

*When man begins to understand  
He will learn to love  
And when his love is understood  
There will be everlasting Peace*

KRIENSKY

PERSONAL HISTORY STATEMENT

Personal Data

Kriensky

Name:

Morris Kriensky

Address:

463 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014

Telephone:

(212) 243-2352

Birthplace:

Glasgow, Scotland

Date of Birth:

July 27, 1917

Art Education

Boston Museum School of Fine Arts

- Boston, Mass. 1936-40

Art Students League

- New York, N.Y. 1948-49

Escuela de Technica Mexicana, La Esmeralda

- Mexico 1950-51

Exhibitions

One-man shows:

Knoedler Gallery, New York

Chicago Art Institute

Frick Art Library

The White House, Washington, D.C.

University of Connecticut (Retrospective)

Wilmington Society of Fine Arts

Hackley Art Gallery

Currier Gallery of Art

Dartmouth College

Indiana University of Fine Arts

George School

George Walter Vincent Smith Art Gallery

Carus Gallery

Revel Gallery

Castagno Gallery

Shreve, Crump & Low

-- and others in Mexico and China

**MORRIS E. KRIENSKY**, young American artist-soldier, was born in Glasgow, Scotland, and brought up since a very early age in Malden, Massachusetts. His ability to draw was discovered quite by accident. One day soon after graduation from high school, he happened to make some pencil sketches of Lincoln and Washington; they had unusual quality for a boy who had never drawn before. His new found passion led young Kriensky to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and it was there that he began his formal art training. Watercolors and sculpture followed drawing. His sculptures include busts of Einstein and Lincoln.

In February, 1942, Kriensky enlisted in the U. S. Army and he served with the 14th Air Force in China for two years as aerial photographer. Between missions he turned to painting China—the people and the countryside. Benefit exhibitions of his paintings have been sponsored by the American Red Cross in China, and won for him the commendation of the Chinese themselves. Chi King, noted Chinese artist, and Professor Liang Chao-cha, formerly of Columbia University, expressed great pleasure in both the work and the promise of this young artist.

Kriensky's first exhibition in this country took place at The White House, where the East and West Association held a presentation of its program at the invitation of Mrs. Roosevelt. A number of his paintings appeared as a double spread last year in the magazine Asia.

**MORRIS KRIENSKY** is one of our American veterans who went to China and saw real Chinese, not only with his eyes but also with his skillful and perceptive pencils and brushes. His work shows the Chinese people as they really are, at work, at rest and at play. I hope that others will enjoy Mr. Kriensky's pictures as much as I do. They bring back to us authentic glimpses of a great country and a great people.

