

Franklin C. Watkins

By Andrew Carnduff Ritchie

Author

Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)

Date

1950

Publisher

The Museum of Modern Art

Exhibition URL

www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3265

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Franklin C.

WATKINS

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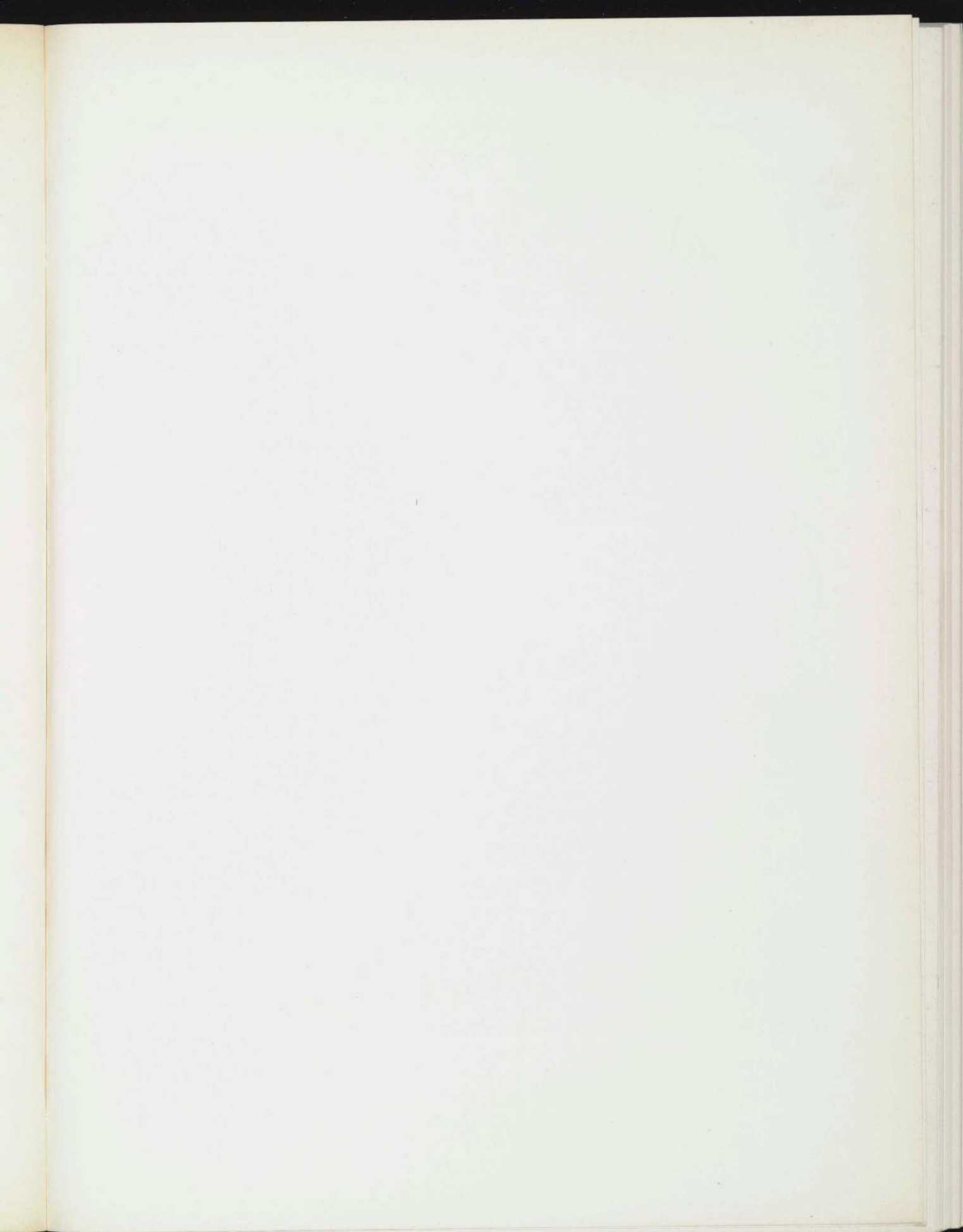
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Franklin C.
WATKINS

by Andrew Carnduff Ritchie

The Museum of Modern Art
New York

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On behalf of the President and Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art the director of the exhibition wishes to thank the collectors and museums whose generosity in lending has made the exhibition possible. Particular thanks are due to Mr. Henry P. McIlhenny for his great kindness in permitting us to borrow his two large paintings, *Death* and *Resurrection*, at no small inconvenience to himself; to Mr. Frank K. M. Rehn, Mr. Watkins' dealer, for his assistance in connection with all the details of the exhibition; to the *Magazine of Art* for permission to reprint excerpts from an article by Franklin C. Watkins; and to the artist himself who has been of inestimable help in the preparation of the catalog. I also wish to thank Miss Alice Bacon and Miss Margaret Miller for their assistance in preparing the exhibition and the catalog.

ANDREW CARNDUFF RITCHIE

Director of the Exhibition

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This book was printed in March, 1950 for the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art by The John B. Watkins Co., New York. The color plates were printed by The John P. Smith Co., Rochester, N.Y. Cover and typography by Edward L. Mills

Archives

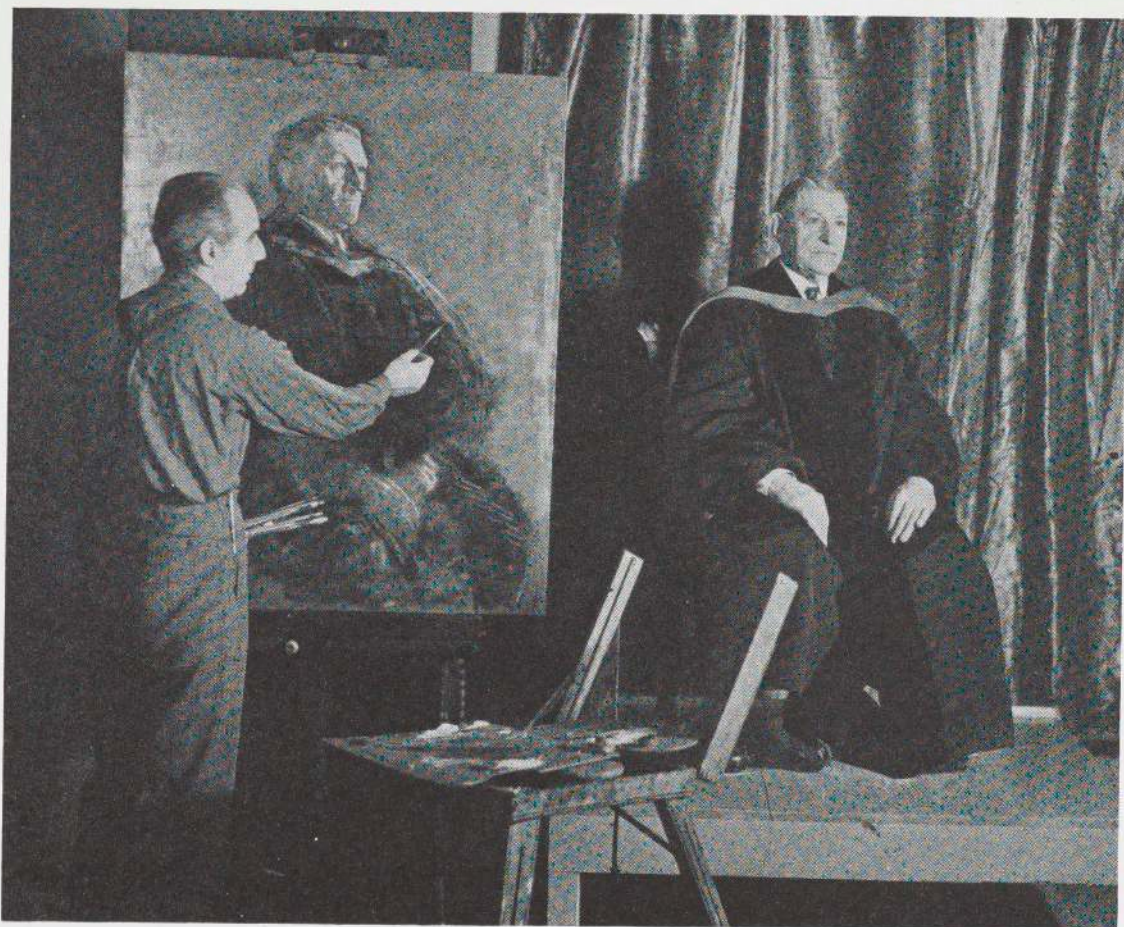
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The artist painting the portrait of Justice Owen J. Roberts, 1947

Franklin C.
WATKINS

*Paint may order life and increase it;
but it is paint, and must stay paint
and reduce life to painted terms.*

FRANKLIN C. WATKINS

Watkins is a painter. All his life he has courted paint to its advantage and to his. He draws with paint; he thinks, feels, even smiles with paint. By nature warm and sensitive, he has a poetic imagination that abstracts a compelling image from the merest suggestion and the most unlikely material: death in an orchard, a fire eater at a circus, a man playing solitaire, a Supreme Court judge.

