESPIE

Fragment (Vietnam Shrine), 1966

mixed media

25 x 19 x 4 ½ inches

signed verso “GG”

Provenance

The Artist

Myrna and Norman Katz, Sharon, Massachusetts

Private Collection, Australia



Gregory Gillespie's visionary, insightful and psychologically loaded scene paintings, haunting fantasy landscapes, memorable self-portraits, symbolic abstractions and dimensional paintings defied categorization and brought Gillespie to the attention of discerning collectors and museums across the country. Throughout his career, Gillespie focused his unerring eye for detail and masterful technique on the forces that drive the human condition.

During his seven years living in Italy, Gillespie created real and imaginary narratives of European life, often highly charged with sexuality and emotional power. Upon his return from Italy, and settling in rural Massachusetts where he spent the rest of his life, Gillespie turned his painter's attention to his own life and its immediate surroundings.

Northampton Motor Vehicle Department was created by Gregory Gillespie in 1971. Selected for inclusion in a remarkable retrospective exhibition organized by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, presented in 1977 when the Artist was just 40 years old. Gillespie told the story of the painting's inspiration for the exhibition catalogue:

When I went to the Motor Vehicle Department to get my driver's license, they handed out these flyers with photographs of Governor Sargent sitting there. They had begun using color photographs on the driver's licenses, and the flyer explained the camera they were using, and so on. This whole scene was actually painted on the flyer they handed out.

Gillespie had been incorporating photographic elements and paper collage underneath his compositions for several years prior and it had become a valuable part of his creative process, as described by Abram Lerner, first Director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden:

Given his fascination with the more bizarre aspects of society, (Gillespie) discovered a source of endless material in the newspaper and magazine photographs which serve as our mirrors onto the world. Sorting and clipping those photographs which struck a response, he explored new relationships and affinities between them. Responding to their suggestive power, he reconciled images which had no common origin, arranging his collages into pictorial compositions from which various themes emerged. Having thus created the basic foundation of his composition, he painted over the entire surface, frequently disguising his source by transforming individual elements eliminating others or adding to the whole. In this fashion, beginning with disparate photo fragments, he was able to create a unified work which heightened those incongruous and psychological images which had originally sparked his interest.

_Abram Lerner, for the catalogue published on the occasion of the exhibition *Gregory Gillespie*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., 1977; traveled to Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, GA.

GREGORY GILLESPIE

Northampton Motor Vehicle Department, 1971
oil and magna on wood
4 ½ x 6 ½ inches

Provenance

The Artist
Sydney and Frances Lewis, Richmond, Virginia
Private Collection, Australia





Fernand Léger

(1881–1955)

The quintessential painter of the machine age, Fernand Léger observed the effects of modern technology from the trenches as a soldier in the French army during World War I. Beginning in 1917, Léger began painting figures and objects characterized by tubular, machinelike forms as an expression of his belief that all of modern life was succumbing to the machine.

Though Léger's fascination with the modern world never diminished, his aesthetic evolved again in the early 1920s corresponding to his association with Purist artists Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant, who advocated for an artistic fusion of classicism and modernity.

By the 1930s, Léger's interest in capturing the external world in an accessible visual language extended to his politics. Léger began teaching painting to the common worker in the mid-1930s as part of his activities as a leftist proponent of the French Popular Front and his work took on an increasingly figurative, populist style. In 1931 he visited the United States for the first time, propelling an exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, and The Art Institute of Chicago in 1935.

With the onset of World War II, Léger made plans to move to the United States where he lived from 1940 to 1945. Returning to France after the war, the industrial detritus and urban environment of New York continued to inform Léger's work. However, it was the devastation of World War II and the postwar process of reconstruction in France that became Léger's inspiration for a series of paintings depicting *les constructeurs* (construction workers), the universal symbol of *homo faber*, man the maker and builder.

Étude pour la Grande Tour, 1949 is Léger's paean to the working class in which the Artist exalts the value of proletarian labor in the story he tells of a group of electricians he witnessed working on steel girders and pylons, their bicycles standing alongside to take them home at the end of the day. Eager that his art should be accessible and seen by ordinary workers, Léger first exhibited the series of *les constructeurs* paintings in the canteen of the Renault car factory in Paris.

Étude pour la Grande Tour is directly related to Leger's major oil paintings in the collections of Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Caracas, Venezuela (*Étude Pour Les Constructeurs*); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (*Builders with Rope*); and Le Musée National Fernand Léger, Biot, France (*Les Constructeurs*).

This work was owned by André Amédée Nicolas Lefèvre, a successful financier and stockbroker who retired in 1927 at the age of forty-four in order to fully devote himself to collecting art and books. With a focus on Cubism, Lefèvre built an outstanding collection acquiring exceptional works by George Braque, Juan Gris, Fernand Léger, and Pablo Picasso. *Étude pour la Grande Tour* remained in his esteemed collection until he died in 1963.

FERNAND LÉGER

Étude pour la Grande Tour: Constructeurs, 1949

gouache, ink, oil, and graphite on paper

32 x 22 inches

Initialed and dated lower right, "FL 49"

A photo certificate of authenticity issued by Mme. Irus Hansma accompanies this work.