**PEARL BUCK**

## EXHIBITION

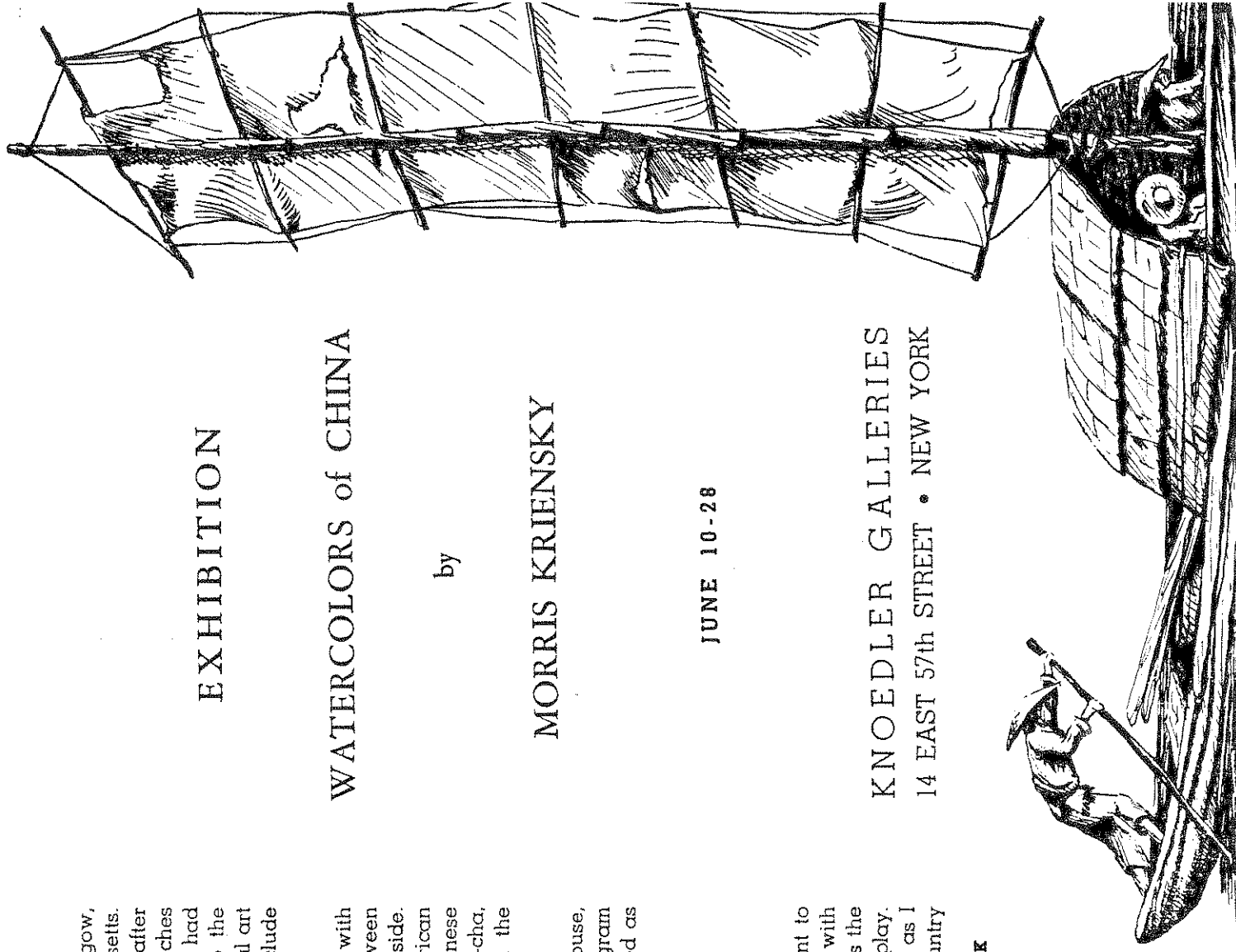
### WATERCOLORS of CHINA

by

**MORRIS KRIENSKY**

JUNE 10-28

**KNOEDLER GALLERIES**  
14 EAST 57th STREET • NEW YORK



## KRIENSKY

### The Painter in Retrospect

Kriensky, who, from the critics' superb reviews throughout his career, has been considered a most significant artist of our time, has spent many years in patient probing deep within his spirit for that core of absolute truth, the expression of which marks the true artist. The fruits of this meticulous research and self-analysis are evident in the searing sincerity of his current work. It shows a strength which strikes at the conscious mind with tremendous impact.

He believes emphatically in a strong harmony of the best of the Oriental and Western ways of painting for a truly universal art form. In his own words: "Every good painting has a 'point of harmony' when the statement the painter wishes to make and his emotions, his draftsmanship, his use of space, volume, color, line, movement, perspective, tension, and all the many other ingredients of composition, combine to form a balance without compromising one to the other. A canvas should speak for itself. Abstraction, to me, is abstracting all that is superficial to the very truth, and is not the negation of humanity and all life around it. To be able to express the absolute, one must think beyond the neurotic tempo of our time. One must take an integral part of the life in the world and then, as an artist, be able to stand aside and paint the truth that is there."

Morris E. Kriensky was born in Glasgow, Scotland. He was five when his family moved to Massachusetts. Oddly enough, it was not until he was attending Engineering School that his artistic ability was discovered. Doodling idly with a pencil, he produced sketches which showed remarkable quality for one who had never studied drawing. Though Kriensky, at twenty, was too old for enrollment at the Boston Museum School of Fine Arts, the Head of the Museum School was so interested in his potential that she, personally, accepted him as a private student for four years.