He is a serious painter, much concerned with the nature of his materials. He is a modern painter with a healthy respect for the traditions of his craft. He is above all a colorist who has derived inspiration unashamedly from many sources. As he has said to his students: "Influence is inevitable, so best find good company for a little while — you'll be alone soon enough." He has been "alone" for many years now and he has made his own distinctive contribution to American painting. With elegance and a characteristic fancifulness and humor he has uncovered a particular strain of the American temperament and one that has never been so well expressed before.

Born in New York, he was brought up in North Carolina, educated in part in Virginia and finally in Philadelphia where he has lived most of his working life. He was a pupil at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in the latter city, a venerable institution that has given us many fine painters, among them Eakins, Demuth and Marin. But most of all he is an adopted son of Philadelphia itself, a city with perhaps a longer history of artistic production than any other in America.

His training at the Academy was severely academic and, as he tells us himself, the shadow of Eakins' pictorial precepts hung like a pall over him and his fellow students. As students will, they rebelled from the strict discipline in anatomy that was Eakins' legacy to the school, and determined to follow instead the new freedom of color and form, discovered by post-impressionists like Gauguin, Lautrec and Cézanne, which was carried to a higher pitch of intensity by Matisse and his followers. Following this revolt of his student

days, Watkins, having won two travelling fellowships, studied abroad in Spain, France and Italy. The Venetians, Giorgione and Tintoretto in particular, and the Venetian-trained El Greco, seem to have impressed him most. The seductiveness of their color, the mannerist or expressionist qualities of their figure drawing and the opulent pictorial architecture of their compositions left a lasting imprint upon his own style.

Watkins has never been a prolific painter, and the first few years in the '20s, after he returned from abroad, were something of a strain. His family suffered financial reverses when he was a student, which forced him to seek work for a time in an advertising agency to earn a living. The few canvases he was able to produce, and the fewer still he was able to sell in those early years might have discouraged a less determined artist. His first portraits and figure compositions, as one might expect, find him searching for a style, trying now one, now another direction until he finds himself securely on his own feet in the early '30s. The portrait of Paul Cret (p. 11), painted in 1922, and the *Still Life* (p. 12) from the following year have a solidity of modelling and an assurance of brushwork that reflect his sound academy training. Despite Watkins' student resentment of the Eakins discipline, the older master has had a hand, one suspects, in the Cret portrait—in its forthrightness of characterization and in the strength of its draughtsmanship. (And Eakins, I feel, remained with him as a perhaps unconscious inspiration for most of his best portraits. Watkins, in fact, came to admire him tremendously in later years.) The *Still Life* has a somewhat academic flavor to it with a suggestion of Cézanne in the brushwork. *The Picnic* (p. 12) of 1924 is an ambitious work, carefully composed and owing a good deal to the inspiration of Gauguin and Picasso.

In *The Musician* of 1925 and *The Return* of 1927 (p. 13) one can detect for the first time the emergence of a distinct artistic personality. The strong emphasis on diagonals in both compositions, the large sweeping rhythms, the easy command of forms in space, the expressionistic distortions or exaggerations of feature or gesture, the humorous mood of one picture and the romantic implications of the other—all these are to become characteristic of Watkins' paintings henceforth.

In 1931, at the age of 37, he was suddenly catapulted into the national limelight when he won first prize at the Carnegie International Exhibition with his *Suicide in Costume* (p. 15). The picture provoked a storm of criticism from the public and from many of the critics. Even those who approved the choice of an unknown young American for this international distinction were moderate in their praise of the painting itself. Conservative critics called it an example of ugly modernism. Some progressives felt it was somewhat derivative. It is difficult to understand today why such a picture created so great a furor. Perhaps in the depths of the depression the public was more repelled than usual by the morbid subject of suicide. However that may be,

I think we must now admit that while the painting shows great technical dexterity, the subject is theatrical and the exaggerated pose of the figure appears contrived for purposes of foreshortening and is somewhat unconvincing emotionally.

There is perhaps a similar straining after effect in several small Crucifixions done in 1931 (p. 14). Here, the distortions of the forms, the tortured gestures of all the participants in the scene, echoed in the violent cloud formation in the background, express a morbid mood of almost hysterical proportions that is akin to the melodrama of *Suicide in Costume*. There can be no question that the artist in both these subjects is reacting, however sentimentally, to the despair induced by the depression following the financial crash of 1929. Speaking of these years and in connection with these Crucifixion pictures and *Suicide in Costume*, he has said: "I went through a rather morose period of spiking myself up by getting gloomy. Race and religious questions and 'What a mess things are in and getting worse' were fruitful trains of thought."

Following the notoriety attendant upon the winning of the Carnegie prize, Watkins, shocked by the amount of publicity he had received, retired from public view for three years. In 1934 he had his first one-man exhibition at the Rehn Galleries in New York. This same year he designed sets and costumes for *Transcendence*, a ballet set to music by Liszt, with a plot inspired to some degree by the life of Paganini. During the years 1931 to 1934 he turned to subject matter more in keeping with his normal temperament. Gently poetic in feeling, with occasional humorous or whimsical overtones, such canvases as *Soliloquy* (p. 17), *Negro Spiritual* (p. 18) and *The Fire Eater* (p. 19), painted between 1932 and 1934, set the pattern for much of his later painting. In a recent letter he has explained to me how slight the suggestions were from which many of his picture subjects originated:

"I find," he says, "that it is most difficult to probe to the promptings back of pictures. In a few cases people have asked me 'How come?' shortly after the picture was painted, and the brief time lapse has allowed me to trace back a bit. But what I can pick up is superficial — nothing valid about it — just paraphernalia — the props for the play, so to speak. Not the reason the play was written.

"*The Fire Eater* (p. 19). I was drawing in an evening class. No one knew me. It was peaceful and I remember comfort in finding none of my students about. A small group behind me started whispering during the pose. They were abuzz about a sight they'd seen on their way to class — a fire eater. Intrigued away from my drawing, I listened in. At the end of the pose I asked exactly where this sight might be seen. I started painting the thing the next morning, and went on with it, planning always to see the real thing and find help. But I never got around to seeing it. I think I was afraid to: the flame interested me, and the flame within (eaten) somehow seemed to suggest, if I remember correctly, a continuous movement through the core of

the figure. And then I believe I sort of thought of something difficult, perhaps painful, being done with the people who stood about gawking — kidding — indifferent.

"*Death in the Orchard* (p. 32). I was driving on a cement highway on a hot summer day. I passed an animal that had been run over. Its body had been flattened again and again and sun-baked for hours. Nothing left but a little fur and parchment. Too bad, I thought, this waste on cement. The poor field at the roadside could have used the nourishment of the carcass. This event and mind-wandering preceded *Death in the Orchard*. I want sometime to try and do better wings fluttering down through branches.

"*Solitaire* (p. 16). Just men mooning around about themselves (palm reading, fortune telling perhaps). Cards interested me briefly. *Poison for the King* was from a playing card. Maybe someone trumped my King.

"*Negro Spiritual* (p. 18). I heard a fine Negro choir at the Barnes Foundation sing 'Dis ain't the Preacher but it's me, O Lord.' It echoed in my head and the picture was the result. *Springtime* (p. 20) had something to do with an old model I used. I got more out of her thinking about her later than working from her. She had some kind of nervous regret that went into her bones. I didn't actually use her for the picture."

Aside from such subject pictures, a few still lifes (pp. 12, 27) and a rare landscape, *Autumn Recollections*, Watkins has produced from time to time some of the finest portraits painted today in America. This can be said, I think, without qualification. Most modern painters have avoided the commissioned portrait because they refused to be bound by conventional portrait requirements of a good likeness or a flattering pose. Watkins, without sacrificing his independence of expression or giving in to conventions, has succeeded in dignifying his sitters by going beyond mere likeness and studio pose and painting a picture first of all. His sensitive perception of personality, often conveyed through a casual gesture, and by relating the sitter to his own intimate surroundings (pp. 21, 24 and 26), is the most outstanding feature of his work. And even in a more traditional vein, and probably owing some of its solidity and force to Eakins' example, his monumental *Justice Owen J. Roberts* (p. 30) is a vital and authoritative characterization in contrast to the insipid emptiness of most official portraits. On occasion, also, he has painted one or two genre portraits which are related in imaginative temper and in their whimsical air of reverie to a number of his subject pieces. *Fanciful Meeting Long Ago* (p. 29), for example, was painted, I believe, from daguerreotypes of the two children, and *Remember Me* (p. 31) is a souvenir portrait of an English girl who lived for a time with an American family during the last war.