Provenance

The Artist

Galerie Louise Leiris, Paris

Andre Lefèvre, Paris

(Hotel Drouot, Paris, November 24, 1967, No. 27)

Galerie Berggruen, Geneva

Michelle Rosenfeld Gallery, New York

Private Collection, New Jersey

Arnold Herstand & Co., New York

Waddington Galleries, London

(acquired from the above, September 1989)

Private Collection

(acquired from the above, April 1993)

Vivian Horan, New York

Michelle Rosenfeld Gallery, New York

James Goodman Gallery, New York

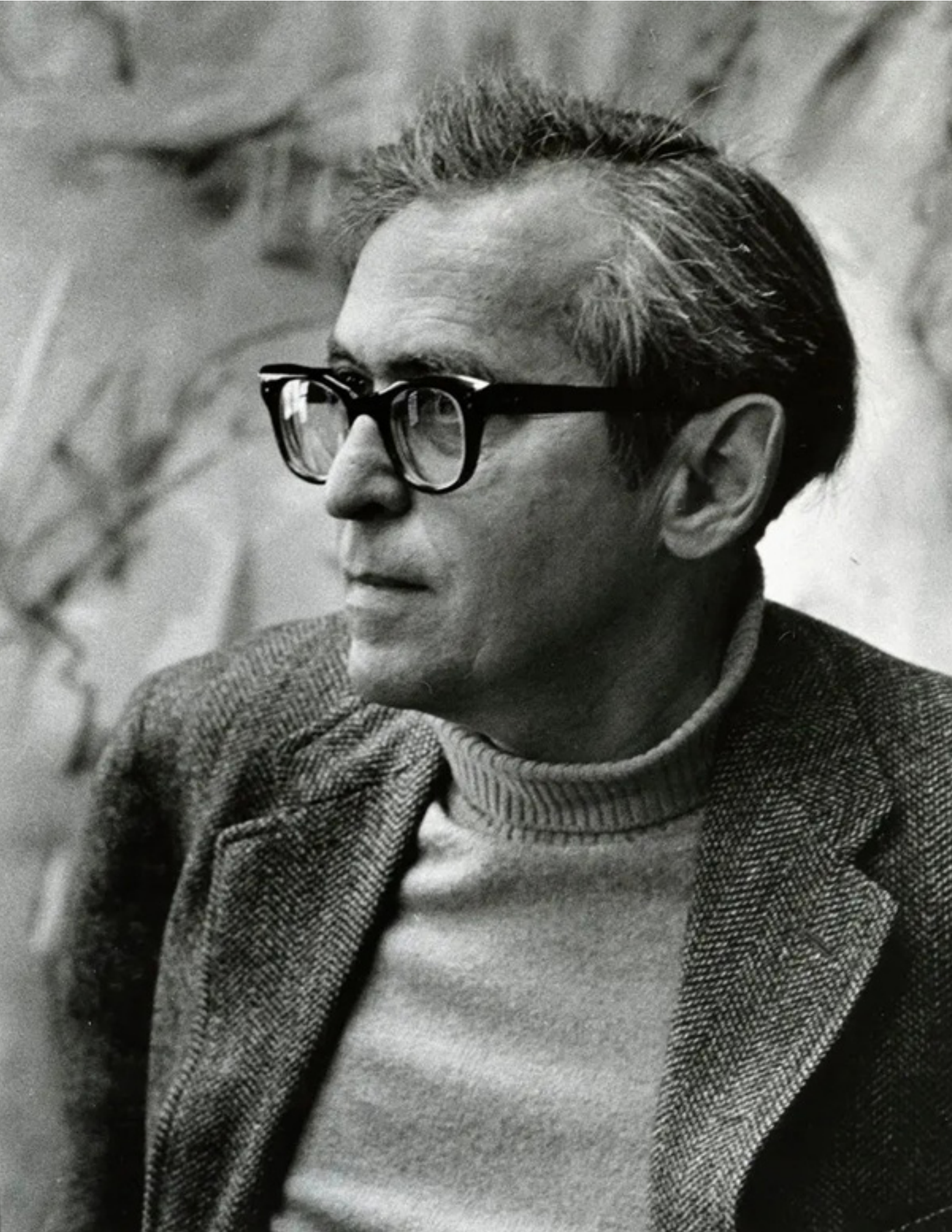
(acquired March 2000)

Collection of Jack and Leslie Kavanaugh, Los Angeles

Private Collection, New York (acquired 2011)

Forum Gallery, New York





Jack Levine

(1915–2010)

Jack Levine was born in Boston's South End slums in 1915. He began drawing at the age of eight at the community art center as did his friend Hyman Bloom, who would also go on to be a well-known artist. By 1929, Levine was studying with Dr. Denman Ross of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard. In 1935, Levine became employed as an artist in the Work Progress Administration (WPA). This endeavor supported him through the Depression; the vignettes of street life at that time filled his mind and would appear on his canvases as biting social commentary for the rest of his life.

Jack Levine's *The Feast of Reason*, 1937, was created for the WPA and catapulted the artist into national prominence when it was acquired by The Museum of Modern Art. Levine was only 23 years old at the time. In 1939, he had the first of 3 one-person exhibitions at New York's legendary Downtown Gallery owned by Edith Halpert.

