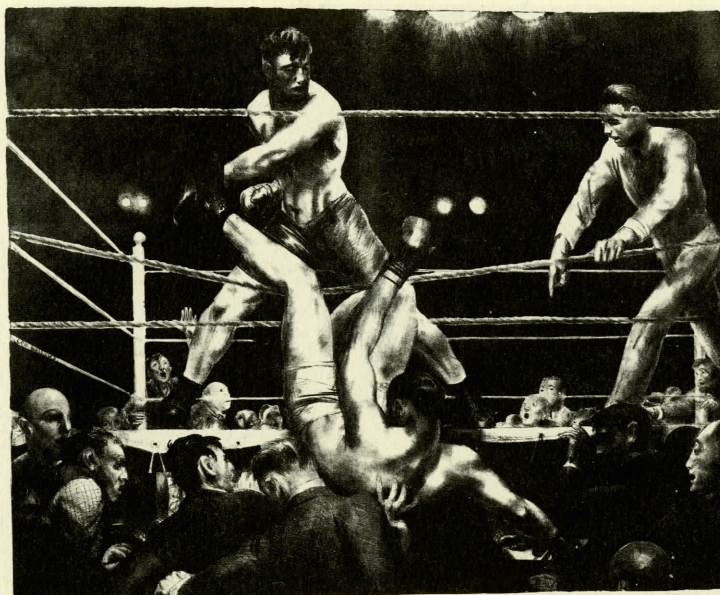


Date: 1923-24

Size: 18 x 22 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches (459 x 568 mm)

Edition: 103

Reference: B. 89



The gesture of the referee is quite silly, I think. Whether he is issuing commands or counting time, I do not know, but it is inconceivable that he should be giving orders already since it is still in the infinitesimal fraction of time in which Dempsey is falling, as is indicated by the champion's lifted leg. Although by all accounts "pandemonium reigned" I'm sure that referee had at least half a second of complete petrification. At any rate, I don't like that gesture. And I don't like the man who supports Dempsey. He seems to turn his head away as though doing a simple gymnastic feat. He must have been quite huddled against Dempsey to have rendered him service.... The lithograph as a whole is a highly commendable undertaking, and collectors who ignore it, in my opinion, will not be wise.—McBride, 1924

The "Manassa Mauler" and the "Bull of the Pampas" (Jack Dempsey and Luis Firpo) fought at the Polo Grounds in New York, September 14, 1923, before 82,000 spectators. Dempsey had regained his popularity in the two years since his victory over Carpentier (see *Introducing Georges Carpentier*, M. 98), and his fans anticipated a bloody fight between the champion and the aggressive Argentinian.

In the frantic first round Firpo was knocked down seven times but he managed to send Dempsey flying through the ropes into the press box. An historic controversy involved the legality of Dempsey's being boosted back into the ring.

George Bellows can be seen in the confusion of the crowd in the lower left corner of the lithograph, enjoying the most dramatic moment of the fight. Dempsey recovered and knocked Firpo out in the second round.

A lithographic stone in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art has the image of

Dempsey and Firpo on one side and *A Knockout*, second state (M. 92) upside down on the verso. Four related lithographic crayon drawings are in the collection of the Mead Art Museum. Another is in a private collection. The painting *Dempsey and Firpo*, 1924, is in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

The impression of the print in the Mead Art Museum has a grid drawn on it and was probably used by the artist for plotting the canvas.

A photographic reproduction was made of this print during World War II. A representative of the U.S. Armed Forces requested that the Metropolitan Museum of Art select a subject and reproduce it in a small edition for distribution to hospitals and camps for the enjoyment of the servicemen. The reproduction is an inch smaller than the original and has identifying markings on the bottom margin and on the verso.