

DID YOU KNOW?

* Starting in 1916, Norman Rockwell painted 321 covers for *The Saturday Evening Post*, the country's most popular magazine during the first half of the 20th century. His last published cover for the *Post* was a portrait of John F. Kennedy the week after his assassination in 1963.

* More than 4 million posters of the *Four Freedoms* were sold during World War II, raising \$132 million for the war effort.

* Rockwell is considered by many to be the most popular artist of the 20th century. His work helped Americans define who they were and what they looked like. Some of his most famous paintings of soldiers returning home, families celebrating Thanksgiving, family trees, historical events, and representations of American ideals became icons of American self-identity.

* Legendary for his attention to detail, Rockwell went to great lengths to create authentic images. While doing research for a series of illustrations of Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer, he bought old clothes from Missouri hoboes. "You can't buy a straw hat and make it old by rubbing it in dirt," he said. "A hat has to be worn in the sun and sweated in and sat on and rained on. Then it'll be old. And look it."

* Rockwell looked to Dutch masters such as Vermeer and Mondrian for inspiration. He was also a great admirer of Picasso and Pollack.

* Rockwell employed a painstaking process for every illustration he did, prompting some observers to describe his technique as being more like a movie director than an artist. Using props and photographs, Rockwell typically went through at least five preliminary steps before working on the final image. These included thumbnail sketches, charcoal drawings from a model, photography and color studies.

* A founder of The Norman Rockwell Museum in 1969, Rockwell gave 367 paintings to the museum, his entire art studio building, and more than 100,000 other materials to the museum's Norman Rockwell Archives.

* The Norman Rockwell Museum is the most popular year-round cultural attraction in the Berkshires which is located in western Massachusetts.