

THOMAS HART BENTON (1889-1975) Hoeing Cotton

Signed lower right, "Benton" oil on tin 9 1/8 x 13 in. (15 1/4 x 19 x 1 3/4 in.) 23.18 x 33.02 cm (38.74 x 48.26 x 4.45 cm) 1932

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PROVENANCE:

Feragil Galleries, New York
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Sotheby's New York: Wednesday, March 15, 2000, Lot 142
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Thomas Hart Benton was an American-born painter best known for his depictions of the everyday life of the average, working-class American. Benton's early travels and studies allowed him to meet and study with artists such as Diego Rivera, whose influence can be seen in Benton's murals, and Stanton MacDonald-Wright, whose influence is evident in Benton's Synchromist style. During WWI, Benton served in the Navy, and was instructed to give accurate representations of the warship's camouflage markings, and of the activity on the docks. The need for accuracy in that work, which he felt was crucial to him as an American and as an artist, influenced his style in his later murals. He declared himself an enemy of Modernism and adopted his naturalistic and representational style, which is now known as Regionalism. Some of his works sparked controversy because he painted historical events or political undercurrents that some did not want publicized. Later in life, he taught at the Kansas City Art Institute, and mentored artists such as Jackson Pollock, until he was dismissed for his controversial political views.

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