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Robert Fishko, *Director*

**BERNARD PERLIN**  
(1918 - 2014)

*Hope Had Been Abandoned*  
*(The Recovery Room)*, 1944  
casein tempera on panel  
10 1/4 x 20 inches  
signed and dated lower left  
"B Perlin '44"



**Provenance**

The Artist  
Private Collection, Australia

**Literature**

Schreiber, Michael, *One Man Show: The Life and Art of Bernard Perlin*, (Berlin, Germany: Bruno Gmünder, 2016), p. 101, Illustrated.

**Note**

Born in Richmond, Virginia in 1918 to Russian Jewish immigrants, American artist Bernard Perlin was a painter, illustrator, and war artist-correspondent whose works expressed the horrors of WWII, issues of social justice, and homosexuality with conviction and bravery. Early in his career, Perlin lent his artistic talent to the creation of American wartime propaganda and illustration, going on to create throughout his lifetime a body of work that gravitated from social realism to magic realism with subjects as varied as graphic wartime recollections, sensuous male nudes, evocative New York scenes, and works implicit with social comment concerning the plight of minority groups and the poor. He led a life that, in his own words, was “a direct path to making art and seeking human connection.”

In the 1930s, Bernard Perlin was an artist for the Works Project Administration, painting murals for the Treasury Department and the U.S. Maritime Commission. During World War II, he was embedded with American forces in Europe, Asia and the South Pacific as an artist-correspondent for *Life* and *Fortune* magazines, creating works he described as *reportage*.

*Hope Had Been Abandoned (The Recovery Room)*, 1944, is a casein tempera work on panel that Perlin painted from memory shortly after returning safely to New York following harrowing war-time experiences overseas. For a monograph about the Artist published in 2016, Michael Schreiber interviewed Perlin who described his time spent embedded with a British commando group on the island of Crete in the summer of 1944, a transformative experience. There, Perlin had unfortunately witnessed a brutal wound from a grenade that shattered the leg of a British soldier he knew named Brian Vincent Boston. Perlin assisted in the make-shift operating room as the surgeon performed the bloody amputation and stayed by his friend's bedside until they were able to evacuate them both.

Perlin recalls, "After I came back [from the war], George Platt Lynes had a little spare room in his Madison Avenue photo studio which he offered to me to paint in...and so I painted my first serious picture there [*The Leg*, 1946]. And indeed, it was extremely important to me; therapeutic. I felt compelled to paint the two preliminaries; first I painted a greenish foot, then a bright blue foot, then finally *the leg* – the nightmare leg..."<sup>i</sup>

Other paintings by the Artist of the intense scene include, *In Hospital (The Operating Room)*, 1944 and *The Artist's Foot I (Study for "The Leg")*, 1946. All three works are reproduced in the Schreiber monograph on pages 23, 100 and 101. Shortly before his death in 2014, Perlin gifted *The Leg*, 1946, to The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, in honor of Brian Vincent Boston.

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<sup>i</sup> Schreiber, Michael, *One Man Show: The Life and Art of Bernard Perlin*, (Berlin, Germany: Bruno Gmünder, 2016), p. 23