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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 20, 1976

MRS. FORD,

Dorothy Downton asked
that this booklet be sent to you.

Marge
Marge W.



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LECOQUE

FRENCH POST IMPRESSIONIST

Born 1891

LECOQUE

by
JAMES J. ALTIERI

A summary of his biography is only the tip of a massive iceberg. He was born in Prague in 1891. His father, an engineer specializing in the regulation of rivers and hydraulic stations wanted him to follow in his footsteps but Lecoque wanted to be an artist and his father wisely assented. After six years of formal study at Prague's Real Schule, he went to Zagreb to study at the Art Institute under Professor Crncic. There he mastered the technique of capturing scenic objects in effervescent color. Alois Kohout was such an outstanding student who applied himself assiduously that he left the institute with high honors. So pleased was his father that he agreed to allow his son the dreamed for opportunity to go to Paris where the art world was in such exciting ferment. There he attended the Academie Jullian studying under Professor Baschet, Emile Bernard and others who were highly respected by the Post Impressionist school of painting.

Kohout now became Lecoque — the french name for Rooster, which had the same meaning in the Czech language. Under that name his art career soared upward with astounding speed. Renoir, the great master took a liking to the young artist and taught him many of his secrets; predicting that his drive and originality would one day make him famous. Establishing his own studio in "La Ruche des Artistes" located in the famed Vauguirard Quarter, he met and became friends with many artists whose works have since achieved world acclaim, including the sculptor Zadkine, Moissi Kogan, Modigliani, Soutine and many others. Before long Lecoque won considerable acclaim when his works were exhibited in 1913 at the prestigious Anglo German Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London.

In 1914 Lecoque returned to Prague where he was highly honored by winning the first prize of Frs.3.000 in gold by Architect Turek. The press raved with acclaim and Lecoque basked in the glory of a local celebrity. His paintings were in great demand and as befits a successful painter he moved into an entire floor of the Colorado Mansfeld Palace. Here he played well the role of social lion and entertained lavishly like a grand Seigneur. Important personages found it fashionable to be linked with his name.

But World War I exploded and so did Lecoque's high style of living. He spent the war years in Prague because of a medical exemption and the Austrian government realized that it was better to keep such a famous painter home than to send him to the front. Meanwhile Lecoque endured an unhappy marriage and left Prague in 1920 to journey to Algiers at the invitation of his friend, Dinet. For a while he remained in the famed Casbah, capturing on canvas the exotic color and mystique of this fabled enclave; then he went to meet his friend Dinet in Bou-Sada, deep in the heart of the Sahara desert. He remained for two years in different places of North Africa and then his restless soul compelled him to return to Paris, which he loved and missed intensely.

There — at the Rue Jacob — Lecoque concentrated on scenes of the Seine River, the Cathedral of Notre Dame and the interesting bridges. He worked feverishly and in two years he had enough paintings for an exhibit at the Andree Galerie where his works were avidly snapped up by collectors. Restless again, he went to the coast of Brittany, Brignogan, where he painted with such fury that he was able to go back to Paris with enough works for a second showing that brought such favorable reviews from the critics and such financial rewards that his friends urged him to remain in Paris and reap his due there.

Emile Bernard longed for his company and beckoned him to Venice. On the Canal Rio del Piombo he occupied a studio in one of the palaces and here he settled down to serious work. Evenings were spent in the company of Emile Bernard, the Russian painter Resrodni and the Italian poet, Luigi Gentina. They debated politics, art and women, and not necessarily in that order. One of his crowning achievements was capturing vividly a few gondolas lazily moving over the surface of the Canal Grande, while white snow fell over the Byzantine-like rooftops. This and other paintings were accepted for the exhibit in the Biennale of Venice in 1926 and again in 1928. But as much as he enjoyed Venice, Lecoque had to depart hastily, due to his innocent involvement in a plot to assassinate Benito Mussolini. Back to Prague he went in 1925 where he settled down to enjoy 13 of the most exciting and years of his life.

Here in his beloved home city, Lecoque's popularity rose immensely. Overnight his paintings increased in value and many of his works were purchased by the government.

