

The Portfolio

The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge

Spring 1997



PROPERTY OF THE
NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM
REFERENCE CENTER

**In Celebrated Company
My Father's Paintings About Painting
Going Once, Going Twice, SOLD!**

Scenes from:
**The Members Opening of
 Currier & Ives, Printmakers to the American People**

At the exhibit opening, Dr. Bonnie Yochelson, curator of the exhibit, addresses an interested audience. Far right, Guests enjoy the *Currier & Ives* exhibit.



Director Laurie Norton Moffatt chats with museum member Dr. William Cristo, Jr. who came from Newton Massachusetts.



and from:

**The Exhibit of Norman Rockwell's Art and
 322 Saturday Evening Post Covers**

This exhibit at the Old State House in Hartford, Connecticut, sponsored by MassMutual, runs through June 14, 1997.



Frank Dolson, model for Norman Rockwell's *Family Tree*, talks to a journalist at the press preview. Mr. Dolson was the model for all the men in the painting with the exception of the minister who was portrayed by Norman Rockwell himself.



Ronald A. Copes, Vice President Community Relations for MassMutual, addresses an audience at a press preview prior to the exhibit opening on February 3, 1997. Seated at left is Rockwell model Frank Dolson.

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The Portfolio

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Cover: Norman Rockwell shows actress Ann-Margret how to pose for her portrait promoting the film *Stagecoach*. Photographer unidentified.

Going Once, Going Twice, SOLD!

Laurie Norton Moffatt, *Director*

TO BIDDER NUMBER 301! Attending an auction is a thrill, a fast paced drama where art revolves around the center stage, people revolve in and out the gallery door, and paddles, hands, and heads nod or nay at each incremental stage of the auctioneer's bidding.

times, the art market values drop, just like the stock market or real estate, and a sale may not realize that which was initially invested.

Norman Rockwell's paintings have been selling at auction since the late 1970s. Frequently, his work appears in the May and

December American paintings sales catalogue of Sotheby's and Christie's. His work has also sold at auction at Illustration House and Phillips in New York, Skinners in Boston, and numerous auction houses across the country.

Sotheby's and Christie's are the two auction houses that largely control the American market. Both have large staffs

rare work. They follow the art world, international laws, currency fluctuations, current trends, and have to be multifaceted in the art of cultivating potential clients.

The commissions that the larger auction houses receive from the seller are established at 20% for a work that goes for less than \$2,000 to a smaller percentage for the sale for pieces over \$10,000. A buyer pays a premium equal to 15% of the successful bid price up to and including \$50,000, and 10% on any amount in excess of \$50,000. The seller and the auction house may set a reserve price. This means that the auction house will withdraw the piece from sale if the final bid is lower than this amount.

The price of a work is generally established by the appraisers of the auction house; the seller may also bring the work to an independent art appraiser. The appraisers set a price range based on what similar items have sold for, what the present market will bear, and on the condition of the work—is the varnish discolored, is the canvas cupped or cracked, or has it been restored? Also considered in the appraisal is the size of the work, its history and subject, and whether or not it has appeared in a published work. Once the price is agreed upon, the work is assigned a number in the auction catalogue and a price range is established.

In the Sotheby's catalogue,



Copyright, © 1954, The Curtis Publishing Company.

Choir Boy Combing Hair for Easter, oil on canvas, *Saturday Evening Post*, April 17, 1954, cover.

What is a painting worth? An auction matches a willing seller with a willing buyer, thereby establishing a "market" value for an artist's particular work at a point in time. Since the art market, like any other market fluctuates, most collectors subscribe to the theory of buy what you like, for enjoyment, not for investment. For some-

with specialists in many departments—paintings, sculptures, furniture, musical instruments, to name a few. Each department has within it many subdivisions—under paintings there are American paintings, European, Impressionists, Moderns, Old Masters, etc. The staff at both houses compete with each other to secure the consignment of a



Copyright, © 1948, The Norman Rockwell Family Trust



Copyright, © 1955, The Curtis Publishing Company.

Right, *What Makes It Tick?* (*The Watchmaker*), oil on canvas, advertisement. Far right, *The Critic*, charcoal, 1955, study for *Art Critic*, *Saturday Evening Post*, April 16, 1955, cover.

December 5, 1996, *The Choirboy* was listed as follows: Number 183, Norman Rockwell (1894-1978), \$500,000-700,000, followed by a discussion of the painting, its provenance (the record of all known previous ownerships), where it had been exhibited, and references to it in the literature. With buyer's premium included, the painting sold for \$717,500.

