

OWINGS-DEWEY FINE ART

A GALLERY FOR 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN ART

CONSULTATION | SALES | APPRAISAL

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EMIL BISTTRAM: 1895-1976, May 1 through May 30, 2009

The exhibition features thirty-five works by Emil Bisttram, comprised mainly of delicate pencil drawings and gouache studies, which encapsulate Bisttram's fascination with dynamic symmetry. The work in the exhibition provides one of the clearest examples of a period and style, which largely defined Bisttram's fascinating and complex career.

Emil Bisttram, born in Europe in 1895, immigrated to New York with his family in 1906. They settled in the lower East Side and Emil attended school until 1910, when at the age of sixteen he was expelled for "beating up several teachers."

Instead of returning to school, in 1911 Emil Bisttram became the leader of the Gas House Gang which was involved in the infamous New York street fights between Irish and Jewish ghettos. Deciding to turn his skills into a source of income, Bisttram became an amateur fighter known as "Battling Bennett", and fought in the ring until he was nineteen. Admired for his boxing skills, Bisttram was hired by the owner of commercial art firm and his career in art began.

Bisttram is well known for his overwhelming variety of styles. This exhibition explores abstract work created between 1936 and 1942, years that include the period of The Transcendental Painting Group Bisttram formed with Raymond Jonson in 1938.

In the early 1930s Bisttram was among the first Taos painters to revolt from the serious and studious painting style, which made the art colony famous two decades earlier.

One respected, yet unnamed "aspen painter" declared "Bisttram should be tarred and feathered and wheeled out of Taos for bringing in that crazy modern art." Dorothy Brett was the first Taos artist to defend Bisttram and Ernest Blumenschein, Eleanor Kissel and others followed.

On view through May 23 at Owings-Dewey Fine Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico

All exhibitions can be viewed in their entirety, online at www.owingsdewey.com. Please contact Laura Widmar (505) 982-6244 for further information and images.

Owings-Dewey Fine Art was founded in Santa Fe, New Mexico by Nathaniel Owings and Ray Dewey as a gallery for 19th and 20th century American Art. Over the past twenty years the gallery has exhibited thousands of accomplished works by many of America's finest painters. The gallery holds approximately a dozen special exhibitions a year, which have explored a variety of historical and contemporary themes. As an active member of the thriving arts community in Santa Fe, Owings-Dewey Fine Art also represents a small and very select group of contemporary artists.