

Sport as Setting: Some Works of Thomas Eakins and Thomas Worth

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Two nineteenth-century American artists, Thomas Eakins and Thomas Worth, used sport as setting in many of their works. Though their styles differed considerably and their works were distributed and exhibited through different media, some preliminary conclusions can be drawn from comparative analysis.

Eakins, whose work was relatively controversial because of his use of what his contemporaries considered to be a too-scientific technique, considered himself to be a portrait, as opposed to a genre, painter. The subjects of his works were often friends or members of his family. The bulk of his sport-related works were of water sports and boxing.

Worth was a free-lance illustrator who often contributed to the firm of Currier and Ives. His “Darktown Comics” series caricatured and satirized black people’s lives using sport as setting.