The bidding begins usually just shy of the low range, (it can start even lower than that), and increases in increments proportionate to the anticipated

The adrenalin starts pumping as the bids ascend.
"Do I have \$500,000?"

selling price. The auctioneer scans the room for bids, noting phone bidders who talk to an auction-house agent who is on the sales floor. Knowing how to whet the interest of the audience is the auctioneer's talent, and he uses words such as "important painting," "rare," "one of a kind" to keep the bidding going up.

The pace is quick. A bidder must think fast. "Going once, going twice, sold." The hammer falls, and the auctioneer asks of

the buyer, "Your number please?" When an item generates an unusually fevered pitch, the final fall of the hammer brings out a spontaneous applause. The competition has been exciting, and one person has emerged the winner!

As one might expect, some of the most popular Norman Rockwell pieces that sell at auction have been his *Saturday Evening Post* covers. It seems that collectors desire to own not only an original Rockwell work but the works for which he is most beloved, that appeared on the cover of America's most popular magazine.

It is interesting to note that the highest price paid at auction for a Rockwell painting was an advertising piece done for the Watchmakers of Switzerland. This painting, *The Watchmaker*, an oil, 26 by 26 inches, was auctioned on May 22, 1996 at Sotheby's. It sold, including the buyers premium, for \$937,500.

Not all Rockwell works sell in the six figures. There is something to fit every budget. It is rather like deciding to buy a Rolls Royce or a Yugo. In 1990, the Norman Rockwell Museum acquired for \$3,300 two charcoal

drawings from Christie's that were intended, but not used, for *Family Tree*. These drawings are valuable in understanding the way Norman Rockwell worked. He conceived an idea, worked on it, and then, as he fine-tuned his conception, discarded the sketch and made a new one. In 1994, the museum purchased a significant study for *The Art Critic*. This charcoal on paper 11 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches was bought for \$6,325. This was also an important acquisition to the museum's collection as it helps to show the artist's process.

So what does it feel like to sit at an auction and watch a beloved painting sell when the gavel goes down? The adrenalin starts pumping as the bids ascend.

"Do I have \$500,000?"

"\$525,000?"

"\$525,000 on the phone."

"\$550,000?"

A pause. "It's the lady's bid."

A bidder must think fast.

"Going once."

"One more increment?"

A hand goes up. Two bidders remain. The pace is quick. One hesitates. The other knows she's got it.

"Sold to the lady in the front. Number please?"

My Father's Paintings About Painting

Peter Rockwell, *International Sculptor and Author*

In the Winter Portfolio, Peter Rockwell discussed his father's place in American art, the strong influence the "old masters" had on his work, and the barrier that existed between the modernists and the traditionalists. Part II continues the discussion as to which side of the art barrier Norman Rockwell placed himself.

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW of both the general public and the art world, one was either for or against abstract art. Flowing from this dualism was the characterization of the two sides as populist versus elitist, anti-intellectual versus intellectual and finally uneducated versus educated.

The populist side came to be characterized, as well as to characterize itself, not only as anti-intellectual but also as unthinkingly conservative. People would proudly write my father saying, "I don't know anything about art, but I like your work." The first part of the phrase became almost a form of bragging. The type of small town versus big city populism that has always been a part of American political life became a way of defining a division in art.

Norman Rockwell's work became, and to some extent remains, the archetypal populist work. By a natural extension, the artist himself came to be viewed as an archetypal populist, on the assumption that he must be like his work. He came to be seen as a hard-working, dedicated small-town type who had nothing to do with intellectual nonsense.

This characterization did not fit either the work or the person. He was born in New York and studied at the Art Students' League where many of the modernists studied. His work itself was neither so unthinking nor unquestioning as both his admirers and detractors presumed.

From 1938, when he painted himself at his easel for *The Saturday Evening Post* cover *Deadline* until the *Triple Self-*

uncertainty: one hand on his hip, the other scratching his head. Several details, such as a watch and a piece of paper with a due date on it, show that the painter has a deadline that is almost up. It is the last minute and the artist does not know what to paint.

The story of being caught in a deadline seems simple. Nevertheless, there are several interesting points at which this becomes typical of his paintings about painting. The artist is

shown with his back to us. Although it is fairly obviously a self-portrait, it also has the element of a painting within a painting, but the inner painting is blank. The artist is thus being faced directly by his canvas, surely a typical statement of the modernist dilemma: all the action is within the confines of the canvas, and therefore it is the blank canvas itself that presents the problem. What



Artist Facing Blank Canvas (Deadline), oil on canvas, *Saturday Evening Post*, October 8, 1938, cover.

