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Gil Elvgren: All His Glamorous American Pin-Ups

Gil Elvgren, Charles G. Martignette, Louis K. Meisel

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Gil Elvgren: All His Glamorous American Pin-Ups Gil Elvgren, Charles G. Martignette, Louis K. Meisel Post-depression USA was in desperate need of a defining iconography that would lift it out of the black and white doldrums, and it came in the form of Gil Elvgren's technicolor fantasies of the American dream. From the Forties to the Sixties his painted adverts and posters for, among others, Coca-Cola and Pangburn's Chocolates, as well as the long-running Brown and Bigelow calendars, were a bright red white and blue account of the country's aspirations and hopes.

As the country plunged into war Elvgren provided the troops with pin-up girls galore. His technique involved photographing models and then painting them into gorgeous hyper-reality, with longer legs, more flamboyant hair and gravity-defying busts, and in the process making them the perfect moral-boosting eye-candy for every homesick private.

Elvgren defined the classic ""pop"" vision of Americana, a bold visualisation that has been endlessly appropriated and recycled in advertising, TV, film and art. His style is instantly recognisable. Dubbed ""The Norman Rockwell of cheesecake,"" Elvgren's images combine desire for a better life with nostalgia for the nation's innocent apple-pie past.

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