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**Olin Dows: World War II: the European Theater
At William Holman Gallery**

September 8 – September 30, 2013

OPENING RECEPTION: Thursday, September 12th from 6.00 to 8: PM

NEW YORK, August 16, 2013 - William Holman Gallery is pleased to open our second season with an exhibition of the World War II Watercolors, Drawings and Photographs of Olin Dows, Technical Sergeant 1st Cl., a decorated veteran who served in the European Theater of Operations from 1942 until the end of World War II in 1945. This very personal archive from the artist's estate reveals an emotive journey in images from deployment, through training in England, D-Day and then Dows' agonizing march from Normandy to Torgau, Germany on the Elbe River, 70 miles from Berlin.

This exhibition includes over 60 watercolors and drawings which recorded army life both in and out of battle - from basic training exercises at Fort Meade, Maryland to refugees carrying their belongings through devastated cities and towns immediately following Allied liberation. These works are supplemented by Dows' remarkable collection of photographs, taken in battles and in camps across Europe. The exhibition is excerpted from Dows' impressive archive, which includes more than 800 photographs, drawings and watercolors, as well as his personal journals, correspondences and sketches relating together one man's experience of the War. The archive also includes many works returned to Dows by the Department of the Army after the end of the war, and is complemented by the Dows' works that remain in the Archives of the Army, as well as the FDR Presidential Library in Hyde Park, NY.

The journey across Europe was epic for Dows, who carried a rifle and a camera as well as his watercolors and charcoals. Dows' preceding work included raw drawings and watercolors which were used by the Army for domestic information and exhibition in the US, while his photographs and terrain sketches were employed on the battlefield for reconnaissance.

The WWII work follows Dows' induction into the US Army at Ft. Meade, Maryland, and his training in the west of England in 1943-44 then moves through the 270 days of fighting beginning with the "Battle of the Hedgerows" at St. Lô in Normandy, through the liberation of Paris and the brutal winter at Bastogne in Belgium and ending through Metz and the Ruhr Valley in Germany. Dows documented the 35th Infantry Division after D-Day and was with them from June to September 1944. In late August 1944, we have photographs of Dows in the studio of Pablo Picasso in Paris at the Liberation. Three months later he was assigned to 101st Airborne and spent the winter recording the "Battle of the Bulge" at Bastogne.

On the drive across France to the Elbe in March-April, 1945, we know Dows was present at the liberation of Buchenwald in early April, 1945 from which no work, except two photographs, has survived in this collection. Dows was present at the culminating union of American and Soviet Forces at Torgau on the Elbe River on April 25, 1945 and recorded this historic meeting in several watercolors, as well as many photographs.

Decorated with a Bronze Star for bravery, Dows was instrumental in the surrender of a large group of German Regular Army soldiers without an engagement using his very good German to talk them into laying down their arms.

Dows was discharged from the Army in August 1945.

Olin Dows, World War II: The European Theater is on view from September 8 – 30, 2013.

A catalog of the exhibition is available for \$25.00.

For more information on the gallery's exhibition schedule, images, and a catalogue to the exhibition please visit <http://www.wholmangallery.com/exhibitions/>.

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Biographical Note

Olin Dows (1904 - 1981) was born in Irvington-on Hudson and in 1908 moved to a large farmhouse on the Hudson River just below Rhinebeck, New York where he lived for the much of his life when not in Washington, D.C. and Pirque, Chile. By his own admission he wanted to paint from the time he was 12 years old and admired artists including Maxwell Parrish, Remington, Augustus John, Charles Dana Gibson, Blake, Whistler and the decorative screens of Robert Chanler, who was raised at Rokeby in Germantown, N.Y. His family's close friendship with President Roosevelt's family informed his career for many years.

Dows entered Harvard College in 1922 and studied art, then studied architectural drawing at MIT and drew portraits and made screens in his dorm room. Within three years he had moved to Yale Art School and studied there with Eugene Savage and Edwin Cassius Taylor through 1927. In 1928 and 1929 Dows studied at the Arts Students League in New York City with some unusual classmates including David Smith, Clyfford Still, Beatrice Cuming, Burgoyne Diller and Jackson Pollock. Thomas Hart Benton was a professor there at this time.

During the 1930's Dows traveled to Mexico and made woodcuts, watercolors and a few paintings, to Egypt which inspired many screens and also to Germany in the summer of 1938 on the eve of World War II. Living in Washington and having a long standing relationship with the Roosevelt's, he served as a member of the administration during the Great Depression. Working with Forbes Watson and the Treasury Department, Dows was a central figure in several aid-to-artist programs, all prior to the Federal Arts Project created under the WPA in 1935. Dows and a team reviewed hundreds of competition entries for paintings, sculptures and particularly murals intended for the many federal buildings constructed across the nation as part of the relief effort.

Many of the commissions were for post offices across the country; including two he painted himself in Hyde Park and Rhinebeck, N.Y. It is of note that as an administrator Dows approved contracts for murals and art work to Milton Avery, Thomas Hart Benton, George Biddle, John Stuart Curry, Philip Evergood, Rockwell Kent, Reginald Marsh, Max Weber and Grant Wood. These friends, teachers and colleagues explain a great deal about his stylistic influences and his lack of interest in abstraction. Dows drew and painted what he saw and what interested him. At the end of this tenure he was largely responsible for the publication of the survey "Art in Federal Buildings", Washington, D.C., 1935.

After a lengthy trip to Germany in 1938 with his sister where he drew and observed the rise of the Nazi party, Dows returned to Rhinebeck and painted the two post offices in the period before Pearl Harbor. In 1941-2 Dows again joined the Treasury and Office of Civilian Defense. By the end of 1942 he joined the Army as a technical private and was promoted to Technical Sergeant before D-Day. Dows was asked to serve as one of three official war artists assigned to the European Theatre of Operations. He was in active combat, staged in the west of England, landed with the 35th tank Division and was decorated for capturing 20 German soldiers. He saw action at St. Lo, Near Paris, Battle of the Bulge at Bastogne, Torgan and the Ruhr campaign in 1945.

After the war he returned to Rhinebeck to work and paint. Between 1947-49 he wrote and illustrated "Franklin Delano Roosevelt at Hyde Park". In 1950 he married the Chilean Minister to Holland, Carmen Vial-Freire de Senoret, traveled extensively and worked on watercolors, paintings and large paneled screens in the United States and Chile over the next thirty years. Olin Dows died in 1981.

Collections

Baltimore Museum of Art
Boston Museum of Fine Art
Corcoran gallery of Art
Library of Congress
Phillips Collection

F.D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York
National Collection of Fine Art
Vassar College Museum