

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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BELLOWS BOXING PICTURES
TO OPEN AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D.C. July 20, 1982. Bellows: The Boxing Pictures, the first exhibition to focus solely on the prizefight scenes of the American realist George Bellows, opens in the National Gallery of Art's East Building on September 5, 1982. The exhibition explores this aspect of the artist's career through thirty-nine works of art drawn from public and private American collections and will be on view through January 2, 1983.

The year 1982 marks the centennial of the birth of George Bellows, to whom the National Gallery devoted its first one-man show in 1957. Bellows, a member of the Ash Can School of artists who flourished in New York in the early twentieth century, created portraits, genre scenes, and landscapes. However, he is best remembered for his lively depictions of boxing scenes which capture the drama and action of the prizefight ring.

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The exhibition brings together for the first time all six of Bellows' boxing paintings: the National Gallery's important canvas, Both Members of This Club, a 1945 gift from Chester Dale which has recently been cleaned; Club Night; the Cleveland Museum's Stag at Sharkey's; Introducing John L. Sullivan; Ringside Seats; and the Whitney Museum's monumental Dempsey and Firpo.

In addition, most of the known graphics related to the boxing theme will be on view: eighteen lithographs, drawn mainly from the National Gallery's print collection; fourteen drawings; and a 1915 cover of the radical journal, The Masses.

Bellows: The Boxing Pictures chronicles the development of this important and recurring theme in various media and studies the artist's working methods. On view is the Metropolitan Museum's drawing, Dempsey and Firpo, commissioned in 1923 by the New York Evening Journal to document the historic match between champion Jack Dempsey and the Argentine challenger, Luis Firpo. It is shown with two lithographs of the same subject, executed in 1923-1924, the finished 1924 painting entitled Dempsey and Firpo, and five crayon drawings that served as preliminary studies for the painting. Also exhibited is Bellows' first boxing image, the large, powerful pastel of 1907, The Knock Out, which can be compared in the exhibition to two 1921 lithographs of the same subject.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue containing four essays: Bellows' boxing pictures and the American tradition by John Wilmerding, Curator of American Art and Senior Curator; the boxing paintings by E. A. Carmean, Jr., Curator of Twentieth-Century Art; the boxing drawings by Linda Ayres, Assistant Curator of American Art; and the boxing lithographs by Deborah Chotner, Research Assistant in American Art. The catalogue also includes a chronology prepared by Trinkett Clark, Assistant Curator of Twentieth-Century Art, and a catalogue raisonne of Bellows' boxing images.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director (Information Officer), or Carolyn Engel, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, (202) 842-6353.