In recent years Watkins has returned to paintings of a religious nature and in fact has produced in this category his major pictures to date: the large *Death and Resurrection* canvases in the McIlhenny collection (p. 38 and

color plate facing p. 38). Previous to this commission he had hopes of getting one from a church, but this project did not materialize. He had painted, without commission, a *Resurrection* in 1943 (p. 33). Mr. McIlhenny had seen and liked it, and with this picture as a point of departure the artist proceeded to work for two and a half years until the final panels were completed in 1948. To fully appreciate their significance from an emotional and compositional standpoint, they should be studied in relation to the first *Resurrection*, the *Death in the Orchard* of 1938, and to the many studies which led up to the final pictures.

The latter make use of a minimum of traditional imagery or symbolism. The *Death* is slightly indebted to traditional depictions of the Entombment and the Women at the Sepulchre. The cross is barely suggested in the dark opening of the tomb to the left. But in the main this is a very personal interpretation of the subject. The sober color harmonies, browns, greens and violets, and the broad elegiac rhythms of the composition tell their own "story" without recourse to obvious symbolic properties. The impressive restraint and simplicity of this conception of death was arrived at only after considerable thought and preparation. This becomes clear if one follows the genesis of the composition step by step. In his first two studies, *Descent No. 1* (p. 35) and *Descent No. 2*, Watkins attempted to convey the idea of death through the traditional representation of the Descent from the Cross. He abandoned this conception, perhaps because he was forced to use too many conventional properties whose significance had insufficient meaning for him. The first suggestion for the final composition is contained in *To the Tomb* (p. 35). This study is developed further in *The Beloved Dead* (p. 36). The latter sketch has a number of traditional features later discarded or considerably altered: the cross prominently displayed behind the mourning women, the architectural tomb to the left, the mourner with a lamp illuminating the shrouded body. In the next study (p. 37, top) the cross has been removed; the tomb has been extended to give a strong horizontal accent to the composition; the pose of the angel holding the lamp has been changed; and the mourners formerly around the cross have been grouped to the extreme right. The final study (p. 37, bottom) contains all the essentials of the finished picture. Here hovering angels have been introduced, recalling those in *Death in the Orchard* and the 1943 *Resurrection*, but where, in the earlier pictures, their flight is precipitate, in *Death*, their progress is reduced to a slow, horizontal motion, the long rhythms of their movements more in keeping with the funereal subject. The sepulchre has given place to a rock-like tomb, and two powerful vertical columns now divide the composition triptych-wise. In the finished canvas he places these dividing pillars in different planes thus giving a greater depth to the composition.

Watkins tells me that, despite the changes indicated in these various studies, the *Death* canvas was completed fairly quickly. The *Resurrection* occu-

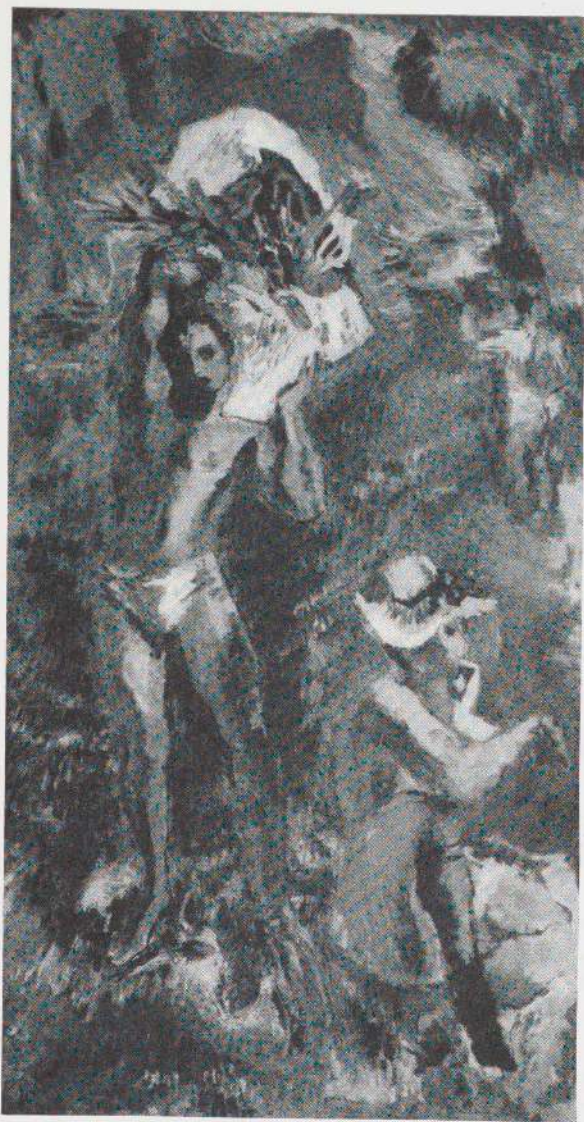
pied him for a much longer time, partly, he says, because the subject gave him more enjoyment. In contrast to the *Death*, however, the *Resurrection* took almost final shape from the beginning (p. 40, top). The motif of the three angels before a curtain, behind which rise the flames symbolizing rebirth, is obviously derived from a similar arrangement in the 1943 *Resurrection*. In later studies (pp. 40 and 41) these angels undergo several slight changes and one important rearrangement. The angel holding the left-hand corner of the curtain receives several changes of costume, first a hoop-skirted garment, then a toga-like cloak and lastly a Martian-like jerkin. The angel to right of center who first carries a key is deprived of this symbol of life in all further studies and is ultimately given another resurrection symbol, a budding branch. And finally the third angel to the right is raised up into the branches of a tree, a device reminiscent of figures in a mediaeval Tree of Life. The crown of thorns in the foreground, one of the more obvious traditional symbols, is in the end linked with the lance, another instrument of Christ's Passion. In three studies of angels Watkins toyed with the idea of giving them more individualized features (p. 39, right) but, he has told me, the result tended to emphasize the importance of the angels too much and to detract from the overall mood of buoyancy and life he wished to convey. In one study the central angel is shown standing before a grove of trees (p. 39, left), but in the final picture the trees are moved to the right and the angel returns to his former position before the curtain.

Returning to the finished pictures, I think what impresses one most about them is not merely their great size (9' x 14' 4"), but the dignity and simplicity of their conception. That such convincing directness of emotional expression has been achieved by a very subtle balance of forms and rhythms in the compositions and by a most sensitive series of color harmonies, without any obvious parade of technical virtuosity, is a mark of Watkins' character as an artist and his sincerity and honesty as a man.

A.C.R.



Paul P. Cret. 1922. Oil on canvas, $17\frac{1}{2}$ x $21\frac{1}{2}$ ". Collection Mrs. Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia, Pa.



The Picnic. c. 1924. Oil on canvas, 74 x 40". Collection Mr. and Mrs. R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Penllyn, Pa.

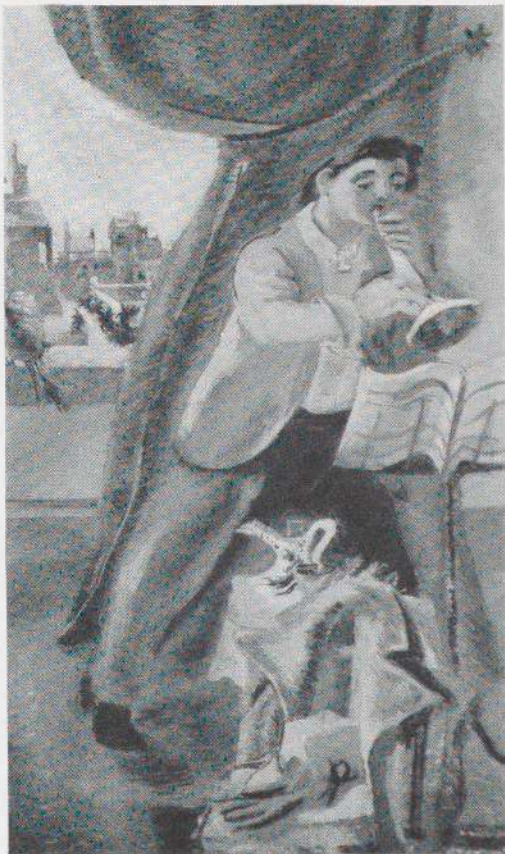
Right: *Still Life.* 1923. Oil on canvas, 26 x 20". Collection Mrs. Morris Wenger, Philadelphia, Pa.