Portrait of 1960, there were series of paintings that questioned the nature of his own work, as well as the nature of painting in general. The 1938 self-portrait shows a painter sitting with his back to us in front of an easel with a canvas that is blank except for the lettering of the magazine title. The pose is a caricature of

becomes interesting about this statement of the problem is that it is a false statement as far as Norman Rockwell's own technique was concerned.

There is one characteristic of this painting that holds true for all of his paintings about painting. They are all humorous. If the subject were treated too

seriously, even though he felt serious about it, it might not appeal to his audience. Humor is also a way of achieving objectivity. By caricaturing himself, the painter creates a distance between his real self and his painted self. It is also true that the painter views a painting as a place for playing tricks. In this case part of the trick, which his audience could not know, is that he is not actually describing his own technique. The blank canvas is not a problem for the artist who prepares for the act of painting through a painstaking series of detailed studies. It becomes a problem when, as in modernism, the artist begins the painting by confronting the canvas with nothing but his own creativity. In this work, the blank canvas is a metaphor for the artist's own difficulty in getting ideas. This metaphor acts as a bridge between this particular artist's problems and those of a very different group—the modernists.

During the 1940s and 1950s, my father did a whole series of paintings that were both jokes and question marks at the same

Something that at first sight is a normal, realistic "Norman Rockwell scene" is, in fact, a complete falsification of reality.

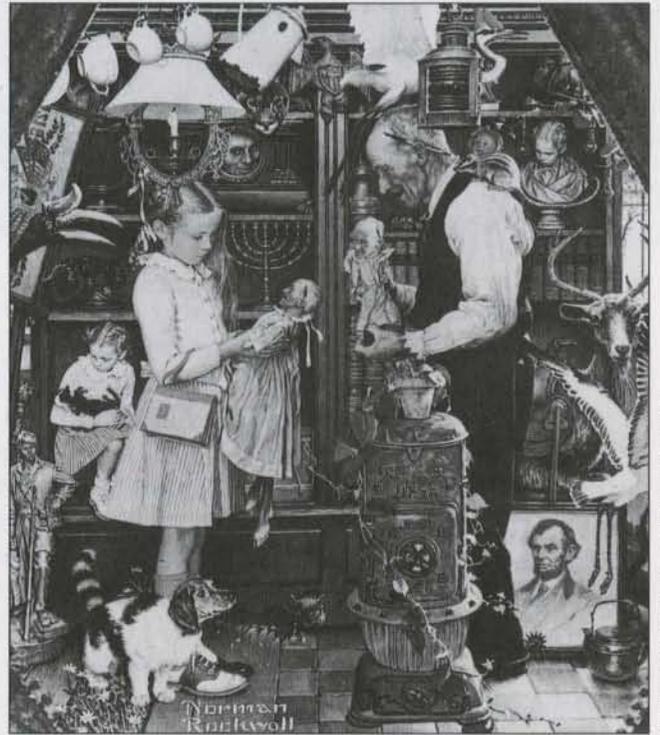
time. Among them were three that were entitled *April Fools* and were covers for *The Saturday Evening Post*. An example is the cover for April 3, 1948: *Girl with Shopkeeper*. In this painting, the artist's insistence on getting every detail exactly right is turned upside down. All of the details are painted with loving

care, but they are mostly wrong. The animal next to the girl is a cat with a dog's head, there are flowers growing from the floor, the wood stove has no stove pipe, there is a bird flying out of the painting from right to left, and the girl's doll has the head of the storekeeper and the hooves of a deer. At another level, there are more subtle things wrong. The clock has a human rather than a clock face, the candelabra below has eight rather than seven branches,

and the reproduction of the *Mona Lisa* shows her with a halo. The intentional errors vary from the obvious to the subtle, so that when looking at any detail, we cannot be sure whether or not it is part of the joke.

Superficially, this painting is a kind of trompe l'oeil joke that can be enjoyed by anyone. It is a treasure hunt in which the treasure is finding all the mistakes. On another level, however, it is a slightly surrealistic dream in which something that at first sight is a normal, realistic "Norman Rockwell scene" is, in fact, a complete falsification of reality. If it were not so peaceful, it could be a nightmare. Everything looks right and yet it is

wrong. On a third level, the picture is a question about the artist's own work. Is it possible to convince the audience that the unreal is real by simply painting it all with consummate attention to detail? To what extent can