Jack Levine's social satire reflected the frustrations and injustices of the 1930's. Many of his best paintings embodied his hatred of war, inequality and the hypocritical aspects of our society, thereby securing his position as one of America's greatest social realists.

Moving to the Alan Gallery in 1953, he continued his satirical direction with the completion of *The Gangsters Funeral*, 1952-53, oil on canvas, purchased by the Whitney Museum of American Art. After his second exhibition at the Alan Gallery, Levine began work on *1932 (In Memory of George Grosz)*. The painting became the centerpiece of his next exhibition at the gallery in December 1959.

1932 (In Memory of George Grosz) is one of a small number of Jack Levine's works relating to Nazism. When asked about these works Levine said:

I think an artist should paint his life, and I try to and I am a social realist painter to the degree that society or the body politic impinges on my life. The gas ovens were too horrible for me to face. Now, with Hitler and Hindenburg that was an aspect I could face. Somebody showed me a book about Germany, and a line caught my eye about Hindenburg being a giant of a man and that set me off.

In my painting, the senile stupid figure of President Hindenburg is handing over the baton of power to Hitler, a creepy little man with an expression like the face of a shark. (Hitler is named chancellor of Germany in 1933). Hannah Arendt's phrase 'the banality of evil' applies here. The figure on the left behind Hindenburg, rubbing his hands together in anticipation, could be Franz von Papen who was instrumental in this particular chapter of Hitler's rise to power. I painted the background as a military museum. Up on a

pedestal right behind Hindenburg is an equestrian figure in full armor, including an emblazed shield and the windows are Gothic.

The title was an afterthought. George Grosz, who was one of the few 20th century artists who I admired, had just died; and as he had frequently chosen to attack the perversity of German fascism through his art, I thought it would be a fitting tribute. (George Grosz had come to New York to teach at the Arts Student League in the Summer of 1932.)

Jack Levine takes this episode from history and invests it with theatrical drama, inviting the viewer to witness the chilling picture of Hitler bowing to Hindenburg as he assumes power.

1932 (*In Memory of George Grosz*) was purchased from the Alan Gallery exhibition in 1960 by the award-winning author and screenwriter, Dalton Trumbo. A decade earlier, Trumbo and nine colleagues refused to testify before Congress regarding their suspected Communist ties and became known as the “Hollywood Ten.” Dalton Trumbo was fined, imprisoned, and blacklisted for more than ten years; he wrote 30 scripts under pseudonyms. In 1960 *The New York Times* carried the story that Otto Preminger had hired Dalton Trumbo to write the script for *Exodus*. The same year, Kirk Douglas announced in *Variety* that Trumbo had written the script for *Spartacus* under an assumed name. It is against these extraordinary events that Dalton Trumbo bought this painting and held it until he died in 1976.

Writing for *The New Yorker* in 2007, actor and comedian Steve Martin tells the story of his experience seeing the works of art in the collection of Dalton Trumbo in an article titled “In the Bird Cage: Finding Out What Funny Is” published in the October issue:

The Trumbo house was modern, built on a hillside, and extended down three floors into a ravine. The walls in the living room gave me my most vivid memory of the house, for they were covered with art. I had never seen real paintings in a house, and this might have been where my own inclination toward owning pictures began. In the dining room was a William Gropper, depicting members of the House Un-American Activities Committee grotesquely outlined in fluorescent green against a murky background. There was a Raphael Soyer, a Moses Soyer and a Jack Levine painting of Hindenburg making Hitler chancellor. These artists are obscure today but not forgotten. Gropper’s art depicted politicians as porcine bullies, and Jack Levine’s well-brushed social realism had a biting edge that fit the politics of the family perfectly.

JACK LEVINE

1932 (*In Memory of George Grosz*), 1959

oil on canvas

64 x 56 inches

signed lower left “J Levine”

signed and inscribed verso

“Jack Levine / 2 West 15th Street”

Provenance

The Artist

(The Alan Gallery, New York)

Mr. and Mrs. Dalton Trumbo, Los Angeles

(Greer Gallery, New York, c.1977)

Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Topol, Mamaroneck, NY, c.1977

Private Collection, Harrison, NY (by descent)





Louis Lozowick

(1892–1973)

Born in Ludvinovka in the Ukraine, Louis Lozowick is remembered for the richly tonal, evocative lithographs of skyscrapers, machinery, and civil and industrial constructions he created in his lifetime, a series spanning fifty years.

Lozowick attended the Kiev Art School from 1904 to 1906 before immigrating to the United States at age 14. In New York, he studied for three years at the National Academy of Design with Leon Kroll, attended Ohio State University and, between 1919 and 1924 he traveled extensively throughout Europe, particularly Paris, Berlin, and Russia. During his time in Berlin, Lozowick learned lithography and quickly became one of the city's most highly regarded young artists most noted for his lithographs of American cities that embodied the essence of the Machine Age. Fascinated by the technical and industrial achievements of the United States, European audiences admired Lozowick's interpretations of the geometric architecture of modern urbanity—skyscrapers, smokestacks, elevated trains, and bridges of America.