The Return. 1927. Oil on canvas,
30½ x 35½". Collection Harry G.
Sundheim, Philadelphia, Pa.



Musician. 1925. Oil on canvas,
60 x 36". Frank K. M. Rehn Gal-
leries, New York





Crucifixion. 1931. Oil on canvas, 28 x 22". Collection Harry G. Sundheim, Philadelphia, Pa.



Suicide in Costume. 1931. Oil, tempera and pastel on canvas, 33 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 41 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pa.



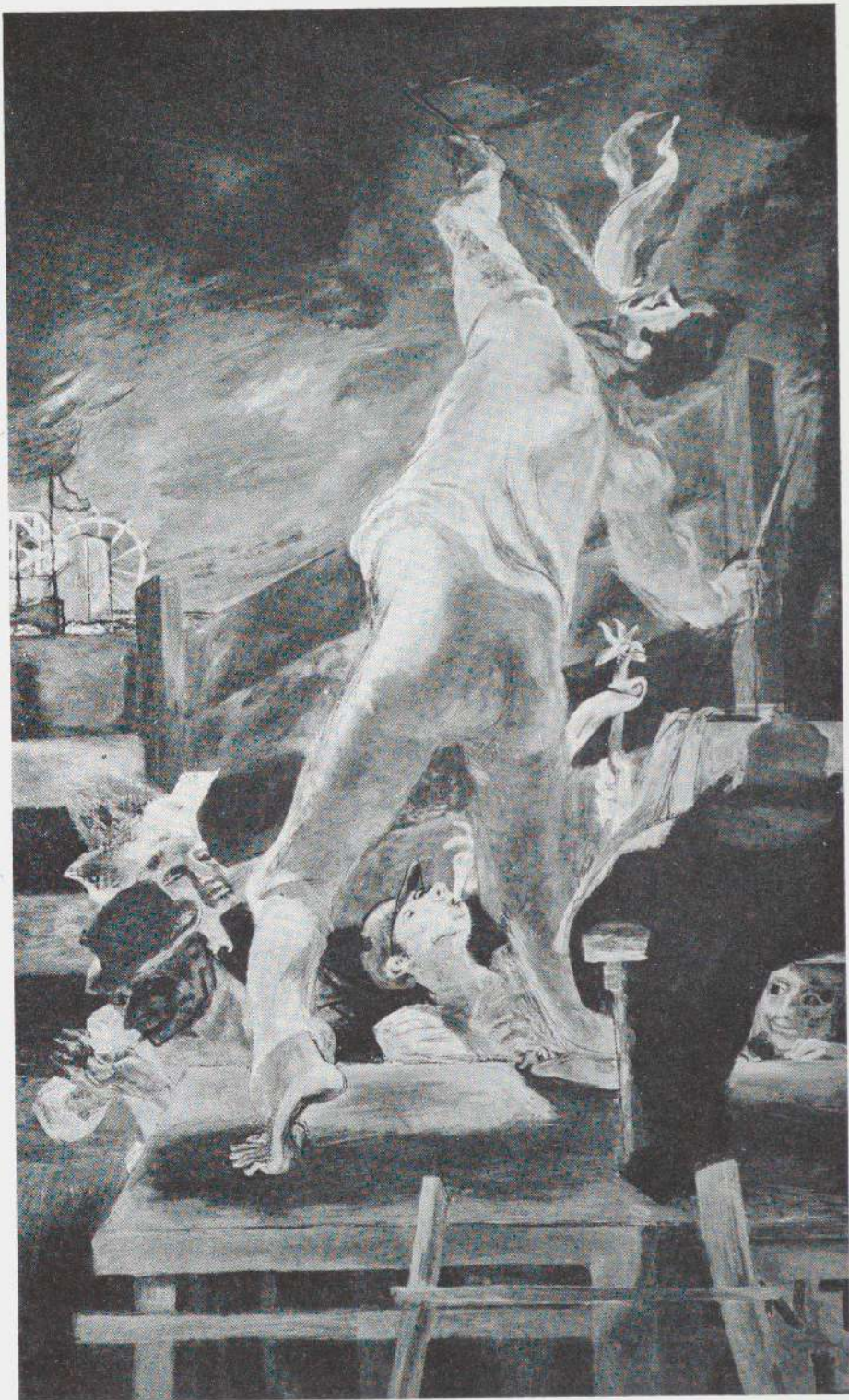
Solitaire. 1937. Oil on canvas, 27 x 30 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Mass.



Soliloquy. 1932. Oil on canvas, 25 x 30". The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York



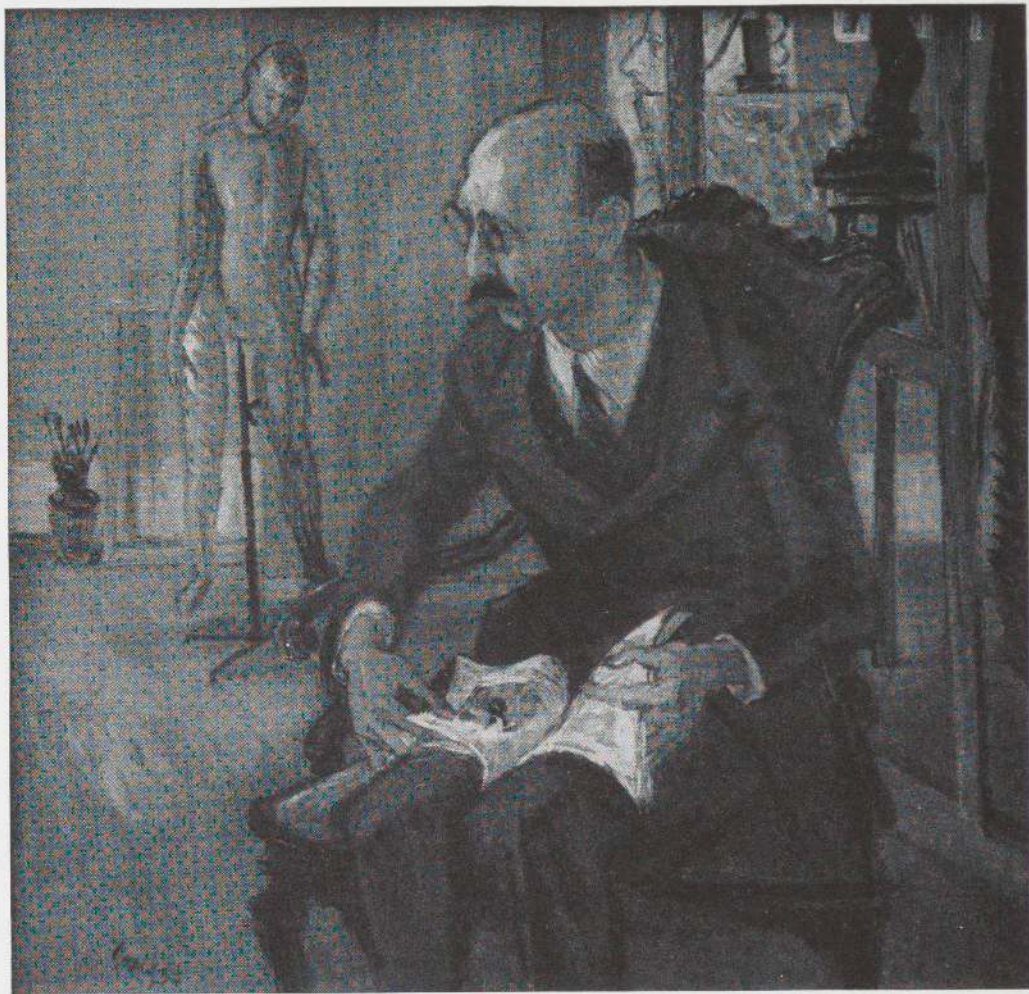
Negro Spiritual. c. 1932. Oil on canvas, 54 x 36". Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Va.



The Fire Eater. 1933-34. Oil on canvas, 60 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 39". Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pa.



Springtime. 1936. Oil on canvas, 54 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 35 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, Calif.



R. Sturgis Ingersoll. 1938. Oil on canvas, 23 x 24". Collection Mr. and Mrs. R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Penllyn, Pa.



