



The Woodcut Art of J.J. Lankes (Imago Mundi Book)

Welford Dunaway Taylor, Julius J. Lankes

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The work of J. J. Lankes (1884-1960) is regrettably almost forgotten today. This is unfortunate, for in addition to being a certifiable American original, Lankes was a talented artist (arguably the first genuine woodcut artist this country produced), the close friend of poets and writers, and the author of the first reliable and comprehensive book on woodcutting published in North America. This is the first and only volume devoted to his fascinating career, one that highlights and illustrates the variety and the quality of the work he created over forty years. Reading it will be a revelation.

Lankes worked exclusively in the East, and his woodcuts, mostly of scenery and structures, range from northern Vermont to his adopted state, Virginia, with brief excursions into New York and Pennsylvania. Commissioned on a regular basis to illustrate books, he created a number of enduring images, his most famous certainly being the ones used to adorn Robert Frost's poetry. These and the glorious woodcuts he published of Virginia were probably his crowning achievement, but this retrospective contains a complete overview of his work, including his Christmas cards, illustrations of weather sayings, Bucks County stone barns, and his inventive ephemera.

In *The Woodcut Art of J. J. Lankes*, Welford Dunaway Taylor has painted a rich portrait of a crotchety, unconventional and neglected American artist, and also provided an extensive bibliography of Lankes's published work as well as a collation of his prints. This book, if there is any justice, will restore Lankes's reputation as one of America's foremost graphic artists.

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