From his experiences in Europe, Lozowick wrote and published a monograph on Russian Constructivism entitled *Modern Russian Art* and, once he returned to the United States, he created illustrations for the social reform periodical *New Masses*. He also translated for *Broom Magazine*, an international magazine of the arts that was first printed in Rome, then in Berlin, with the intention of bringing new avant-garde art back to America.

During the Great Depression, Lozowick became a muralist for the Public Works Art Project, painting his optimistic images onto city walls. Also during this period, the aesthetic of Constructivism captured Lozowick's imagination spawning a series of drawings of machine ornaments, and he toured the country extensively making lithographs inspired by his travels including a 1932 lithograph of the Grand Canyon.

Returning to New York from Berlin in 1924, Lozowick found a city transformed by machinery, which reinvigorated his love for the American cityscape. Lozowick's lithographs of this period feature geometrically designed scenes of New York with a focus on imagery of trains and industrial machinery. The high quality of his work and distinctly American subjects won him critical acclaim when they appeared in the Machine-Age Exposition of 1927, the first ever event designed to bring together architecture, engineering, industrial arts and modern art presented in New York.

When earlier in his career his work presented the promise of industrial machinery, following the stock market crash of 1929 Lozowick's lithographs became more attentive to the laborers who maintained and constructed the city. Lozowick's meticulously rendered prints of this period, including *Subway Construction*, created in 1931, are today the images for which he is best known.

In *The Prints of Louis Lozowick: A Catalogue Raisonné*, author Janet Flint remarks:

A beautifully articulated synthesis of strong personal visions and an extraordinary command of black-and-white lithography remained constant. His prints have withstood the inevitable fluctuations of fashion and taste, and today are deservedly appreciated by both connoisseurs and a new generation as among the finest created in twentieth-century America.

LOUIS LOZOWICK

Subway Construction, 1931

lithograph

6 ½ x 13 inches

Edition 4/50

Monogram lower right

signed and dated in graphite lower right

"Louis Lozowick '31"

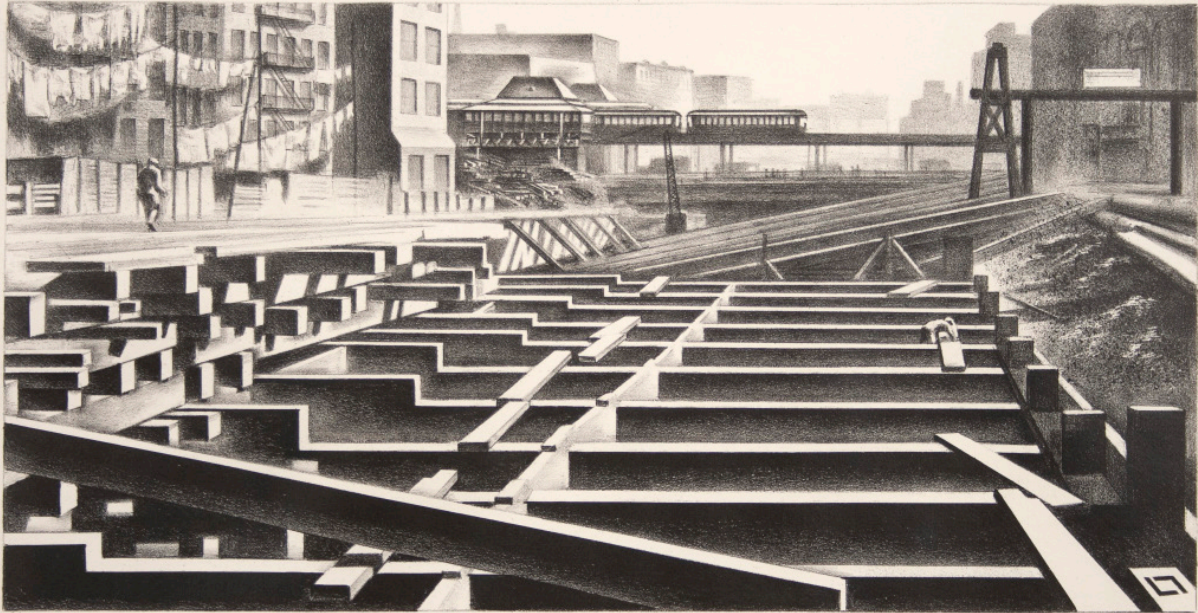
numbered lower left "4/50"

Catalogue Raisonné no. 86

Provenance

The Artist

Forum Gallery, New York





Bernard Perlin

(1918–2014)

Born in Richmond, Virginia in 1918 to Russian Jewish immigrants, American artist Bernard Perlin was a painter, illustrator, and war artist-correspondent whose works expressed the horrors of WWII, issues of social justice, and homosexuality with conviction and bravery.

Early in his career, Perlin lent his artistic talent to the creation of American wartime propaganda and illustration, going on to create throughout his lifetime a body of work that gravitated from social realism to magic realism with subjects as varied as graphic wartime recollections, sensuous male nudes, evocative New York scenes, and works implicit with social comment concerning the plight of minority groups and the poor. He led a life that, in his own words, was “a direct path to making art and seeking human connection.”