The Studio. 1940. Oil on canvas, 26 x 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y. Room of Contemporary Art



Boris Blai. 1938. Oil on canvas, 40 x 35". The Museum of Modern Art, gift of A. Conger Goodyear



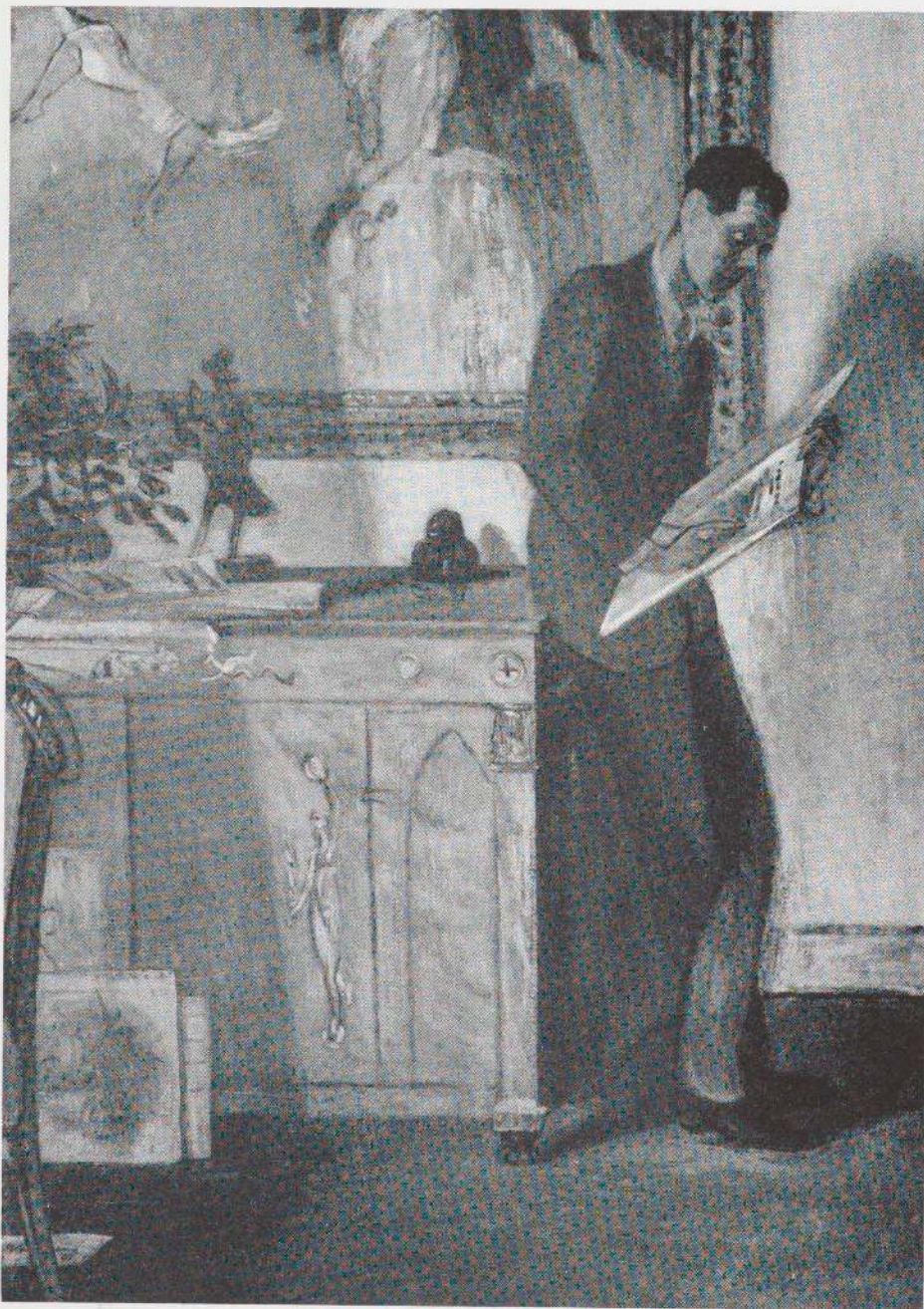
Above: *Thomas Raeburn White*. 1940. Oil on canvas, 34½ x 45". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Raeburn White, Philadelphia, Pa.



Mrs. C. E. Etnier. c. 1941. Oil on canvas, 21¾ x 20¾". Collection Stephen Etnier, South Harpswell, Me.



J. Stoddell Stokes. 1943. Oil on canvas, 35 x 27". Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pa.



Henry P. McIlhenny. 1941. Oil on canvas, 47 x 33". Collection Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia, Pa.



Above: *Miss Rosemary Thompson*. 1941. Oil on canvas, 31 x 32". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Randall Thompson, Cambridge, Mass.

The Blue Chair. 1941. Oil on canvas, 34 x 25". William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, Mo.





Mrs. John F. Steinman. 1943. Oil on canvas, 39 x 35½". Collection Mr. and Mrs. John F. Steinman, Lancaster, Pa.



Fanciful Meeting Long Ago. 1945. Oil on canvas, 31 x 45½". Collection Mrs. Herbert C. Morris, Mount Airy, Pa.



Justice Owen J. Roberts. 1947. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40". The Law School, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.



Remember Me. 1945. Oil on canvas, 49¼ x 32¼". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Henry D. Sharpe, Providence, R.I.



Death in the Orchard. 1938. Oil on canvas, 42 x 38". Collection Mr. and Mrs. John F. Steinman, Lancaster, Pa.



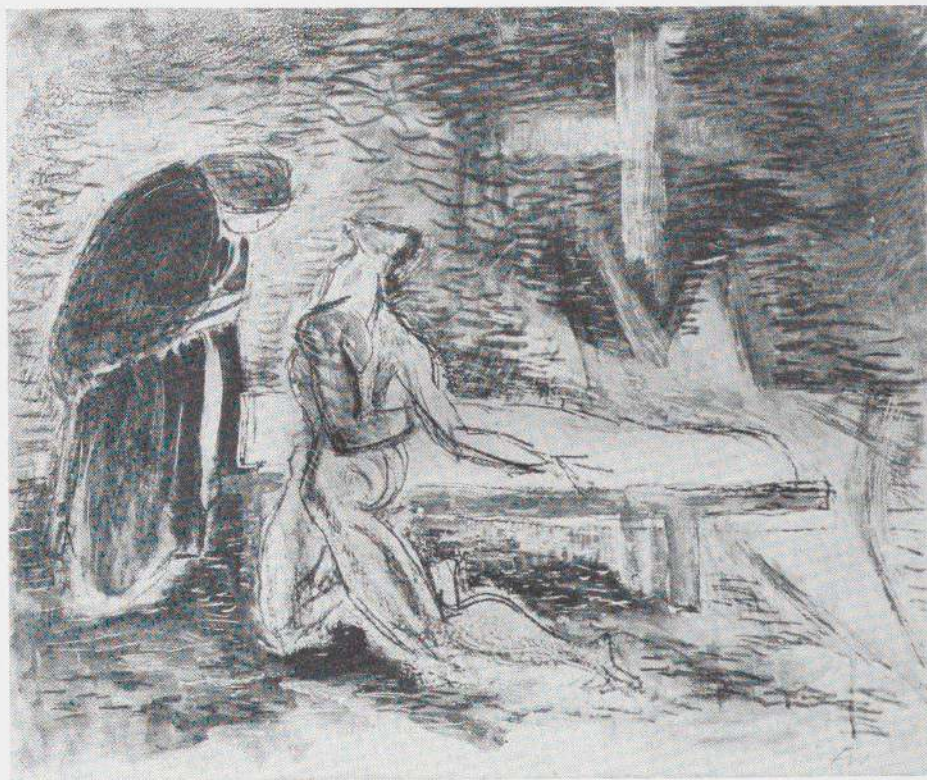
Resurrection. 1943. Oil on canvas, 40 x 41". International Business Machines Corporation, New York. Permanent Collection, Fine Arts Department



