

MUSINGS OF THE MURALIST

Dear Twisted Tube:

The powers that be suggested that it would be a good thing to write you to deny rumours that I returned to New York, fell from a scaffold or generally speaking that I am not at the Art department anymore. Students that will cross the few yards that separate our building from the Journalism building will find me there in the flesh atop a scaffold busy covering 700 sq. feet of wall with Mexicans, paratroopers, and other jolly inventions. Dean Drewery has become an art patron on a big scale. The tenuous link between the art department and my activities is Mary Taylor who cumulates the office of displaying art objects in our showcase and of catering to my mural whims. When on my scaffold she dons the elegant overalls of the Savannah Playhouse and the spectators that loiter at the foot of our boards have thus the illusion that a play is enacted.

The other night I had a dream that arriving at the Journalism Building I found both my scaffolds swarming with art students all busy with the many pursuits of the muralist. Some were mixing plaster, some sifting sand, others trowelling the mortar on the wall, pouncing designs, and still others putting the colors in fresco. At what must have been 3:50 A.M., the mural was completed. But when I arrived that morning to see it, alas it was only a dream!

Other activities are lectures, either to classes or to what we like to call the general public. From what people remark after each lecture, the most conspicuous thing they remember is my accent. Some think it charming or vice versa. I am in those lectures to make the Old Masters live again, to make people feel that they were real human beings and not museum exhibits; may some of my hearers become Old Masters in their turn and their turn and I will feel well repaid.

Now call my friends, those artists and student artists that I met here three seasons ago, and follow their progresses with great hope. Reuben Gambrell has sent us water colors of a style seasoned and clarified by the harsh experiences of his martial life. Wilmer Wallace has blossomed into an excellent painter of the kind that is born and not made. And

I have a secret fondness for the fresco that Lew Tilley sneaked in between drain pipes and heating fixtures in the complete obscurity of our basement. I hope that Alan Kuznicki has found time to paint in the midst of his war pursuits and that it is only his essential shyness that stopped him from letting us see his new work.

As long as we celebrate now Christmas in November, may I take this opportunity to wish a Merry Christmas to all the members of this department, my friends, scattered today all over the world.

jean charles

Billis: Twisted Tube, Nov. 1943