Perlin was openly gay at a time when there were real risks involved, both socially and physically, and he pursued his art as he pursued his lovers—unapologetically and with great passion and aplomb. He was active in the gay Greenwich Village scene in the 1950s, living in a small room on Jones Street, and at the center of the Paul Cadmus and Jared and Margaret French circle. He befriended artists, musicians, and personalities including Leonard Bernstein, Grace Hartigan, David Hockney, Lincoln Kirstein, Pavel Tchelitchew, and George Tooker, along with literary figures Truman Capote, Gore Vidal, Arthur Laurents, Glenway Wescott, E. M. Forster, Somerset Maugham, Christopher Isherwood, and Tennessee Williams.

In the 1930s, Bernard Perlin was an artist for the Works Project Administration, painting murals for the Treasury Department and the U.S. Maritime Commission. During World War II, he was embedded with American forces in Europe, Asia and the South Pacific as an artist-correspondent for *Life* and *Fortune* magazines creating works he described as “reportage.”

Bernard Perlin's tempera work, *Hospital Corridor* was commissioned by *Fortune* magazine for an article, "What the Doctor Can't Order—But You Can" published in the August 1961 issue. Upon examination, the painting is much more than mere illustration revealing ubiquitous inequities in the hierarchy of the medical world in 1960s America. In this way, Perlin enters his own statement for Civil Rights. Edward Insull was a close friend in Perlin's inner circle and first owner of *Hospital Corridor*.

Perlin embraced and lived his own life in his own way, without apology, to the very end. At age 91, Perlin legally married his longtime partner, Edward Newell, as a "political statement."

Works by Bernard Perlin are represented in many prominent museum collections, such as the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; The Museum of Modern Art and Whitney Museum of American Art in New York; Art Institute of Chicago; Pritzker Military Museum & Library in Chicago; and the Tate Modern in London.

In his lifetime, Perlin's work hung in many notable private collections including those of Mrs. Vincent Astor, Mr. and Mrs. John Jay Whitney, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Bernstein, Harry Hirshhorn, and Lincoln Kirstein.

BERNARD PERLIN

Hospital Corridor, 1961

tempera on board

10 x 20 inches

signed lower left "*Bernard Perlin*"

Provenance

The Artist

Collection of Edward Insull

Private Collection, Australia





Winfred Rembert

(1945–2021)

Winfred Rembert was born in 1945 in Americus, Georgia, during the Jim Crow era of the American South. Influenced by the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement as a teenager, Rembert attended a peaceful protest in 1965 and was attacked by white antagonists. He fled the assailants by stealing a car, leading to his arrest for theft. Rembert spent two years incarcerated while awaiting charges before escaping from jail in 1967. He was caught, placed in the trunk of a police car and released to an angry white mob. Surviving the ensuing near-lynching, Rembert was thrown in jail for the next seven years of his life.

After transferring through three penitentiaries within the Georgia prison system, Rembert was moved to chain gang labor in Morgan, Georgia. The conditions the prisoners faced were brutal and unrelenting from the heat of the Georgia summers to the freezing winters. It was hard labor that broke a person down mentally and physically. The inhumane cruelty of the guards humbled the prisoners who were subjected to psychological torture that, to Rembert, was worse than the physical torment.

Rembert learned how to tool and craft leather from a fellow prisoner, a technique he would use to share his harrowing story with the world. Following his release from prison in 1974, Rembert married Patsy Gammage and the couple eventually settled in New Haven, Connecticut where they raised a family.

At the age of fifty-one, with his wife’s encouragement, Rembert began a full-time artistic practice. Combining his mastery of leather working with his skilled draftsmanship, he created an extraordinary body of autobiographical paintings chronicling Black life of the Jim Crow south through pictorial landscapes of cotton fields and Black neighborhoods, and rhythmic compositions featuring field workers, freedom marches, juke joints, and prison life.

His works depicting the chain gangs, including *The Chain Gang in the Ditch*, are among Rembert’s most powerful expressions. His textural tooling of the leather with brilliant and intuitive use of cadenced patterns and intense color conjure both human hardship and a sense of optimism for the future, identified by brave moments of good humor.

Rembert continued to make art for nearly twenty-five years, before his death in 2021 at the age of seventy-five. His works can be found in the collections of numerous museums including Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; Legacy Museum, Equal Justice Initiative, Montgomery, AL; Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, Los Angeles, CA; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT; and Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT.

In addition to his pictorial narratives in leather, Rembert recalled his life in an autobiography penned by Erin I. Kelly, *Chasing Me to My Grave: An Artist’s Memoir of the Jim Crow South*. Published in 2021, Rembert was posthumously awarded the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in Biography.

