



Black Wall

JAMES LECHAY

November 24th to December 13th
1947

MACBETH

11 East 57th Street

GALLERY

New York 22, N. Y.

JAMES LECHAY is first of all a colorist. In fact, he does not think a painting without excellence in color can properly be called a painting. This does not mean that he minimizes drawing and design, but rather that all three factors are integrated in a single process of thought of which, for him, the crowning glory is color value. His major chord is ordinarily a scintillating blue and silvery gray with, more recently, a greater prominence of black. Other colors, particularly orange, red and yellow are used to play a delectable melody. With their nice adjustment, both in three-dimensional space and on the plane of the canvas, he is willing to take infinite pains.

As a person and as an artist Lechay is extraordinarily sensitive and discriminating. In the development of a painting he is able to rely on the authority of his feelings to dictate the steps to be taken, and thus operates successfully without verbal analysis of the problems which confront him. He dislikes to and sometimes cannot give reasons for his solutions of pictorial problems, although he is confident at the end that his solutions are perfect. While this is not uncommon, Lechay gives unusual emphasis to a rather mystical "right feeling" in discussing the methods of an artist.

With respect to expression, Lechay has always been a formalist rather than an ideological painter in spite of his hatred of reactionary political developments. There are occasional expressionistic aspects to his work, but his ties are rather with the French school than with the German of the period between the wars. A few years ago he was working in a somewhat impressionistic manner. Then he went through a period of discipline in near-abstract design related to the style of Marin, always drawing his forms from nature rather than manufacturing them whole. Since coming to the University of Iowa to teach painting, he has occasionally, as in the large triptych, introduced surrealist elements. Throughout this rapid evolution his work, within the space of a few years, has become increasingly disciplined and developed, richer in complexity of form, in beauty of design and color, and in depth of expression. Contemporaneous in its spiritual concerns, and American in its dynamic energy, his latest work entitles him to a high position in the roster of serious American painters.

LESTER D. LONGMAN
Head of the Art Department.
State University of Iowa

Oils

1. Before I Wake (triptych)
2. Family Portrait
3. Black Wall
4. Double Portrait with Moons and Railroad Signals
5. Gold Fish
6. White Circle
7. New York Tic-Tac-Toe
8. Dark Sky, Dark Water
9. Sky Symbols and Double Portrait

Water Colors

10. Strange Sky Over Nyack
11. Red for Mary Lou
12. Self Portrait
13. Harbor of Plum
14. Gloucester Harbor with Reflected Blue Sun

New York (city), Macbeth gallery E =
N48
M12

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