



Life on the Press: The Popular Art and Illustrations of George Benjamin Luks

Robert L. Gambone

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George Benjamin Luks (1867-1933) is renowned for the oil paintings, watercolors, and pastel drawings he created as an acclaimed member of the artists' collective known as the Ashcan School. His professional development came, however, from his apprenticeship as a newspaper and magazine artist. Luks spent his early career drawing cartoons, spot illustrations, political caricatures, and comic strips for the *New York World* and other papers. These early portraits and stories of street urchins, peddlers, shopkeepers, and other ordinary New Yorkers would all be revisited in his later painting. He achieved fame when he took over drawing *Hogan's Alley* for Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* after the strip's originator Richard F. Outcault defected to William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*.

Life on the Press: The Popular Art and Illustrations of George Benjamin Luks explores the roots of the artist's career drawing turn-of-the-twentieth-century New York City. The city's vital popular press served as a crucible in which a number of American artists honed their talents and learned how to communicate ideas to a broad popular audience.

The resultant work, both popular and controversial, challenged notions of good art and proper subject matter. Robert L. Gambone's study brings Luks's early work to light and reveals the funny, often edgy, and sometimes prejudicial creations that formed the base upon which Luks built his later career.

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