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SAINT-GAUDENS' LINCOLN, WESTMINSTER, LONDON

YOSHIO MARKINO

## THE WATER COLORS OF YOSHIO MARKINO\*

BY AMELIA DEFRIES

**T**HE ANCIENT Chinese and Japanese were the first to use water colors for painting; in Europe this fascinating medium was not in use before it was taken up by the early Missal painters who used it as an alternative to gouache. Late in the fifteenth century, in Europe, prints of engravings were often tinted with water colors, and

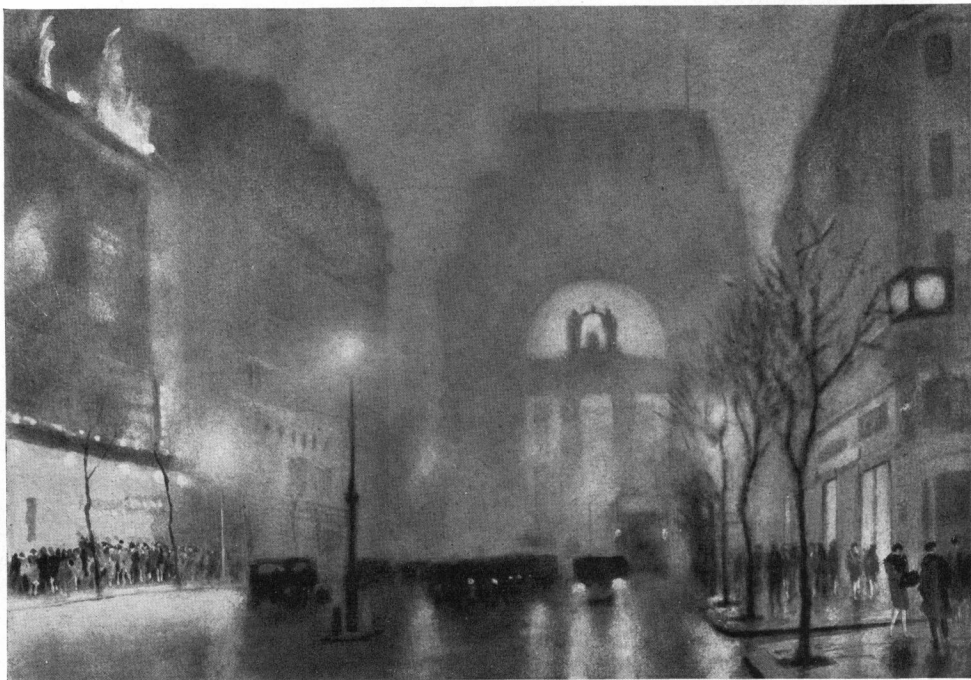
Dürer sometimes filled in the spaces of his reed-pen drawings with washes in this medium; Rembrandt and Rubens employed it in much the same way, but in their hands and in those of Dutch, Flemish and German artists, water color became really a stain in monochrome heightened by a few dashes of strong tones, and this style of partly stained

\*An exhibition of water colors of America and London by Yoshio Markino was held in the Cottars Studio Gallery, London, under the auspices of Mrs. Nigel Playfair and Mrs. Pitt-Chatham, April-May, and was formally opened by Mr. John Drinkwater.



NIGHT—HYDE PARK, LONDON

YOSHIO MARKINO



BUSH HOUSE, LONDON

OWNED BY H. G. WELLS, ESQ.

YOSHIO MARKINO





BROADWAY, NEW YORK

YOSHIO MARKINO

drawing lasted till well on into the eighteenth century.

It was Gainsborough who, experimenting with this as with other methods, foreshadowed the artistic possibility of water colors. Paul Sandby (1725-1809) was, however, the first to establish the use of this medium as a definite specialty. He is often called The Father of British Water Color Painting; and it is in England that this side of art has found most favor, Cozens, Girtin and Turner being the greatest exponents of the "School" he established, while David Cox, Peter de Windt, Copley, Fielding, J. S. Cotman, and R. P. Bonington are the later "Masters" of

the "School." The influence of Bonington in France stimulated Delacroix, Géricault and Decamps, and (in Germany) Schwind, Hildebrandt and Menzel to excel in water color painting.