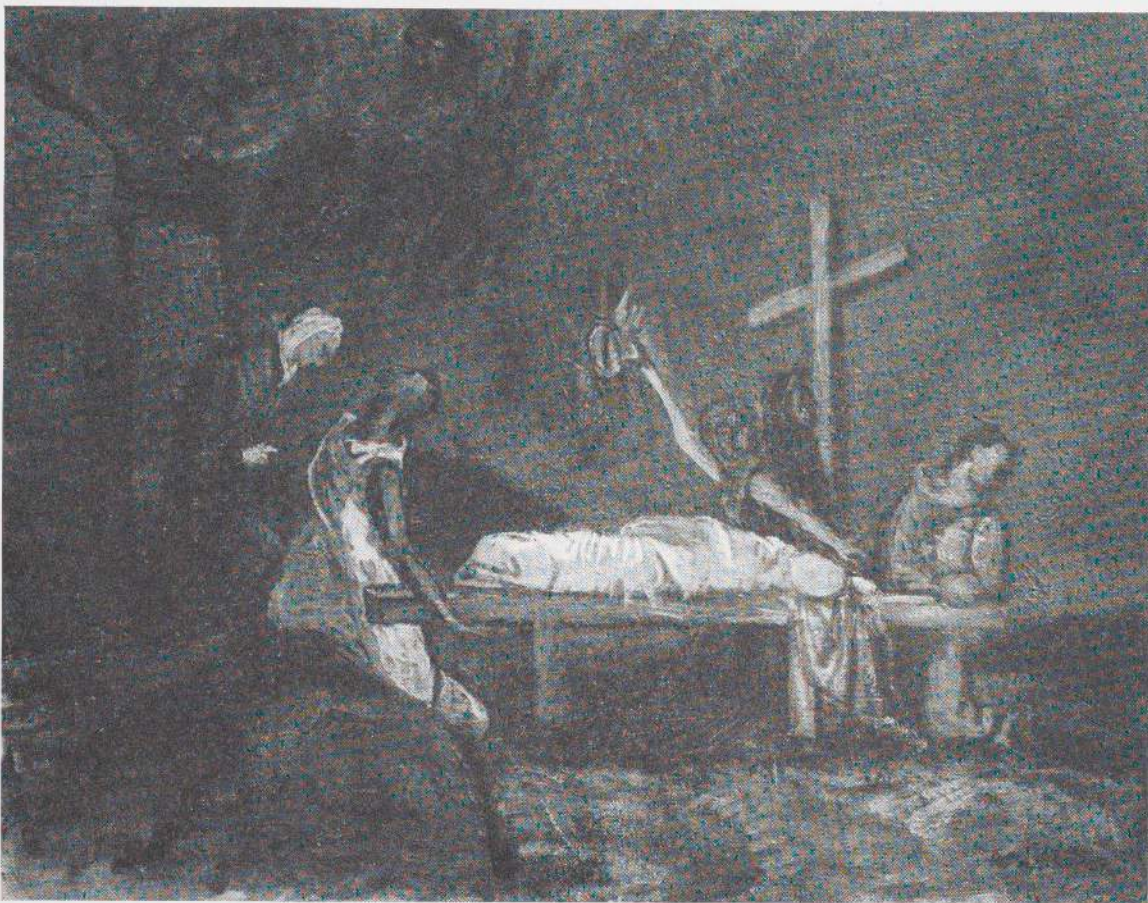
The Angel Will Turn a Page in the Book. 1944. Oil on canvas, 33 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 28". The Phillips Gallery, Washington, D.C.



Descent, No. 1. 1947. Oil and tempera on canvas, 12 x 20". Private collection



To the Tomb. 1947. Oil and charcoal on gesso panel, 15 x 18". Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York



Beloved Dead. 1947. Oil and tempera on canvas, 22 x 28". Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York



Study for Death. 1947. Watercolor, 19 x 32". Collection Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia, Pa.



Study for Death. 1947. Oil and tempera on canvas, 40 x 76". Owned by the artist



Death. 1947-48. Oil and egg tempera on canvas, 9' x 14' 4". Collection Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia, Pa.

Color plate: *Resurrection*. 1947-48. Oil and egg tempera on canvas, 9' x 14' 4". Collection Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia, Pa.





Angel Posed. 1947. Oil and charcoal on gesso panel, 18 x 15". Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York

Right: *Angel.* 1948. Oil on canvas, 76 x 40". Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Mich.

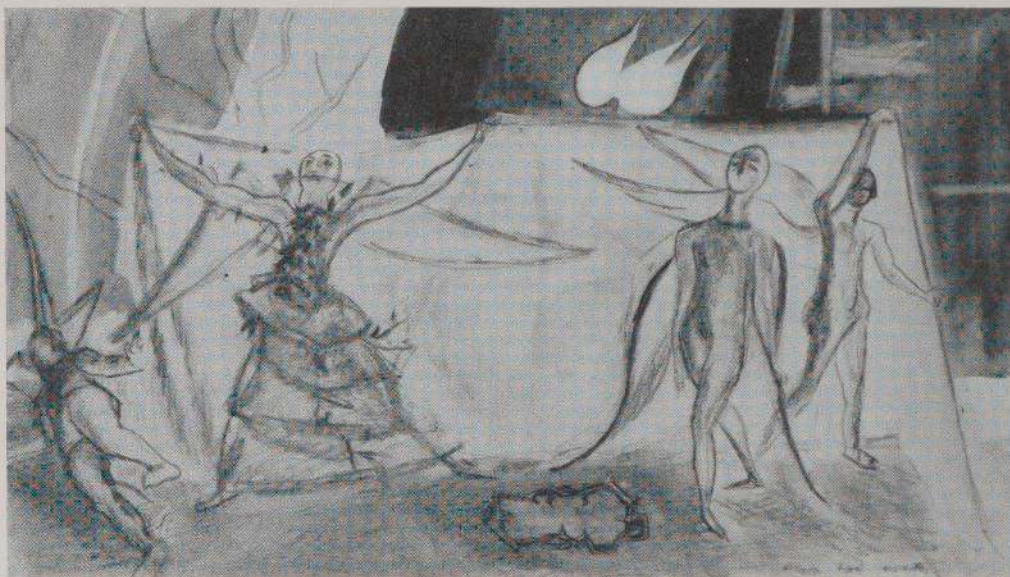




Resurrection, No. 1. 1947. Oil on canvas, 18 x 24". Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York



Resurrection, No. 2. 1947. Oil on canvas, 17 x 28". Collection Mr. and Mrs. John F. Steinman, Lancaster, Pa.



Study for *Resurrection*, 1947. Watercolor, 19 x 33". Collection Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia, Pa.



Study for *Resurrection*, 1947. Oil and tempera on canvas, 40 x 76". Owned by the artist

CHRONOLOGY

- 1894 Born New York City, December 30. Childhood spent in Rye, N.Y., Louisville, Ky. and Winston Salem, N.C.
- 1911-12 University of Virginia.
- 1912-13 University of Pennsylvania.
- 1913 Entered The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.
- 1914 Left the Academy to work in New York City.
- 1916 Returned to The Pennsylvania Academy.
- 1917 Received Cresson Travelling Fellowship — withheld owing to war conditions. Enlisted in Naval Camouflage.
- 1918 Returned to The Pennsylvania Academy. Received second Cresson Travelling Scholarship.
- 1918-23 Worked with advertising agency in New York City.
- 1923 Exercised both travelling scholarships. Travelled for a year in France, Spain and Italy. Studied particularly the work of El Greco, Goya, Piero della Francesca, Andrea del Castagno, Tintoretto and Giorgione.
- 1926 Returned to Europe for nine months travel; visited Sicily, North Africa and France.
- 1927 Exhibited with six other Philadelphia painters at the Wildenstein Gallery, New York.
- 1931 Won first prize at Carnegie International Exhibition, Pittsburgh, with *Suicide in Costume*.
- 1934 First one-man exhibition at Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York.
- 1935 to present Has taught painting at Stella Elkins Tyler School of Fine Arts in Philadelphia and, more recently, at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

ADVICE TO STUDENTS*

BY FRANKLIN C. WATKINS

The following notes are from comments prompted by particular paintings or drawings examined in the classroom.

If our urges are proper, the sources of our material supply are at hand in our surroundings.

There is surely something inconsistent and superficial in the approach which for variety's sake, poses the model with infinite care to twist the torso, differ each arm and leg, from the other; but then, if it happens to be in full face, paints a repetition on either side of the head's center line. Variety, if it is to be consistent and coincident throughout, comes with the painted thing. Since the variety is in the painting itself and not in the posed object why waste so much ingenuity on the pose? The same must be true with other elements of design. A composition cannot be posed in advance any more than one can find a balanced novel or short story ready-made in a news item.

Don't fake an agility and cleverness to your outline that you don't possess. Let your natural writing form itself. If it trembles and falters it may be your way and time may improve your touch. A writer's character and thought is more legible in engraver's script; but it is separate from it. Your thought and character is in the script itself.

Think of black not as darkness but as a color; black velvet is less black in shadow. Black like other colors lives in light.

Too much light bleaches color, too little fails to reveal.

Some colors seem to have more power than others to expand if surrounded properly by a neutral or breathing zone or a zone in which the insistence of its own color is not too stifling. These zones themselves often add up in the whole picture to an indefinite and indefinable bouquet which we take away with us and recollect as thoughts of lavender or thoughts of blue, or brown, or pink; but, on returning, we cannot find from where it came, nor quite explain the color in our memory.