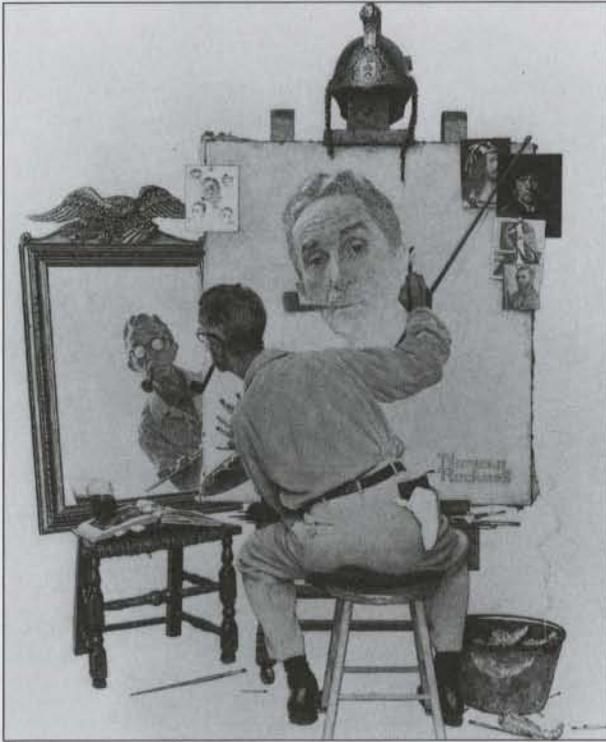


April Fool: Girl with Shopkeeper, oil on canvas, *Saturday Evening Post*, April 3, 1948, cover.

you trick your audience?

Since the essence of my father's painting was to use the picture space as a window onto a world that the audience should believe is the real world, this picture seems to be asking questions about how honest the technique is. Is the artist really playing tricks with us? Since the painting is honestly stating its purpose, the artist is, by implication, sharing with his audience the question of whether his other paintings may not be tricks as well. There is finally another level at which this work is asking a question about the whole nature of realistic painting. To what extent is it really realistic?

Of the several paintings spaced over more than twenty years that ask related questions about the nature of painting and of his own work, the best and virtually last is the *Post* cover *Triple Self-Portrait*, commissioned for the issue that



Triple Self-Portrait, oil on canvas, *Saturday Evening Post*, February 13, 1960, cover.

contained the first installment of his autobiography. *Triple Self-Portrait* is a visualization, through the medium of a self-portrait, of the artist's method of working. In effect, it is a deconstruction of the painter's technique. We see the painter with his back to us, the same pose used in *Deadline*. He is looking into a mirror, where we see his face as he sees it. On the canvas is the image of the face as the painter wants us to see him, holding a pipe at a jaunty angle. There is a sort of progression away from reality from the seated figure to the mirror to the face on the canvas. The portrait on canvas is a manipulated image derived from reality rather than

the reality itself. Attached to the canvas is a page of preliminary sketches and reproductions of self-portraits by Dürer, Rembrandt, Picasso and VanGogh. There are various other details that are apparently from his working space, but which may also be given different interpretations. For example, the frame of the mirror is topped by a symbol of America, an eagle holding a shield with the stars and stripes of the flag on it. The easel is topped by a brass helmet, which looks warlike

but was actually a Paris firemen's helmet fobbed off on him as an antique. A wisp of smoke rises

from the trash bucket. These details may be only part of his normal environment, but the wisp of smoke reminds me that he once caused his studio to burn down by carelessly emptying his pipe on a cushion.

The reproductions pinned to the canvas are all honest self-portraits; that is, it looks as if the artists looked into the mirror and painted what they saw. What are we to presume, then, is the meaning of the three images of the painter, who is clearly looking into the mirror and not painting exactly what he sees? The four reproductions are not models of what he is doing but demonstrations of exactly what he is *not* doing. They clearly demonstrate that the artist is familiar with the tradition of European painting, as well as modernism. Are they meant merely to demonstrate to us the extent to which this realism is a manipulation of reality? Or are

they a suggestion that these other self-portraits may also be manipulations of reality? In any case, they make it clear by way of contrast that the artist is conscious of what he is doing in his three self-images.

The real portrait of the artist is a fourth one, the one we see by analyzing the painting. Here, the viewer sees the artist as someone who accepts that his own self-image is split; he presents his awareness of the tradition—both the past and the present—of his art. Finally, he

What are we to presume, then, is the meaning of the three images of the painter, who is . . . not painting exactly what he sees?

enjoys playing a visual joke by his putting his signature on the canvas within the canvas.

In analyzing my father's paintings about painting, I hope that I have shown that although he is known as the painter of simple, unsophisticated "hometown" America, he was by no means simple and unsophisticated himself. As an artist who worked outside of modernism, he was not unquestioning about the nature of his own work. Artists of simple pictures are not necessarily simple people.