WINFRED REMBERT

The Chain Gang in the Ditch, 2005

dye on carved and tooled leather

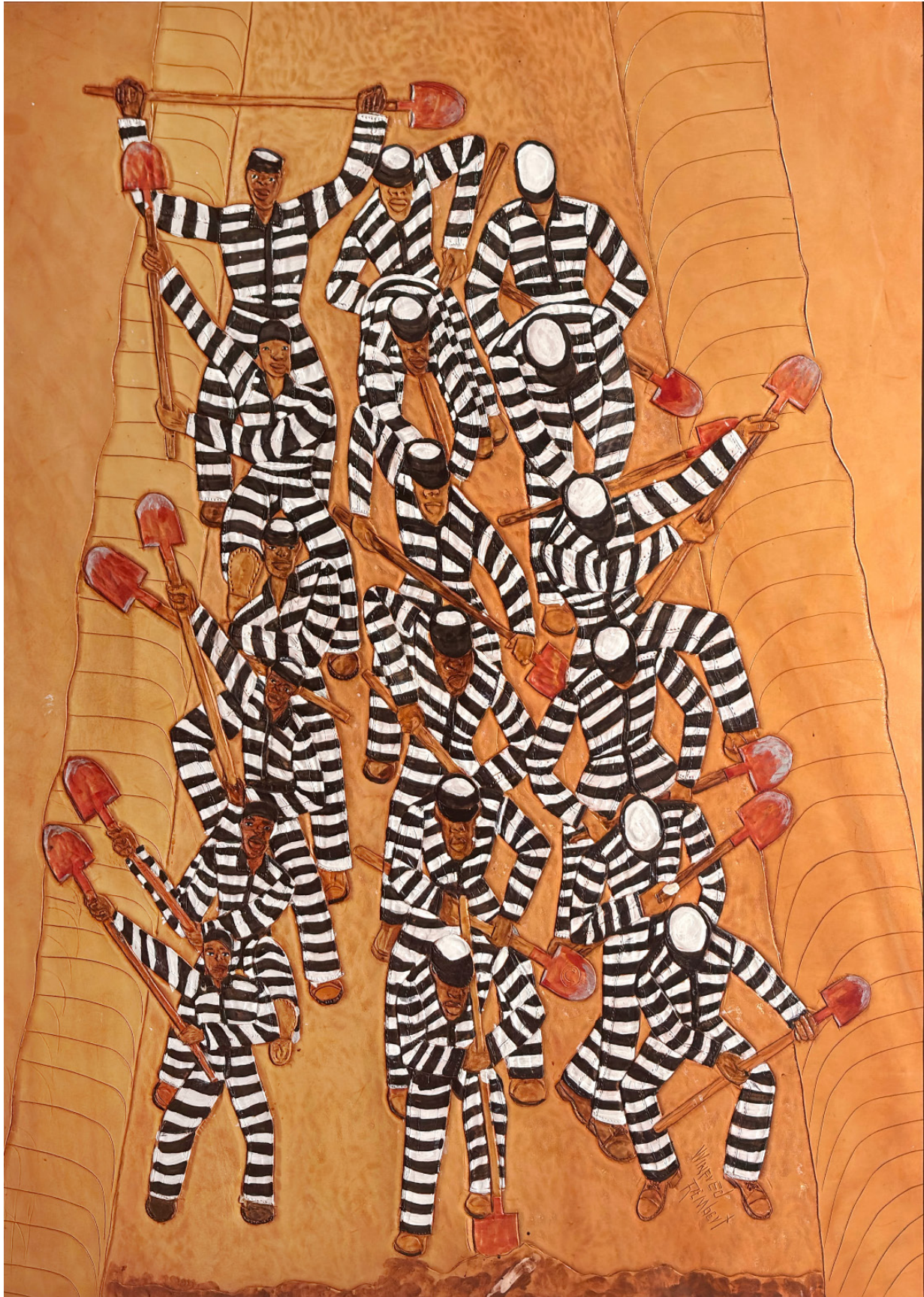
28 x 40 inches

signed lower right “Winfred Rembert”

Provenance

The Artist

Private Collection, Rye, New York





Ben Shahn

(1898–1969)

A young Jewish immigrant from Lithuania, Ben Shahn arrived with his family in Brooklyn at the age of eight. Between 1919 and 1922 he studied at New York University; the City College of New York; and the National Academy of Design. Sharing a studio in 1929 with photographer Walker Evans stimulated Shahn's own interest in photography and he began photographing people and street scenes, first in New York and later around the country. These photographs served as the basis for many of his prints and paintings.

In the 1930s, Shahn submitted and executed mural proposals for the Public Works of Art Project, and he joined the Resettlement Administration in 1935 to document desperate conditions in the rural South while continuing his own work as an artist, designer and photographer. Shahn briefly joined the Office of War Information (OWI) in 1942 to design posters and pamphlets, and later in 1945 he worked for the Political Action Committee of the Congress of Industrial Organizations to help re-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt, serving as the CIO director of Graphic Arts.

Shahn's art is one of protest against injustice and prejudice. He is recognized as one of the leading social realists of the Twentieth Century whose art consistently displayed great empathy for those affected by social and criminal injustices.

Ben Shahn was deeply affected by the conflicts of World War II and created many war-themed paintings in the 1940s that tell stories of desolation and loneliness. Created in 1945, his art's anti-war sentiment is reflected in *Death on the Beach*, which is related to a large-scale tempera work created by the artist the same year titled *Pacific Landscape* in the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art. Both paintings depict haunting scenes of a lifeless soldier lying face down on a dune of small white stones, each painted painstakingly one by one.

Ben Shahn himself noted how several of his paintings from the mid-1940s expressed a new mode of perception. Shahn wrote that these works had become “much more private and more inward-looking. A symbolism which I might once have considered cryptic now became the only means by which I could formulate the sense of emptiness and waste that the war gave me, and the sense of the littleness of people trying to live on through the enormity of war.”¹

For the Abrams monograph, *Ben Shahn*, published in 1972, Ben Shahn's wife, Bernarda Bryson Shahn, writes about the sheer visual impact of his wartime works:

...it is emotional content, an outcry against war...all these impacted feelings are innate in the image. Recognition, the sense of desolation, precedes any words that might arise to describe it. The words follow or are not necessary at all.