In 1942, he enlisted with the United States Army, serving in aerial photography and intelligence with the 14th Air Force in China. It was at this time--literally between bombing missions--that he produced his extraordinary series of water colors of the Chinese people and places. Works extraordinary in that, painted in such circumstances, each one yet captures the timeless, impregnable serenity of the Orient in the midst of all its strife and hunger. This was the Collection shown later at the White House in Washington, D.C., under the sponsorship of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt -- making Kriensky the only contemporary artist ever to have exhibited there in a one-man show. The noted Chinese

artist Chi-King and Professor Chao-Cha of Columbia and Cornell Universities were both deeply impressed by his sensitive interpretation of the Chinese character. Pearl Buck, celebrated writer on China, had this to say:

"Kriensky saw real China not only with his eyes but also with his skillful and perceptive pencils and brushes. His work shows the Chinese people as they really are -- at work, at rest, and at play. I hope that others will enjoy his pictures as much as I do. They bring back to us authentic glimpses of a great country and a great people..."

When the war ended, he returned to the United States and was invited to exhibit at the world-renowned Knoedler Galleries. He showed forty water colors. So successful was the exhibition that Knoedlers did an unprecedented thing -- retained it for an additional four weeks.

Shortly afterwards he moved to Mexico. He had not been living there long when he was asked to show some of his work in an exhibition sponsored by the United States and Mexican Governments. Many outstanding artists of both countries participated, but it was Kriensky's "Las Campesinas" (Country People) which drew highest praise from the critics, as for instance: "... most outstanding among the paintings for its insight into the Mexican people was "Las Campesinas" by Kriensky..." Excelsior

Andrei Guber, Curator of the Pushkin Museum in Moscow and Dean of Art History at Moscow University, visited Kriensky's studio in 1959 and was most enthusiastic about the paintings he saw. He acquired three works for permanent exhibit at the Pushkin -- making Kriensky, in all probability, the only American artist represented there. Here are Mr. Guber's comments:

"I got acquainted with the artist Kriensky at the Soviet Exhibit of Technical Work and Culture in New York. I visited his studio and saw his paintings. Artist Kriensky works with good taste and knowledge. He paints like an artist of European knowledge in the manner of the Chinese... As a result of his seekings, his work is extremely interesting.

"What distinguishes Kriensky above all as an artist is his ability to contemplate long about everything and then the remarkable speed and confidence with which he completes his work -- usually within a few minutes. His creations are closely related with China and Mexico, whose plain, ordinary people he painted with that deep touch of humanity. His

ability as an artist enables him to reveal their innermost feelings.

"The landscapes of the painter are always the fruit of his creative fantasy -- very laconical and fully realized and indirectly connected with places that really exist..."

Kriensky has held many one-man shows apart from those at the White House and at Knoedlers. Others were at such important places as the Chicago Art Institute; Frick Art Library; Wilmington Society of Fine Arts; Hackley Art Gallery; Currier Gallery of Arts; George School; George Walter Vincent Smith Art Gallery; Dartmouth College; University of Connecticut, and Indiana University. Group shows in which he took part include the Instituto Mexicano Norte Americano de Relaciones Culturales; American Water Color Society; National Academy of Arts. He has also had one-man shows at the Carus Gallery, the Revel Gallery, and the Castagno Gallery, all in New York, and - most recently - one at Shreve, Crump & Low, Boston.

#### Critics' Comments

##### New York World Telegram: Emily Genauer

"...Extremely sensitive and keen of perception, Kriensky came to know the Chinese people and their ways and in return gained some of their philosophy. His work has a beauty of design that could stem only from Oriental teachings. The portraits are his own, but here again it was close proximity that brought understanding and the extremely gratifying results..."

##### New York Times: Howard de Vree

"...Kriensky is an artist and has not confined himself to mere realistic statements of picturesque material. There are, to be sure, figures and portraits, landscapes and river junks, but Kriensky employs figures and other forms in a semi-abstract manner with striking design. In some of the paintings he has caught the spirit of traditional Chinese paintings."

##### Pictures on Exhibit

"... quiet and sincere style of work, and one gets the feeling that this is what China really looks like ...even quality in all the work....but for compositional interest the outstanding paintings are "Green Archway" and "Saddle Top."