Equal quantities of complementary colors do not make a maximum contrast — they repeat equal powers.

*Excerpts from a longer text first published in the *Magazine of Art*, December, 1941, under the title, *A Painter Talks to his Students*.

Don't always look directly at the area whose color you are trying to determine. When a color you seek escapes you look away from it, perhaps with unfocused eyes at the surrounding colors, and sometimes in your half-vision, your imagination will supply your color need; and you may see the color in relation to the others.

When certain strong colors break through resistance, as through an overtone, not equally but in climaxes, it seems to give us a feeling of exaltation to a degree that is lacking when they are originally free.

An empty space should be pregnant and full-functioning.

Sculpture students in my school used to refer to painting as a lot of tricks on a flat surface. I used to brood over this; but as time goes on I have been unable to discover a good painter who does not glory in this flatness and those "tricks"; and, in order that his own delight may be shared, he strives that they carry no deception.

Thin color has nothing to do with the consistency of your pigment. It is rather color that does not imply that there is a flat canvas beneath. Acknowledge this flat canvas, this resistance to easy penetration, even when you paint a thin sky. Consciousness of this flat canvas will help your strong colors to sit down and behave.

Don't paint the sky equally deep when you see it through the branches of trees. In some places let the blue appear to come to you, in some places let it suck you in, and it will reach climaxes of intensities, either in itself, or because the colors against it differ from each other and make it appear to change; or it will vary just because you need it to do so. You should control the depths in your whole canvas this way but more broadly.

Art is man's refuge from nature whose confusion is beyond his control, whose order he cannot perceive.

There seems to be in us a natural tendency to rhythm. We incline towards repetitions and accents of a measured pulse.

We seem to look first at people's eyes in life and search them constantly.

Two eyes in a head repeat an already insistent design (spot in circle); vary them — whiter whites in one, darker darks, different high lights, flecks of color. Let one be more intense so that you don't look back and forth, back and forth equally.

This applies to other shape repetitions, ears, cheeks, nostrils, etc. If a two-beat gets too much of a start one's imagination may keep it going, seeing it where it does not even exist.

Take care that eyebrows or other accents like curls or pockets in the hair don't steal from the power of the eyes. Eyes usually demand dominance; man has always acknowledged this—made them too large, jewelled them, etc. A closed eye or even a blind eye has an expression—or we see an expression in it.

Avoid a literary solution to the problem of facial expression. Mona Lisa's expression is completely neutral and so becomes all things to all men, for they make of it what they please or can imagine.

A painted head must add up to something. It must arrive at a climax in paint, to a climax in seen detail, and to a general summing up of the character. This involves many departures from the look of the thing. Sometimes in a large composition where there are many heads, and to avoid redundancy, some of the heads may be broken up through shadows, lighting, etc., into small sizes; but in a portrait the head should be complete.

Shapes act powerfully on one another if their intrinsic forms are separated and contrasted, such as the egg form of a head and the squareness of the shoulders. In some characters, underlying shock is important together with little shocks. In other characters harmonizing may be important.

I remember a portrait painter saying to me: "You should try to make your models look as if they were breathing in, not breathing out."

Sometimes a big movement or spin may be created by having forms advance on one side of a head and recede on the other. Hair forward on one side, back on the other; not so far around the collar on one side as on the other, etc. Sculptors sometimes emphasize the convex on one side, the concave on the other.

The manner and degree of a painter's departure from the actual look of things may measure his meaning, and our photograph of objects may act subconsciously as a stepping stone for us into his emotionalities, or as a yardstick; which is sacrificed in extreme abstraction where no resemblance to the actual object is retained.

A man distorts familiar objects with assurance, for he knows his rights. He is uncertain in a strange environment or in a foreign country.

In connection with taking liberties with the look of things: A lithographer in selecting colors for lithographic inks asked Toulouse-Lautrec, "What color should I make the floor?"

Lautrec answered, "Purple or brown."

But when the lithographer asked him what color to make the roast beef, Lautrec answered, "Why roast beef color, of course."

Whether this is a true story or not, it illustrates the point that certain objects will allow greater liberties and more distortion than others. When you stop to think of it, gas light can be green and still be light, but turn roast beef any other color, and what roast beefiness remains? What happens to roast beef through distorting its color may also happen to some things in ill-considered distortion to other forms.

Aerial perspective teaches that colors and objects dim in the distance. If you paint them this way the inducement to recede into the picture and experience the picture's depth becomes too mild. It is necessary, sometimes, to force the experience of depth by accents and powers in the picture's distance and at the same time silence intensities in the foreground.

Checking and re-checking one's own ideas of success may squelch ridicule of a proper failure. I think it was Bette Davis who said: "My idea of a failure is a woman whose idea of success is a mink coat."

In paint, the means cannot justify an end; they are inseparable from it, and little deceptions, little cover-ups, may jeopardize the integrity of the whole. Good painters know it is not easy and they are more lenient than amateurs towards fumbling in the right direction, so don't try too hard to conceal it. Please yourself first, then address yourself to good painters; then just to people; last to amateurs.

It seems to me that only the strong painters can be tender without going sappy, and I doubt those who are continually pointing in their paint to their virility.

Disagreeable sensations may promote impulses as active as agreeable sensations. Should we then leave them to sour in our belly?

Great painters, with all their findings, have always found the wherewithal to seek again.

And a great painting, expanding ever beyond our understanding, induces growth, and growth is life.

Therefore, if a painter says to you, "I know," ask him if he also knows that he is dead on his feet.

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard T. Beale, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Mrs. Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Stephen Etnier, South Harpswell, Maine; Mrs. Anthony Haswell, Dayton, Ohio; Mr. and Mrs. R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Penllyn, Pennsylvania; International Business Machines Corporation, New York; Mr. and Mrs. Bernard A. Kohn, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Mr. and Mrs. William S. Louchheim, Los Angeles, California; Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Mrs. Herbert C. Morris, Mount Airy, Pennsylvania; Mr. and Mrs. Henry D. Sharpe, Providence, Rhode Island; Mr. and Mrs. Rodolphe Meyer de Schauensee, Devon, Pennsylvania; Mr. and Mrs. John F. Steinman, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Harry G. Sundheim, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Mr. and Mrs. Randall Thompson, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Franklin C. Watkins, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Mrs. Morris Wenger, Philadelphia, Penn-

sylvania; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Raeburn White, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.; Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan; The Law School, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Newark Museum Association, Newark, New Jersey; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; The Phillips Gallery, Washington, D. C.; Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia; Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California; Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, Missouri.

Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York.

CATALOG OF THE EXHIBITION

(March 21 to June 11, 1950)

An asterisk (*) preceding the catalog number indicates that the picture is illustrated. In listing the dimensions, height precedes width.

- *1 PAUL P. CRET. 1922. Oil on canvas, 17½ x 21½". Lent by Mrs. Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill.* p. 11
- *2 STILL LIFE. 1923. Oil on canvas, 26 x 20". Lent by Mrs. Morris Wenger, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill.* p. 12
- *3 THE PICNIC. c. 1924. Oil on canvas, 74 x 40". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Penllyn, Pa. *Ill.* p. 12
- *4 MUSICIAN. 1925. Oil on canvas, 60 x 36". Lent by the Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York. *Ill.* p. 13
- *5 THE RETURN. 1927. Oil on canvas, 30½ x 35½". Lent by Harry G. Sundheim, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill.* p. 13
- *6 SUICIDE IN COSTUME. 1931. Oil, tempera and pastel on canvas, 33¼ x 41¼". Lent by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill.* p. 15
- *7 CRUCIFIXION. 1931. Oil on canvas, 28 x 22". Lent by Harry G. Sundheim, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill.* p. 14
- *8 NEGRO SPIRITUAL. c. 1932. Oil on canvas, 54 x 36". Lent by Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Va. *Ill.* p. 18
- *9 SOLILOQUY. 1932. Oil on canvas, 25 x 30". Lent by The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Ill.* p. 17
- 10 OLD WOMAN READING PROOF. c. 1933. Oil on canvas, 40 x 30". Lent by the Newark Museum Association, Newark, N.J.

