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Robert Fishko, *Director*

PHILIP EVERGOOD

(1901 - 1973)

Workers Victory, 1948

oil on canvas on board

49 3/4 x 48 inches

signed lower center "Philip Evergood"

Provenance

The Artist

Collection of Robert Gwathmey, Amagansett, NY
(gift from the artist)

Bette-Ann Gwathmey, New York

(daughter-in-law of the above, 1996)

Terry Dintenfass, Inc., NY

Private Collection, New South Wales, Australia

(acquired directly from the above)



Exhibited

Philip Evergood: A Painter of Ideas, The Gallery of Modern Art, New York, NY,
in collaboration with the Huntington Hartford Collection, 1969

Philip Evergood: Never Separate from the Heart,
Traveling Exhibition

The Center Gallery of Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA, September 5 – October 19, 1986

The Edith C. Blum Art Institute, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY,

November 1 – December 20, 1986

Frederick S. Wright Art Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles, CA,

January 27 – March 22, 1987

You Say You Want a Revolution: American Artists and the Communist Party,
Galerie St. Etienne, New York, NY, October 18, 2016 - March 4, 2017

Landmarks of 20th Century American Art, Forum Gallery, New York, NY
November 8, 2018 – January 5, 2019

Literature

Valente, Alfredo. *Philip Evergood: A Painter of Ideas*, A.S. Barnes, Cranbury, NJ, 1969, pg. 19, no. 37, Listed.

Taylor, Kendall. *Philip Evergood: Never Separate from the Heart*, Bucknell University Press, Lewisburg, 1987, p. 23, Listed and pp. 176-7, Referenced.

Baur, John I. H., *Philip Evergood*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1975, color-plate 86, Illustrated.

Brooker, Niccolo. *Landmarks of 20th Century American Art*, Forum Gallery, New York, NY, 2018, pp. 30-33 and p. 31, Illustrated.

Note

Prior to 1940, Philip Evergood had only casually known fellow ACA Gallery artist Robert Gwathmey. However, in September of that year Philip and his wife Julia stayed with Robert and his wife Rosalie in the Gwathmey's Pittsburgh home. It was then that the couples' friendship solidified. Having received a Carnegie artist grant, Evergood was on his way from New York to Kalamazoo (Michigan) College to complete an artist-in-residency and mural project titled *The Bridge to Life*.

Essay

“And so they go, each picture containing its own particular expression of the artist's hatred of cruelty and oppression, and his tender feelings of love and sympathy for the oppressed and mistreated of this world. For Philip Evergood is a painter of ideas, not things – ideas that spring from a great heart and a profound mind. And harnessed to them is a technical skill that brings these moving ideas to passionate life on canvases of power and pictorial excitement.”
(Valente, Alfredo. *Philip Evergood: a Painter of Ideas* exhibition catalogue, New York, The Gallery of Modern Art, Barnes & Co., Inc., Cranbury, N.J., p. 10)

Born Philip Howard Francis Dixon Bulashki in New York City, at the age of seven, Evergood was sent to England to receive a traditional British education. After graduating from Eton and realizing he wanted to become an artist, he studied at London's Slade School of Art. Upon his return to New York in 1923, he enrolled at the Art Students League and the Educational Alliance where he would meet lifelong friends Chaim Gross and Moses Soyer. By the late 1920s, Evergood was zealously sketching urban scenes of contemporary New York life but in the 1930s, as the Great Depression continued to deepen, he began to question the validity of the American capitalist system whose failure had impoverished so many.

In 1933, Philip Evergood spent a night with the “Hooverville jungle-dwellers,” a homeless group which hung about Christopher Street in New York City's West Village. He befriended them and drew them until dawn. Perhaps it was during this particular episode that Evergood's social conscience became the driving force of his life and art. Having once written that “some people are born without hearts,” it is fair to state that few American artists have ever committed themselves so totally to promulgating the effects of injustice and to perorating the cause of the exploited. Evergood believed as much as any of his contemporaries in the humanistic quality of art, that it could make a difference towards the greater good, and that it was therefore his personal duty to communicate reformist ideas in his work to a larger public. Later in the same year, he painted *Mine Disaster* for an exhibition titled *Hunger, Fascism and War* (December, 1933 – January, 1934) at the New York headquarters

of the John Reed Club. While the painting might have been a one-year commemoration of the 1932 Christmas Eve Shafer Mine Explosion in Moweaqua, Illinois (which killed 54), more likely it broadly honored the nearly 500 miners who had perished since 1930 in no less than twenty-eight separate disasters. Purposely placing indefinite titles to canvases which depict universal truths was a practice Evergood continued throughout his career.



Evergood, *Mine Disaster*, 1933 (coll. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia)

A year later, Ashcan School painter John Sloan (who had personally purchased one of Philip Evergood's paintings after having failed to get the Brooklyn Museum to do so) coordinated through Whitney Museum of American Art director Juliana Force that Evergood be one of the first artists to join the Public Works of Art Project. Evergood's poignant painting *Railroad Men* was followed by his 1936 multipaneled mural for the Richmond Hill (Queens) Public Library, in which he juxtaposed pastoral pleasure with urban upheaval. After seven years exhibiting at two highly respectable New York galleries, first Montross and then Midtown, in 1937 he joined Herman Baron's American Contemporary Artists Gallery (ACA) and began a reciprocally beneficial relationship which lasted for decades and saw him through his greatest painting years. On a Sunday afternoon in 1943, Joseph Hirshhorn purchased ten of Evergood's paintings and over the years became his most loyal collector.

When Evergood painted *Workers Victory* in 1948 the Great Depression and second World War were over. Nevertheless, he was at the nadir of his career, his art of social protest at its most potent and expressionistic. As usual, time and location are left ambiguous in *Workers Victory*. Beside a railroad yard and track, a throng of operatives occupy the majority of the canvas, with three prominent figures in the foreground and the rest receding progressively into the background until only their diminutive faces are visible.

"*Workers Victory* in one sense commemorates a specific victory for the working class, but also transcends its own topicality by expressing what Evergood viewed as the characteristic exuberance of the decade. 'As life today is insecure and dangerous,' he said, so human character is uncertain and liable to malformation from social strain and stress. Our workers are our heroes. Our workers are the hope of America, but they bear on their faces and bodies and in their souls, the mark of social distortion to which they have been subjected."

(Taylor, Kendall. Philip Evergood: Never Separate from the Heart retrospective exhibition catalogue, Center Gallery Publication, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, page 23, description, pp 176–177.)

While certain Evergood paintings have been described as "gothic" for their eldritch imagery and arcane significance, there is nothing elusive or enigmatic about the ageless conflict he represents. With mordant clarity and in a singular style, Evergood's work is as lasting as its subject matter.



Philip Evergood, seated in front of Anton Refregier's Café Society mural. (Seated next to Evergood, at far left, is Anton Refregier, Juliana Force, Frank Kleinholz, Robert Gwathmey, and Yasuo Kuniyoshi). (coll. of Author, Photograph by Albert Freeman)