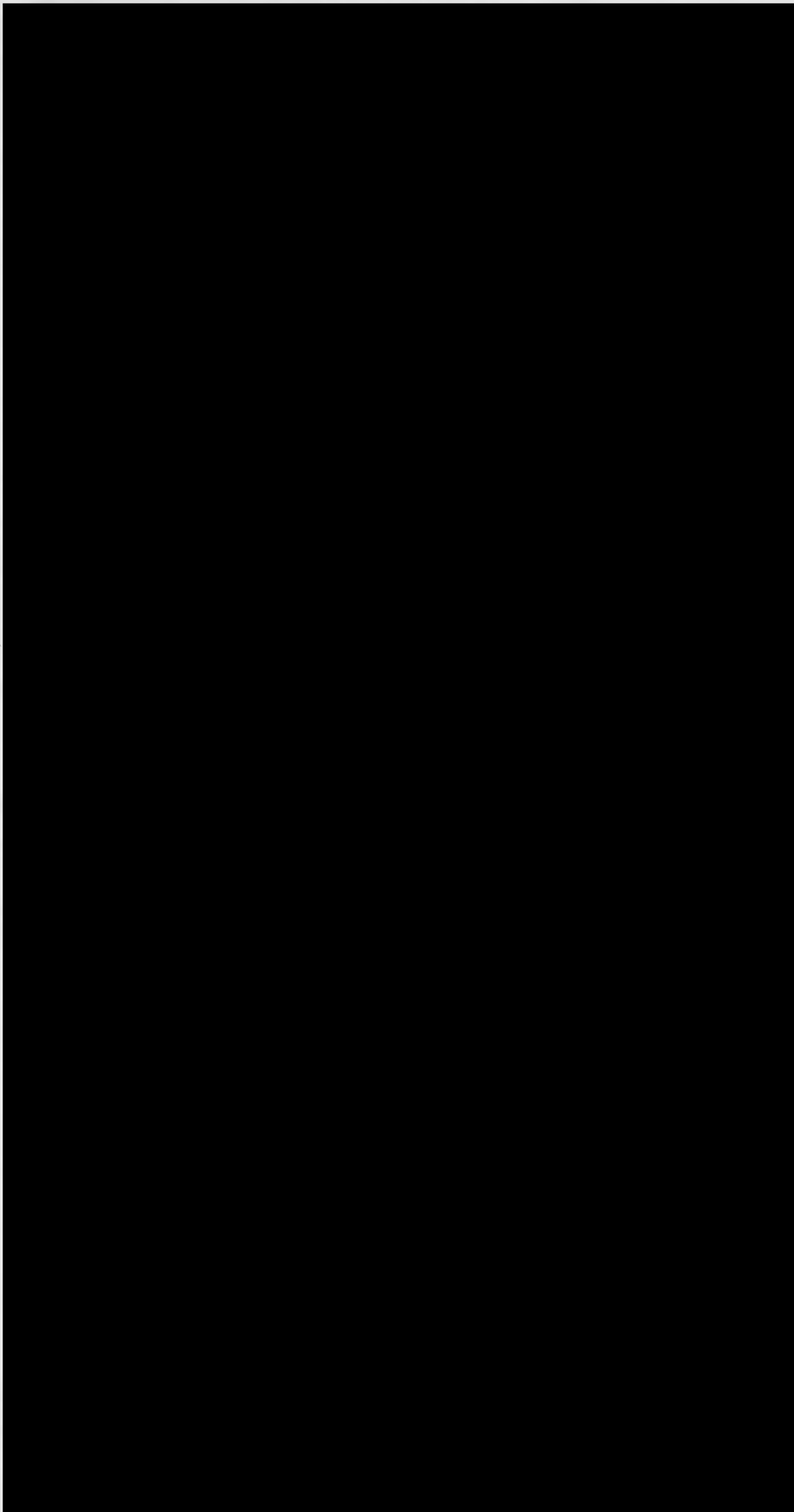
Meanwhile he exhibited in Prague, Ostrava and Bratislava and often travelled to Paris to meet his friends, George Kars, Kupka, Utrillo and others. He also took time to remarry and find happiness for awhile with his second wife. The clouds of War descended again on Europe and because of his bold and controversial political philosophies Lecoque again was forced to flee. Hunted like an animal by the Nazis, he escaped to free Yugoslavia, where he

Ford, Nixon, and arts policy

By William Marlin

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

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illustrate new policy and procedural guidelines in an exchange between design professionals, senior-level federal administrators, and representa-

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