

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

ART AND

Champion Athletes Painted by Stowitts

BY ARTHUR MILLIER

Whether your interest is in art or sports you should trek to Palos Verdes between now and March 18 to see Stowitts's astonishing life-size pictures of American champion athletes at the art gallery there.

"Muscles You Never Met" would be a good advertising slogan, for though you may take it for granted you know what happens under the padding when Russ Saunders makes one of his spectacular runs down the echoing field—take it from Stowitts, you don't.

When Frank Wykoff puts his all into a sprint, it's true you see some fast movement and the news cameramen catch the general action, but there's a whole beautiful muscular play goes on that your mind doesn't work fast enough to show you.

OKAY BY SPORTS

Just in case there might be more art than truth in the Stowitts muscles, I consulted Sports Editor Bill Henry, who assured me that not only are the stances and the muscles they bring out admirably correct, but that athletes will be delighted by scores of special twists, turns and bulges which they alone know about.

And even such cynical students of the body beautiful as Gerald Pidge and Bob Ray turn out to be strongly pro the Stowitts opera, though they did suggest that they would like to see them matched by a series of girl champions. In which case, they added, the sports department would handle the reviewing.

STARTLED BERLIN

Stowitts admits that people are often startled when they see the bulging, rippling muscles he painted on these life-size, nude, action figures of this country's best athletes. Even in Berlin, where the whole collection was shown and where they are strong on physical kultur, there was controversy. One critic likened them to Michelangelo. Another

said that if Rubens is the master of flesh, then the Stowitts is the master of muscles.

It's far too early to make comparisons like that, time being the best hand at it. But the least one can say is that Stowitts has, in these huge paintings, repeated his "Vanishing India" triumph by recording an aspect of life which most of us would never otherwise have seen. It is a beautiful aspect, too, and one much closer home than India.

SHOULD SHOW ALL

In fact, his whole collection—it's not all on view at Palos Verdes—ought to be shown in town where all the people can see it. It's a home product, the new creation of a Californian, and it will draw crowds wherever shown.

But you never can tell how museum officials will react to something as novel as these paintings. Stowitts's painting methods are a bit wholesale and museum folk are liable to miss the sort of quality they are used to and not notice the positive qualities of rhythmic form which Stowitts has so relentlessly watched.

For this ex-athlete and dancer is thorough. Everyone of these athletes spent two days being exactly measured in the studio.

ARTIST'S BELIEF

Back of this undertaking, begun in 1935, is Stowitts's belief that the nobility and beauty of athletic "form" is not sufficiently recognized. The two brilliant panels in which he shows Ted Shawn and his dancing athletes illustrate this idea.

If you are a sports fan, here are a few of the champions depicted in this remarkable collection: Ken Carpenter, Phil Cope, Joe Gonzales, Lee Guttero, Bud Houser, Cornelius Johnson, Lee Roy Kirkpatrick, Earle Meadows, Mickey Riley, Bill Sefton and Woodrow Strode of the incomparable body.



JACK HUPP—LEE GUTTERO

From the life-size painting by Stowitts at Palos Verdes Library Art Gallery.