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Robert Fishko, *Director*

RAPHAEL SOYER

(1899-1987)

Back Stage, 1935

oil on canvas

28 1/4 x 26 1/4 inches

signed lower right "*Raphael Soyer*"

Provenance

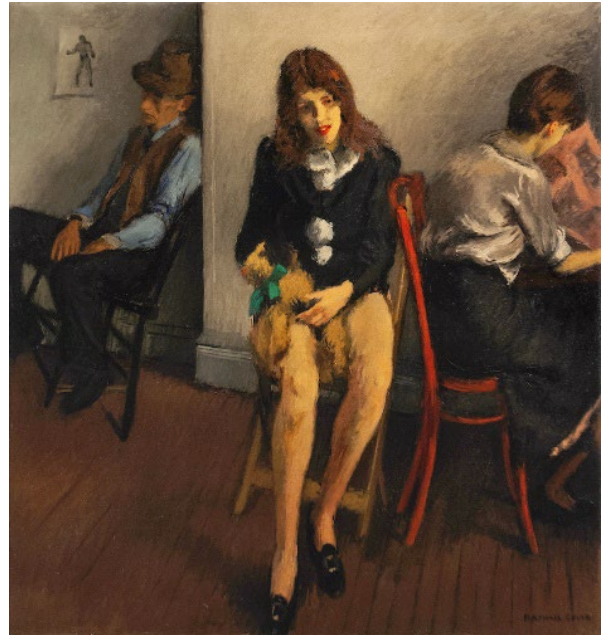
The Artist

Collection of Emil J. Arnold

Private Collection, Amsterdam, New York

(since 1974, acquired directly from the above)

Forum Gallery, New York (since 2022)



Exhibited

Raphael Soyer

Traveling exhibition

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, October 25 – December 3, 1967

Ackland Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC,

January 7 – February 7, 1968

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, February 25 – April 7, 1968

California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA, June 1 – 30, 1968

Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Columbus, OH, July 25 – August 25, 1968

Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, MN, September 11 – October 6, 1968

Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA, November 1 – December 1, 1968

Literature

Goodrich, Lloyd. *Raphael Soyer*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.), 1972, p. 91, Illustrated.

Goodrich, Lloyd. *Raphael Soyer*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, 1967, no. 24, p. 77, Listed. (lent by Emil J. Arnold)

Note

Back Stage, is a masterpiece of social realist genre painting in oil by Raphael Soyer. It was created in 1935, an important time in the Artist's career when Soyer turned his attention to the diverse milieu of urban life during challenging times, from the vagrants languishing in Union Square to the working women, shoppers, shopgirls and, as shown in this painting, theater performers.

A recurring figure in these works was Walter Broe, an out-of-work businessman who was a frequent model of the Fourteenth Street Artists during the Depression. In *Back Stage*, Soyer portrays Broe as a stage doorman resting on a tilted chair, his character serving to spotlight the essential difference between the “just another day” attitude of the trades-workers of the time and the Arts symbolized by the essential optimism of the central figure with her fanciful Pierrot costume and gentle smile, an actor whose goal is to provide relief and an escape for her audience through the joy of performance.

Back Stage was included in *Raphael Soyer*, a retrospective exhibition presented by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in 1967, which then traveled to the Ackland Art Museum, Chapel Hill, NC; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA; Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, OH; Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN; and the Des Moines Art Center, IA.



Raphael Soyer working on “Man Drinking Beer” with model Walter Broe, New York, 1939, photo by David E. Scherman