From this developed the modern Dutch School of which Israels and Anton Mauve were the leaders; followed in Spain by Fortuny, who added brilliance to this art. In our own day there are many painters in water color, but the master of them all in the rendering of atmosphere is Yoshio Markino, a Japanese who, having lived for thirty years in London (with some years in between spent on visits to the U. S. A.),



SUNSET, RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NEW YORK

YOSHIO MARKINO



STATUE OF LIBERTY, NEW YORK HARBOR

YOSHIO MARKINO

OWNED BY LADY MOND

has brought his oriental mind to combine with his Western experience and has carried all the Eastern delicacy of touch and vision into the Western realism which he practices. Famous for his books, "A Japanese Artist in London," "When I Was a Child," "The Color of London," "The Color of Paris," "Oxford Seen from Within," "The Color of Rome," he stands alone, for into realistic representation he embodies the mystery of a poet, the meditative moods of a philosopher, the tranquillity of an oriental, and yet holds the movement and atmosphere of modern life in his renderings of the streets, buildings, people and rivers of London, Boston, and New York. He is shortly publishing a new book, his "Impressions of America." Taken as a whole, his fragile, delicate work exudes peace; but, taken separately, each work has its own message and is worthy of individual study.

Water color as a medium has too often in recent years been weakened by the poor drawing and sketchiness of its users; but Markino is an outstanding draughtsman—the solidity of his forms, the definite character of his architecture, the stoniness of his stone, the movement and the anatomy of his figures, give strength to his almost pastel-like works. His composition at once leads and rests the eye; and he gives to each picture a sense of absolute completion and finality.

His subjects are chosen from the most uncompromising material—the Marylebone Road, London; or Broadway, New York, hideous to the unseeing eye, have assumed, through his mind, beauties hidden from ordinary mortals.

His coloring is chaste and so refined that, like Nature herself, it does not render up all its secrets at a first glance. But on further acquaintance it gradually reveals new and deeper beauties.

This is work to live with, work to love.

H. G. Wells, who purchased "Bush House," summed up the quality of Markino when he said, "I want to carry London to my Paris flat, and this picture is the concentrated essence of London." In these days of so many fierce "flashes in the pan," the depth of the poetry exhaled by Markino is a thing apart.

But he is no romancer, and the essential truth of each of his statements is part of

the lasting value of his work, which records for all time the atmosphere and character of the scenes he pictures so faithfully.

Very few painters since Turner have succeeded as Markino has in filling his water color pictures with *air*. Look at his "Lincoln's Statue," the air of London circulates around the statue, through the spring-like tree, and in the space between it and the Clock Tower of the Houses of Parliament; *Air* is behind the railing and it is felt even above the pavement!

There is inspiration in such work, the secret of which cannot wholly be given away in the artist's simple remark that he obtains this effect of *air* by mixing, in varying degrees, the color of the sky with the colors of pavement, stone and bronze. His "Bush House" contains the very mystery of London at night—the hesitating mist, the lamp-light thrown on to the scene, the crowded queues at the theatre door, the waiting taxis in the thin rain, the loitering passers-by, the oncoming distant 'bus and the swifter moving motor-car with its lights blazing through the light fog. This picture is definitely a technical masterpiece filled with atmosphere perceived by a sensitive soul and rendered by a master-hand at the dictates of a master-mind, at once Japanese and English in style. "Christchurch, Oxford" shows mastery over the intensely difficult problem of ancient stone buildings seen in the combined lights of street lamp and full moon. In this, as in his other pictures, one is amazed at the subtlety of the coloring, at once so strong and yet so delicate.

Markino's method is to very carefully lay one color over another, and the difficulty of this technique in water color is such that in attempting to achieve the result he aims at he often destroys nine or ten pictures to produce one that satisfies himself. Lesser painters would make a woolly effect where his results are clear and definite. Nothing short of mastery over the technical difficulties of the medium could produce these results, which shimmer with the poetry of color, like jewels, transparent and lucid, yet holding in themselves, like lakes, many depths of mysterious tones; and when he turns to woodcutting he retains all these effects together with the Japanese skill in this craft.