



Industrial Interlude (1936)

Meltsner, Machine Age Commentator

Industrial subjects by Paul R. Meltsner, dealing with workmen and machines, miners and builders, are on view at the Midtown Galleries, New York, until May 9. Meltsner, regarded by many as America's most competent commentator in paint on the industrial scene, is equally accomplished in the water color and lithographic fields. His colors have the rich quality of stained glass and his compositions, constructed on vigorous lines, are touched with drama. Examples of Meltsner's work are included in the collections of the Chicago Art Institute, the Museum of Modern Art, the Houston Museum, and the Dayton Art Institute. The Brooklyn Museum now owns seven of Meltsner's lithographs and a water color.

"Meltsner builds his pictures around everyday scenes of industrial life, dedicating them to labor and the machine," wrote Carlyle Burrows in the *New York Herald Tribune*. "He gets broad vitality in his forms and force in his compositions, relieving at the same time the usual drabness of such scenes by a tonic of color." Charles Z. Offin of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* felt that there "is something of the menial laborer's patient plodding in the way that this artist keeps working at the same theme and with the same compositional plan in picture after picture. Yet he does manage a certain amount of variation in the grouping of his forms, and it is this—together with the power and solidity of his modeling—that holds your interest in all of Meltsner's work."

In the artist's oil paintings there develops, according to Edward Alden Jewell of the *New York Times*, "a life-or-death struggle between design that may be full of force—imbued with a genuine thrust of observed, of meditated reality—and color that, besides bearing no connection with the theme, is disagreeable and blatantly orchestrated. . . . Meltsner is too heavy-handed."

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