Art Digest: Margaret Breuning

"The artist set down these vivid impressions of the country and people. The exotic character of the country is not stressed so much as the endearing qualities of the people -- patience, wisdom, and the immemorial devotion to the soil. "The Chinese Farmer" possesses the dignity and authority that reminds one of the famous paintings of the philosophers and sages of an earlier day in Chinese art....work is carried out in color which produces a sense of values and solidity in the simplified plastic design, such as the figures of "Rice Planters," "Fruit Woman," "Crockery Market," "Washing in the Creek." While the palette is low it is rich, and employed with peculiar appropriateness in building up of form."

Art News

"....young as he is, the artist is an expert in the medium... packed with sensitive observation..."

New York Sun

"....simple but skillful paintings of Oriental life done in easy, fluid, pictorial manner. The composition suggests, in its economy of line and general understated handling, the work of Chinese artists..."

Boston Daily Globe

"....Kriensky shows a fine technique in this difficult field of art work. Using dull indigo blues and earth colors, he obtains brilliant effects with strong, sweeping brush strokes. In his portrait work, particularly, he has caught the spirit and the feeling of the Chinese people in their long struggle for freedom."

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt

"....I particularly enjoyed the paintings made in China by Kriensky....they were really well done. The artist had caught the bony structure in the faces and had made some character studies which are unforgettable...."

Ann Daly, Newspaper and Magazine Columnist, Dublin, Ireland

"Kriensky's work is so vividly and excitingly alive that seeing it was, for me, one of the most momentous experiences of my life. "His Daily Rice" is abstract not only in design, but also in that here

is the simple peasant of any race -- humble, vulnerable, yet touched with a timeless dignity. "La Muerta" (painting of a bull stabbed to the heart in a Mexican bullring) is all the terrible, quivering, humiliation and bewilderment of majesty betrayed. "Winter's End" is desolation itself...a starkly withered tree on a hillside. Yet the scrawny branches reach up, by some miracle that is Kriensky and Kriensky alone, with an upthrust of hope, of life, of warmly rising sap. "Seagulls" strikes the senses with such a surge of pulsing movement that one is caught up and swept into those restless waters... seething foam...rushing, whirring wings of questing gulls...."

Herman Ramrus, Professor at University of Minnesota, from a letter of recommendation to a Foundation

"....It is a pleasure and honor to write in behalf of a man who, I believe, has it in him to become one of the most significant artists in our day.... Watching him work, I was almost startled at first by his easy skill and rapidity of execution, in view of the genuine seriousness of the product. But then I came to know that for this artist the painting was but the signature to a spiritual process, that he had a capacity for living so completely with and in his subject that doing the pictures was like picking the ripened fruits. His creative ability and high sincerity of purpose, together with a complete absence of the superficialities so often associated with the artistic 'temperament,' seems to me to give promise of even more significant accomplishments and to make their possessor eminently qualified...."



R. D. 3  
PERKASIE, PENNSYLVANIA

air mail

April 2, 1945.

Dear Sgt. Kriensky:

The very fine bronze sacrificial vase reached me today. It stands on my Chinese desk at which so many of my books have been written. Of course I thank you very much for it and it will be a great pleasure to me. It was nice of you to think of sending me this constant expression of your appreciation.

What I have done is little enough. But I should like you to know that THE EAST AND WEST ASSOCIATION is touring an exhibition of your paintings all over the country. And I should like you to know, too, that we put your paintings around the East Room of the White House on the evening of March 15th, when THE EAST AND WEST ASSOCIATION had an evening's entertainment there, at the special request of Mrs. Roosevelt. I walked around the room with Mrs. Roosevelt after the show was over and explained the pictures to her, and she was really delighted with them. She kept exclaiming, "How really good they are!" Do you know, I like especially, although not necessarily best, the one of the rickshaw man asleep on the shafts of his vehicle, with his hat completely hiding his face? I have seen so many men resting like that.

It seems to me a splendid thing that you and perhaps others of our men, will bring back from China, and indeed from many countries, these fresh and vivid impressions of those countries. I look to you all to help our people with the understanding they so sorely need of these other peoples. And you know that I believe that upon such understanding alone can a sound peace be built.

