THE ARTISTS FOR VICTORY EXHIBITION

By A. HYATT MAYOR

Associate Curator of Prints

The Metropolitan Museum departs from its usual custom in turning over its galleries to Artists for Victory, Inc., for them to select and install a comprehensive showing of the contemporary art of the United States. The Museum has awarded forty-one purchase prizes amounting to $51,000. Comprehensive is not too bold a word, for the exhibition of almost 1,500 sculptures, prints, and paintings was selected from ten times as many entries.

The three juries which Artists for Victory, Inc., called together from far and near attacked the task of selection with a searching sympathy that would not know fatigue or inattention. One result has been to present in our galleries many excellent new artists unknown even to the juries, whose corporate knowledge covered the whole United States. The grand result has been to assemble works whose variety and vitality have rarely if ever been equaled in any other exhibition of our modern art. No style was excluded if it conveyed the impact of an observation, and meaningless dexterity was not admitted. With a final burst of generous energy the juries arranged their respective sections so as to present a complete unity of selection and emphasis. As the exhibition's mere host, the Museum can for once praise as it pleases.

The Jury of Award has tried to emulate the Juries of Admission in broad-minded perspicacity. It is impossible to say which had the harder task—the Juries of Admission, which had to try to keep a fresh eye and an even standard while marshaling the countless works into the ins and the outs, or the Jury of Award, which had to balance one work against another work in an effort to establish a gradation of degrees. It had to ask itself continually, "Just how thoroughly is this work of art organized into an independent world of its own? Just how much life has the artist succeeded in breathing into his creation?" In the decision of these questions no one can be expected to agree with all or even most of the Jury's findings, since no body of jurors, however united by common tastes, could be expected to agree completely among themselves. Since disagreement must lead to a sharper scrutiny of the exhibition as a whole, let disagreement thrive!

This vast exhibition comes aptly at a time that stirs our country more deeply than it has been stirred since the Civil War. Then, as during the Revolution, Americans knew that what they were doing was history, and this knowledge gave force to our art. Today, in another such hour that seems almost to show the shape of the victory to come, the vitality of this exhibition gives us one more affirmation of the strength that we are throwing into man's most far-flung struggle.
LIST OF THE AWARDS


The following purchase prizes were awarded: for paintings—the First Prize of $3,500 to John Steuart Curry, Second Prizes of $3,000 to Peter Blume and Jack Levine, Third Prizes of $2,500 to Louis Bouché and Lyonel Feininger, Fourth Prizes of $2,000 to John Atherton and Marsden Hartley, Fifth Prizes of $1,000 to Aaron Bohrod, Raymond Breinin, and Charles Howard, Sixth Prizes of $500 to Howard N. Cook, Philip Evergood, Frank Kleinholz, Jacob Lawrence, Kurt Roesch, Niles Spencer, and Mark Tobey; for sculpture—the First Prize of $5,000 to José de Creeft, Second Prizes of $3,000 to Chaim Gross and Hugo Robus, Third Prizes of $2,500 to Gladys Edgerly Bates and Henry Kreis, Fourth Prizes of $2,000 to Alexander Calder and Frances Kent Lamont, Fifth Prizes of $1,000 to Herbert Ferber and Grace H. Turnbull, Sixth Prizes of $500 to Richmond Barthé, Eugenie Gershoy, W. W. Swallow, and Carl Walters; for graphic arts—the First Prize of $500 to John Sloan, Second Prizes of $250 to William Gropper and Stow Wengenroth, Third Prizes of $200 to Grace A. Albee and Leonard Pytlak, Fourth Prizes of $100 to Lawrence Barrett, Francis Chapin, Ralston Crawford, Wanda Gág, Benjamin Kopman, and Lawrence Kupferman.

All these works are now owned by the Museum. Ivan Le Lorraine Albright was awarded the First Medal for “That Which I Should Have Done, I Did Not Do.” This was judged the best painting in the exhibition, but had been entered hors concours for a purchase prize. John Rogers Cox received the Second Medal for his painting “Grey and Gold.”
Wisconsin Landscape, by John Steuart Curry. Awarded the First Paintings Prize

Maternity, by José De Creeft
Awarded the First Sculpture Prize

Fifth Avenue in 1909, by John Sloan
Awarded the First Prize in the Graphic Arts

OPPOSITE PAGE: That Which I Should Have Done, I Did Not Do, by Ivan Le Lorraine Albright
Awarded the First Medal for the Best Painting in the Exhibition