Widely exhibited, *Death on the Beach* was selected for inclusion in *Ben Shahn*, a retrospective exhibition organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1948, curated by James Thrall Soby. *Death on the Beach* was presented in a second retrospective exhibition for Shahn presented by The Fogg Art Museum of Harvard in 1957. In 1962 Soby organized an exhibition of Shahn's work, including *Death on the Beach*, that was presented at four European museums—Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam; Palais Des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome; and Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

1 Polcari, Stephen. Essay, “Ben Shahn and Postwar American Art,” in *Common Man Mythic Vision: The Paintings of Ben Shahn*, The Jewish Museum, 1999, p. 71-72.

BEN SHAHN

Death on the Beach, 1945

tempera on board

9 ½ x 13 ¾ inches

signed upper right “Ben Shahn”

Provenance

The Artist

(The Downtown Gallery, New York)

Sidney and Rosalie Berkowitz, New York

(acquired from the above, June 20, 1945)

Private Collection (by descent)

Private Collection, Australia





Raphael Soyer

(1899–1987)

Raphael Soyer was born on Christmas Day in 1899 in Tombov, Russia. With his family, Raphael traveled to the United States and settled in Manhattan at the impressionable age of twelve years old. Although they had to leave high school to contribute to the family income, Raphael and his twin brother, Moses, enrolled in drawing lessons at Cooper Union in 1914. Four years later, Raphael enrolled in the National Academy of Design and afterwards, studied with Guy Pene du Bois at the Art Students League. Du Bois encouraged him to be himself and paint what he knew, his family and environment. Raphael Soyer took this to heart, rejecting the strict academic style of the time for a more personal style.

With the endorsement of Du Bois, Soyer brought his paintings to the Daniel Gallery, and soon had his first solo exhibition there in 1929, the year of the stock market crash. Incredibly, some sales were made, and the exhibition was reviewed favorably. During this year, Soyer made the commitment to give up his day job, rent a studio on the Lower East Side, and paint full-time.

Raphael Soyer's Depression-era depictions of the working class and dispossessed, culminating in his mature and heartfelt observations of friends, family and models, have led his contribution to be regarded as a vital and irreplaceable component of American figurative art in the Twentieth Century. By the time of his death in New York in 1987, he had become one of this country's best-known and beloved painters, described in his *New York Times* obituary as the "dean of American realists."

Raphael Soyer's *Back Stage* is a masterpiece of social realist painting created in 1935, an important time in the Artist's career when, in response to the impacts of the Great Depression, Soyer turned his observation to the diverse milieu of urban life in challenging times, from the vagrants languishing in Union Square to the working women, shoppers, shopgirls and theater performers.

A recurring figure in these works was Walter Broe, an out-of-work businessman who was a frequent model of the Fourteenth Street artists during the Depression. In *Back Stage*, Soyer portrays Broe as a stage doorman resting on a tilted chair, his character serving to spotlight the essential difference between the "just another day" attitude of the trades-workers of the time and the Arts symbolized by the essential optimism of the central figure with her fanciful Pierrot costume and gentle smile, an actor whose goal is to provide relief and an escape for her audience through the joy of performance.

Back Stage was included in *Raphael Soyer*, a retrospective exhibition presented by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in 1967, and that traveled to the Ackland Art Museum, Chapel Hill, NC; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA; Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, OH; Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN; and the Des Moines Art Center, IA.

RAPHAEL SOYER

Back Stage, 1935

oil on canvas

26 1/4 x 28 1/4 inches

signed lower right "*Raphael Soyer*"