- 11 RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE (design for mural competition for U.S. Customs House, Philadelphia). c. 1933. Oil on panel, 11¼ x 30½". Lent by the Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York.
- 12 THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE (design for mural competition for U.S. Customs House, Philadelphia). c. 1933. Oil on panel, 11¼ x 30½". Lent anonymously
- *13 THE FIRE EATER. 1933-34. Oil on canvas, 60¾ x 39". Lent by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill.* p. 19
- 14 POISON FOR THE KING. 1934. Oil on canvas, 24 x 28". Lent by Harry G. Sundheim, Philadelphia, Pa.
- 15 BLACK DUCK. 1934. Oil on canvas, 28 x 34". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. William S. Louchheim, Los Angeles, Calif.
- 16 TRANSCENDENCE: 14 watercolor designs for the ballet produced by the American Ballet Company, 1934. 11 designs for costume, various sizes, 13½ x 9¾" to 14¾ x 19¾"; 3 designs for scenery, 4¼ x 7"; 16 x 24¾"; 12 x 18¾". The Museum of Modern Art, acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest
- 17 GABRIEL. c. 1935. Oil on canvas, 36 x 40". Lent by the Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York
- *18 SPRINGTIME. 1936. Oil on canvas, 54¾ x 35¾". Lent by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, Calif. *Ill.* p. 20
- *19 SOLITAIRE. 1937. Oil on canvas, 27 x 30¾". Lent by the Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Mass. *Ill.* p. 16

- *20 DEATH IN THE ORCHARD. 1938. Oil on canvas, 42 x 38". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. John F. Steinman, Lancaster, Pa. *Ill. p. 32*
- *21 BORIS BLAI. 1938. Oil on canvas, 40 x 35". The Museum of Modern Art, gift of A. Conger Goodyear. *Ill. p. 23*
- *22 R. STURGIS INGERSOLL. 1938. Oil on canvas, 23 x 24". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Penllyn, Pa. *Ill. p. 21*
- 23 SUMMER FRAGRANCE. 1938. Oil on canvas, 39 x 50 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Lent by the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
- *24 THE STUDIO. 1940. Oil on canvas, 26 x 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Lent by the Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y. Room of Contemporary Art. *Ill. p. 22*
- *25 THOMAS RAEBURN WHITE. 1940. Oil on canvas, 34 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 45". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Raeburn White, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill. p. 24*
- 26 AUTUMN RECOLLECTIONS. 1940. Oil on canvas, 28 x 31". Lent by The Phillips Gallery, Washington, D.C.
- *27 MISS ROSEMARY THOMPSON. 1941. Oil on canvas, 31 x 32". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Randall Thompson, Cambridge, Mass. *Ill. p. 27*
- *28 HENRY P. MCILHENNY. 1941. Oil on canvas, 47 x 33". Lent by Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill. p. 26*
- *29 MISSES MAUDE AND MAXINE MEYER DE SCHAUENSEE. 1941. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Rodolphe Meyer de Schauensee, Devon, Pa. *Color frontispiece*
- *30 MRS. C. E. ETNIER. C. 1941. Oil on canvas, 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 20 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Lent by Stephen Etnier, South Harpswell, Me. *Ill. p. 24*
- *31 THE BLUE CHAIR. 1941. Oil on canvas, 34 x 25". Lent by the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, Mo. *Ill. p. 27*
- *32 J. STODDARD STOKES. 1943. Oil on canvas, 35 x 27". Lent by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill. p. 25*
- *33 MRS. JOHN F. STEINMAN. 1943. Oil on canvas, 39 x 35 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. John F. Steinman, Lancaster, Pa. *Ill. p. 28*
- *34 RESURRECTION. 1943. Oil on canvas, 40 x 41". Lent by International Business Machines Corporation, New York. Permanent Collection, Fine Arts Department. *Ill. p. 33*
- *35 THE ANGEL WILL TURN A PAGE IN THE BOOK. 1944. Oil on canvas, 33 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 28". Lent by The Phillips Gallery, Washington, D.C. *Ill. p. 34*
- 36 WHITE ROSES. 1945. Oil on canvas, 27 x 37 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- *37 REMEMBER ME. 1945. Oil on canvas, 49 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 32 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Henry D. Sharpe, Providence, R.I. *Ill. p. 31*
- *38 FANCIFUL MEETING LONG AGO. 1945. Oil on canvas, 31 x 45 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Lent by Mrs. Herbert C. Morris, Mount Airy, Pa. *Ill. p. 29*
- *39 JUSTICE OWEN J. ROBERTS. 1947. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40". Lent by The Law School, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill. p. 30*
- 40 ANTHONY HASWELL. 1948. Oil on canvas, 38 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Lent by Mrs. Anthony Haswell, Dayton, Ohio
- *41 DESCENT, NO. 1. 1947. Oil and tempera on canvas, 12 x 20". Lent anonymously. *Ill. p. 35*
- 42 DESCENT, NO. 2. 1947. Oil and tempera on canvas, 14 x 14". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Leonard T. Beale, Philadelphia, Pa.
- *43 TO THE TOMB. 1947. Oil and charcoal on gesso panel, 15 x 18". Lent by the Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York. *Ill. p. 35*
- *44 BELOVED DEAD. 1947. Oil and tempera on canvas, 22 x 28". Lent by the Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York. *Ill. p. 36*
- *45 Study for DEATH. 1947. Watercolor, 19 x 32". Lent by Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill. p. 37*
- *46 Study for DEATH. 1947. Oil and tempera on canvas, 40 x 76". Lent by the artist. *Ill. p. 37*
- *47 DEATH. 1947-48. Oil and egg tempera on canvas, 9' x 14' 4". Lent by Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill. p. 38*
- 48 PRAYER. 1947. Oil and tempera on panel, 18 x 15". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard A. Kohn, Philadelphia, Pa.
- 49 LAMENT. 1947. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25". Lent by the Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York
- 50 WINGED FIGURE IN ECSTASY. 1947. Oil and charcoal on gesso panel, 15 x 18". Lent by the Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York
- *51 ANGEL POSED. 1947. Oil and charcoal on gesso panel, 18 x 15". Lent by the Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York. *Ill. p. 39*
- *52 RESURRECTION, NO. 1. 1947. Oil on canvas, 18 x 24". Lent by the Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York. *Ill. p. 40*
- *53 RESURRECTION, NO. 2. 1947. Oil on canvas, 17 x 28". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. John F. Steinman, Lancaster, Pa. *Ill. p. 40*
- *54 Study for RESURRECTION. 1947. Watercolor, 19 x 33". Lent by Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia, Pa. *Ill. p. 41*
- *55 Study for RESURRECTION. 1947. Oil and tempera on canvas, 40 x 76". Lent by the artist. *Ill. p. 41*
- *56 ANGEL. 1948. Oil on canvas, 76 x 40". Lent by the Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Mich. *Ill. p. 39*
- *57 RESURRECTION. 1947-48. Oil and egg tempera on canvas, 9' x 14' 4". Lent by Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia, Pa. *Color plate facing p. 38*

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This bibliography, with a few exceptions, does not include references to items which have appeared in newspapers. Omitted also are some references to minor exhibition notices, listed in the Art Index 1929-1949.

In the list of exhibition catalogs only those which have been accessible to the compiler are included. They have been arranged chronologically, as have the references to statements by the artist. References to writings on the artist, however, are listed alphabetically under the author's name, or under the title in case of unsigned articles.

All material has been examined by the compiler. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are in the Museum Library.

ANNE BOLLMANN

Abbreviations: Ag August, Ap April, bibl bibliography, col colored, D December, il illustration(s), Ja January, Je June, Mr March, My May, N November, no number(s), O October, p page(s), por portrait, S September.

Sample entry for magazine article: PITZ, HENRY C. Franklin C. Watkins; a painter who walks alone. il (1 col) *American Artist* (New York) 10:20-4 S 1946.

Explanation: An article by Henry C. Pitz, entitled "Franklin C. Watkins; a painter who walks alone" accompanied by illustrations (one of which is in color), will be found in *American Artist* (published in New York), volume 10, pages 20-24, the September 1946 issue.

STATEMENTS BY THE ARTIST

- *1 A PAINTER TALKS TO HIS STUDENTS. il *Magazine of Art* (Washington D.C.) 34:504-11 D 1941.

Reprinted (with addition of a few paragraphs) under title: "On the teaching of art" in *Painters and sculptors of modern America*; introduction by Monroe Wheeler. p52-60 il New York, Thomas Y. Crowell, 1942.

- *2 BENEATH THE PAINT AND VARNISH; technical photographs reveal a strange new world of excitement and wonder. il *Magazine of Art* (Washington D.C.) 37:128-34 Ap 1944.

Article written by Franklin C. Watkins and Henri Marceau.

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See also bibl. 23.

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- *10 BRACE, ERNEST. Franklin Watkins. il *American Magazine of Art* (Washington D.C.) 29:723-9 N 1936.

- *11 BRAGGIOTTI, GLORIA. Franklin C. Watkins: a painter's painter. il (1 col) *The Studio* (New York & London) 125no600:78-81 Mr 1943.

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