



Wake Up, America. World War I and the American Poster.

Walton Rawls, Maurice Rickards

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The "War to End All Wars" did not begin as a popular cause. Americans were reluctant to get involved in what they viewed as Europe's war and reelected Woodrow Wilson on his promise to keep this nation out of it. When war became inevitable, public opinion had to be turned around. To do this, the government mobilized the talents of an incredible cadre of artists to create "pictorial publicity" for all aspects of the war effort - from recruiting to war relief to food and fuel conservation. Artists of the calibre of James Montgomery Flagg, Howard Chandler Christy, Charles Dana Gibson, J.C. Leyendecker and N.C. Wyeth produced an impressive -even magnificent - body of art, yet all but a handful of these posters have been almost totally forgotten. In this volume, historian Walton Rawls combines a stirring popular history of America's role in World War I with a remarkable collection of posters that boldly demonstrate their artistic worth. The text, while providing ample art-historical background, concentrates on the all-absorbing historical and political context in which the posters were created. The result is a fascinating look at these artifacts, which can be appreciated today both as graphic masterworks and as illustrations of a tragic historical episode.

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