Provenance

The Artist

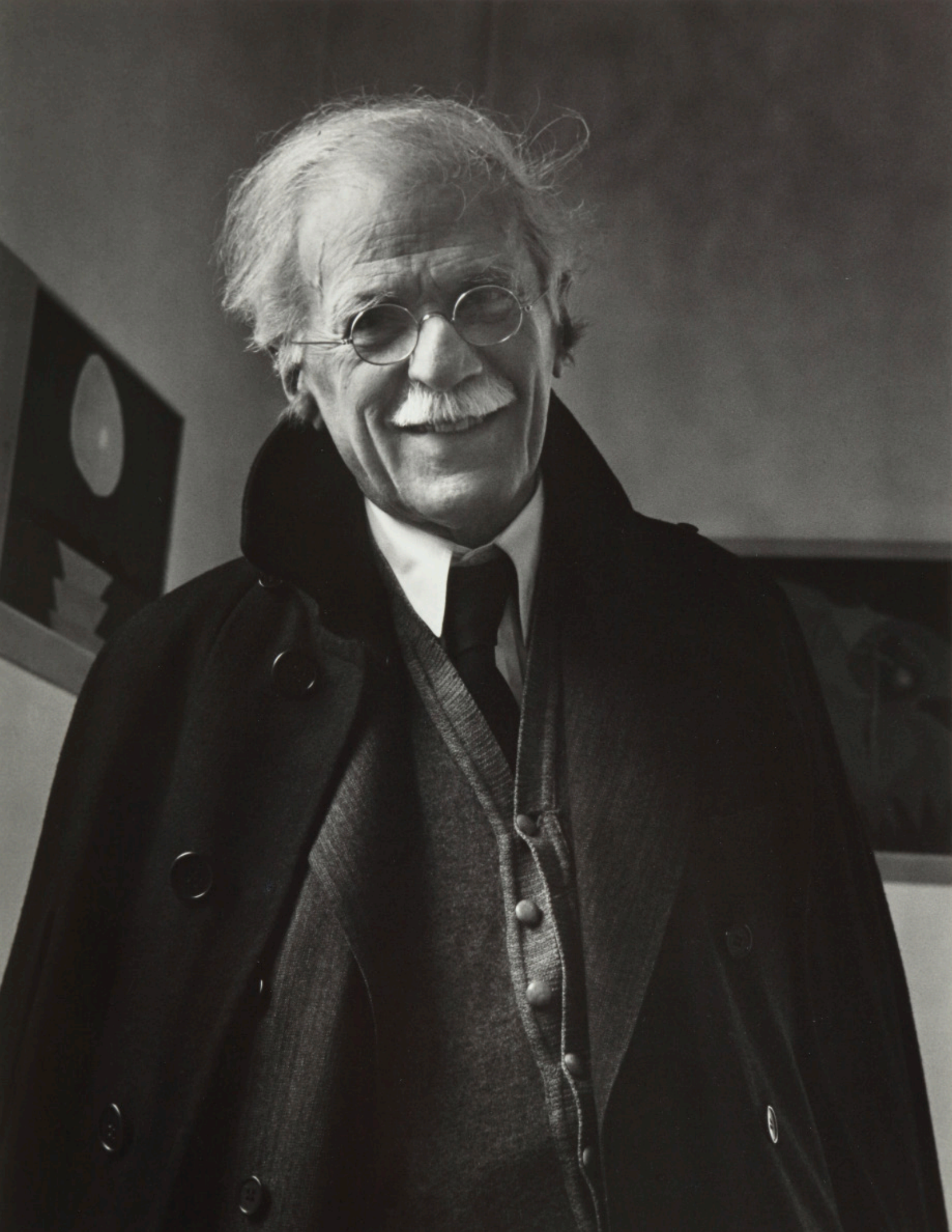
Collection of Emil J. Arnold

Private Collection, Amsterdam, New York

(since 1974, acquired directly from the above)

Forum Gallery, New York (since 2022)





Alfred Stieglitz

(1864–1946)

American artist Alfred Stieglitz was born in Hoboken, New Jersey, in 1864. Schooled as an engineer in Germany, he returned to New York in 1890 determined to prove that photography was a medium as capable of artistic expression as painting or sculpture. As the editor of *Camera Notes*, the journal of an association of amateur photography enthusiasts called the Camera Club of New York, Stieglitz espoused his belief in the aesthetic potential of the medium and published work by photographers who shared his conviction. Stieglitz and several like-minded photographers broke away from the group in 1902 to form the Photo-Secession, advocating for an emphasis on the craftsmanship involved in photography. Stieglitz took great care in producing his prints, often making platinum prints, a process renowned for yielding images with a rich, subtly varied tonal scale. And together with his compositional choices—including the use of natural elements like rain, snow, and steam to unify the components of a scene into a visually pleasing pictorial whole—Stieglitz became acclaimed for achieving the affiliation with painting he desired.

In 1902, Stieglitz devoted his energies toward the production of an autonomous, high-quality magazine intended to elevate and promote the art of photography. *Camera Work* was the result and from 1903 to 1917 Stieglitz edited the sumptuous journal while simultaneously organizing exhibitions with the aid of Edward J. Steichen whose donated studio space became the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession in 1905, familiarly known as “291” for its address on Fifth Avenue. Through these enterprises, Stieglitz supported photographers and other modern American artists, while also apprising artists of the latest developments in early Twentieth Century European modernism with the help of Steichen’s frequent reports from Paris. Stieglitz’s knowledge of this new kind of art is evident in photographs from these years such as *The Steerage*, in which the arrangement of shapes and tones belies his familiarity with Cubism.

For many, *The Steerage*, is considered the first modernist photograph. It was taken by Stieglitz while sailing from New York to Germany on the Kaiser Wilhelm II for a vacation in 1907. The photograph marks Stieglitz's eschewal of Symbolist subject matter for that of everyday life—an image of steerage, the lowest priced quarters on the ship where passengers traveled in harsh conditions. The focus on passengers returning to Europe (some perhaps as a result of unsuccessful attempts to immigrate) inevitably lends the photograph a political charge, but the compositional harmony of *The Steerage* is remarkable for its improbable circumstances of its creation.

The artist narrated that he had only one chance to get the image right, because he was carrying just a single unexposed plate: “Could I catch what I saw and felt? I released the shutter, my heart thumping. If I had captured what I wanted, the photograph would go far beyond any of my previous prints.”

ALFRED STIEGLITZ

The Steerage, 1907 (printed in 1911)

photogravure

7 1/2 x 6 inches

Provenance

Private Collection, New York



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