Yours with cordial regards,

  
Pearl S. Buck

T/Sgt. M. E. Kriensky, 11047309,  
4th Photo Tech. Unit,  
A.P.O. 627,  
c/o P. M. New York City, N. Y.

PSB HS

MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT  
55 EAST 74TH STREET  
NEW YORK CITY

December 18, 1959

Dear Mr. Kriensky:

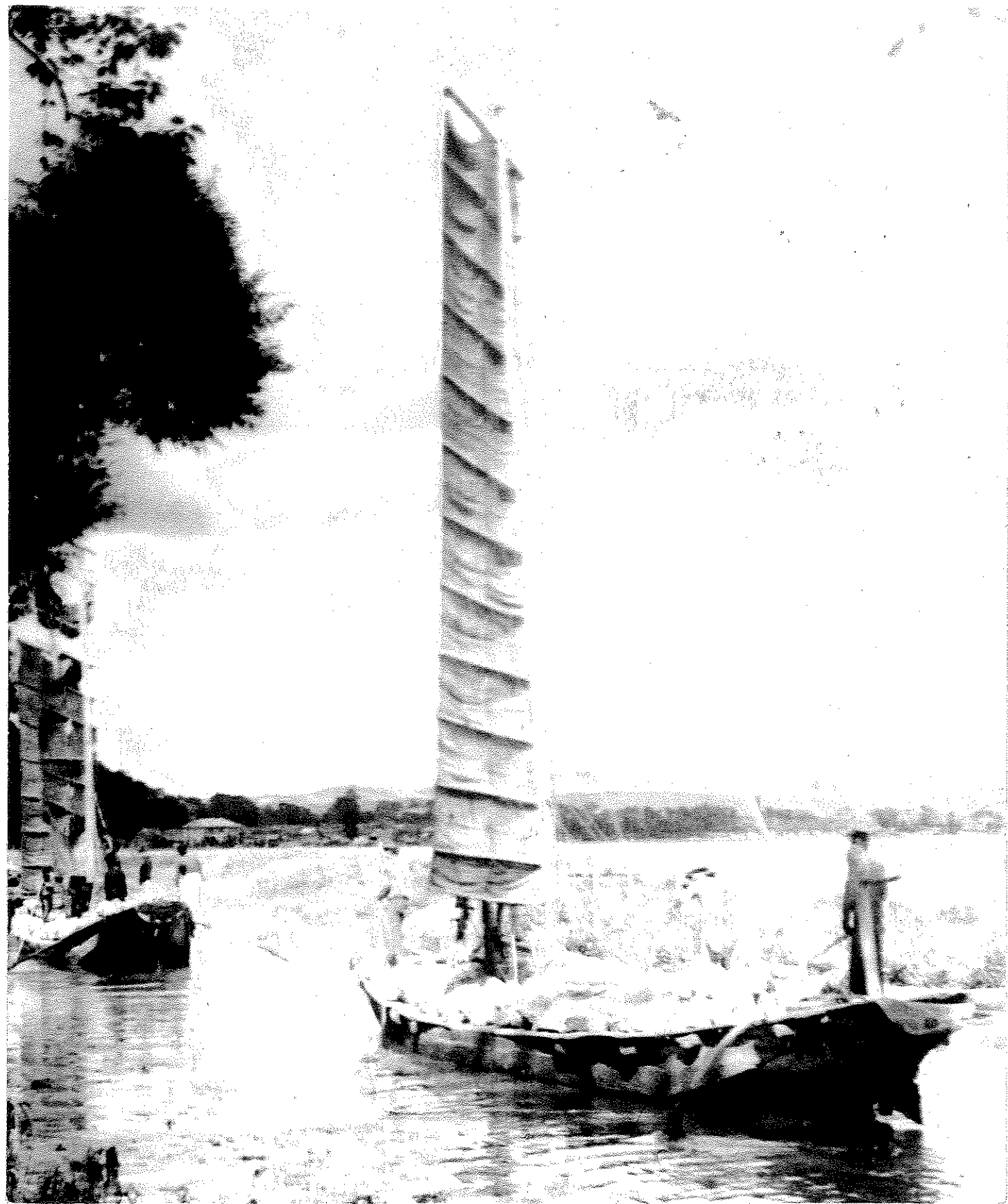
Thank you so very much for your kind  
letter which I appreciate.

