



Fletcher Martin

H. Lester Cooke Jr.

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Fletcher Martin (1904 - 1979), was an American painter, illustrator, muralist and educator. He is best known for his images of soldier life during WWII and his sometimes brutal images of boxing and other sports. He worked as a printer in Los Angeles in the late 1920s, and as an assistant to Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros in the early 1930s. He taught at local art schools such as Otis Art Institute. He won commissions to paint murals for the New Deal's Section of Painting and Sculpture, including Mail Transportation (1938), painted for the San Pedro Federal Building and Post Office in Los Angeles. Under the WPA he painted a mural study for the Kellogg, Idaho post office titled Mine Rescue (1939). Local industrialists objected that it depicted the dangers of mining, while officials of the Mine & Smelt Workers Union praised it. The industrialists prevailed. The rejected mural study is now in the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Perhaps his most ambitious mural, also done under the WPA, was painted for North Hollywood High School in Los Angeles. Legends of Fernandino and Gabileno Indians (1937) depicts overlapping scenes of Native American life and ritual, and the world being carried on the backs of giants. His paintings often depicted men in conflict. The Undefeated (1948-49, St. Petersburg Museum of Fine Arts) depicts the 11th round of the June 25, 1948 World heavyweight boxing championship. The title is ironic: its subject is a severely battered Jersey Joe Walcott, collapsed against the referee and about to lose to (an unseen) Joe Louis. This book includes 202 illustrations, including 51 plates in full color. The illustrations cover every aspect of Fletcher Martin's art, and include many of his sensuous portraits and dynamic book illustrations. This full-scale study devoted to the artist is further enhanced by a biographical outline, a bibliography, and an index.

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