



HUGO BALLIN

Field Sketch

Signed in lower left, "Sketch Hugo Ballin 1906"

oil on canvas on board

11 x 14 in. (16 1/2 x 19 3/4 in.)

1906

33270

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, California

Early in his career, Hugo Ballin painted idealized scenes of mythical figures and stories. His career took a detour after World War I, however, when he moved to Hollywood to become an art director. He returned to painting after a few years and created large, colorful murals for many public buildings on the West Coast. In 1936 he played a trick on the New Deal administrators who were granting mural projects to artists. He submitted eight designs: seven serious proposals and one "hoax" that showed scenes of heavy drinking, suicide, violence, and sex. To his surprise, this entry was chosen by the United States Treasury for a post office in Inglewood, California, and Ballin had to explain that he "would not think of accepting taxpayers' money for painting . . . a mess of cooked-up vulgarity" on a post office wall.

(Smithsonian)

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