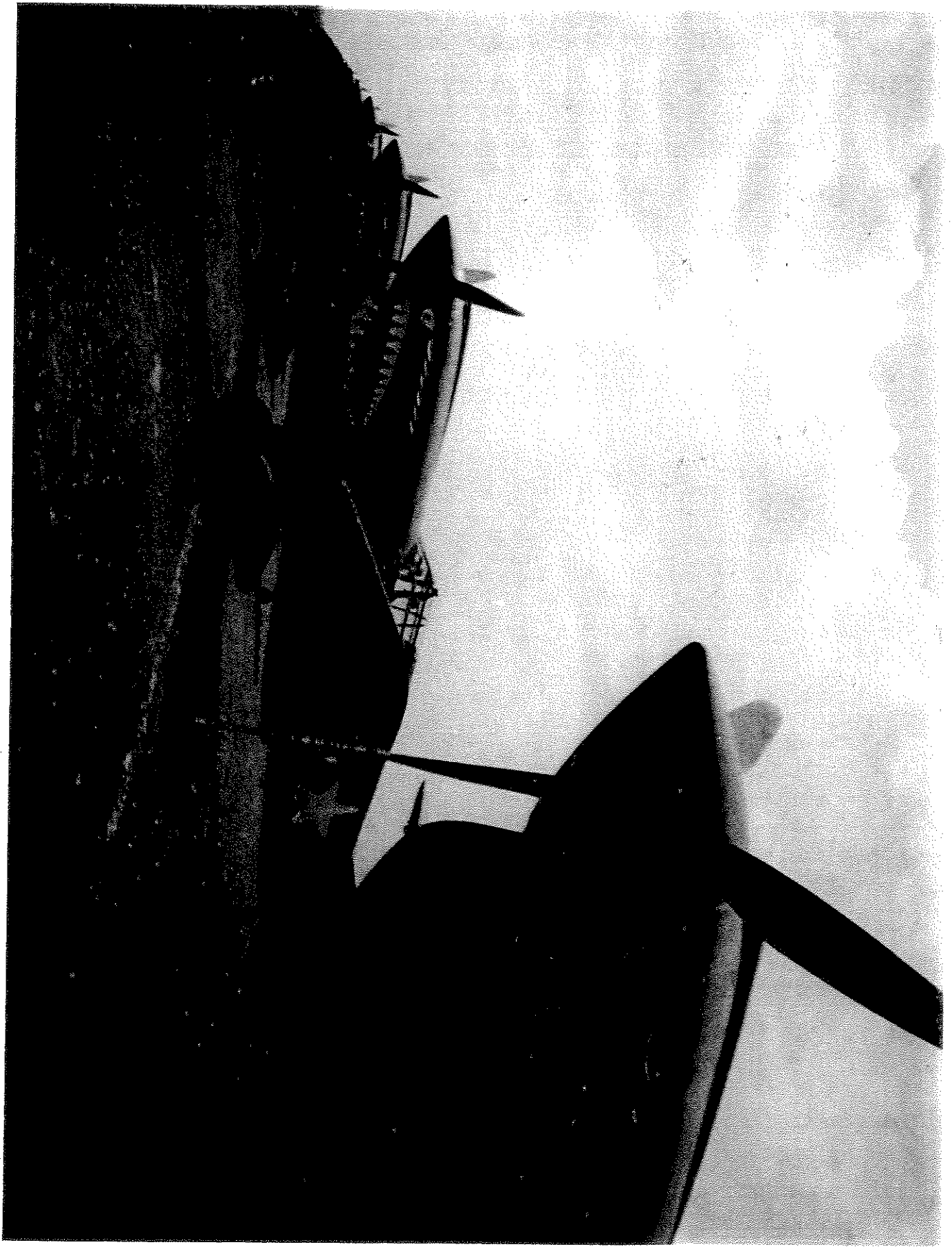
When you have your exhibition here  
I will try to see it if you will let me  
know ahead of time.

With my good wishes for Christmas and  
the New Year.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Eleanor Roosevelt", written in dark ink.









*Morris Edward Kriensky*

*July 27, 1917*

*February 8, 1998*