This article has been excerpted from the exhibition catalogue, *Norman Rockwell*, © 1990 Electa, Milano, and reprinted by permission of the author. The exhibition was organized and curated by Judy Goffman Cutler, American Illustrators Gallery, New York City.

Curator's Corner

Phil the Fiddler

Linda Szekely, Assistant Curator

IN THE 1930S, NORMAN Rockwell was commissioned by Heritage Press, a division of George Macy Companies, to illustrate *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. From this very successful and profitable venture, a personal relationship developed between Rockwell and George Macy that led to proposals for additional book projects. Various titles were considered. During 1944, Rockwell and Macy corresponded on the subject of illustrations for Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* and *Little Men*. Other titles also were considered, and a list that included *Rip Van Winkle*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *The Scarlet Letter* and several others was drawn up for Rockwell's review.

It appears that sometime in 1945, Rockwell proposed an idea of a special book just for boys. The book was to be an anthology of single chapters taken from popular boy's fiction. In December 1945, Macy wrote to Rockwell with enthusiasm about the project and scheduled the publication date for Christmas 1947. Rockwell gave Macy a tentative list of his selection of boys' books, and by October of 1946 Wanna Hecker, an editor from Macy's office who was assigned to do the research for *The Norman Rockwell Book for Boys*, had chosen ten chapters



Phil the Fiddler, 11 1/4" x 8 3/8" oil on photograph mounted to paper board. Signed by the artist, Norman Rockwell/to Phil, the fiddler/from/Norm, the Fumbler. Norman Rockwell Museum Collection. Gift of Philip N. Linde.

from boys' fiction. The books were *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *The Story of a Bad Boy*, *Men of Iron*, *Penrod*, *Prince and the Pauper*, *Abe Lincoln Grows Up*, *Toby Tyler*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn* and *The Cherry Tree Story*. Later, when Hecker was able to locate copies in the company's library, *Terry and the Pirates* and *Phil the Fiddler* were added. *Phil the Fiddler* was written by Horatio Alger, Jr. in 1872. It was an attempt to expose and discredit the custom in Italy of selling boys into slavery to be brought to this country as street beggars for their "padrones." Hecker remained hard at work providing Rockwell with reference

material for the illustrations. At Rockwell's request, she sent him pictures of street urchins and a copy of a drawing by Laura Caxton that was used in a book from the New York Public Library's special Theatre Collection. She considered this drawing to be the perfect inspiration for Rockwell's work on "our friend the Fidler [sic]."

From this list of 12 titles, we know that Rockwell prepared drawings and color studies for *Phil the Fiddler* and *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. The characters of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn had already been done for Macy's 1936 Heritage Press edition, and Ichabod Crane, from *The Legend*

of *Sleepy Hollow*, had been illustrated for a possible book on American fictional characters, so they were waiting in the wings. Rockwell never finished painting Phil or Lord Fauntleroy; at some point he turned sour on the single chapter idea. In a 1951 letter from George Macy to Rockwell regarding the use of reproductions of Tom Sawyer as premiums for new Heritage Club members, Macy spoke of his regret in not seeing Rockwell for so long and also his regret that Rockwell had never produced the paintings for the *Book for Boys*. He asked if it were possible for Rockwell to do them then or in the near future. Rockwell's notes for his secretary's reply read, "I certainly admire your patience in waiting. Have put lot of work in NR *Book for Boys*, but could never get sold on it as I don't like books with excerpts."

Rockwell kept in his own collection the large charcoal drawing of *Phil the Fiddler*, which

is now in the museum's Trust collection, but gave the small color study to his Arlington, Vermont friend Philip Linde as a gesture of his gratitude for a drafting job Linde had done for him. Rockwell had selected his Vermont neighbor Dr. Russell as his model for a family doctor for the *Post* series, *Norman Rockwell Visits ...*. Philip Linde was asked to lend a hand in preparing an architectural drawing of Dr. Russell's office. Gene Pelham, Rockwell's photographer, was not able to photograph the room and get the correct perspective; it's lack of depth prevented him from getting far enough away. Linde, an architect, prepared a pencil drawing and took it to Rockwell's studio. Rockwell asked him to ink over the pencil lines so they would be dark enough to be used in his balopticon, the device he used to project an image onto canvas or paper, but Linde preferred to re-draw it in a size that could be

traced directly to the canvas. Rockwell wanted to pay Linde more than the agreed upon fee for the extra work but Linde refused. Rockwell asked if Linde had any of his work. Linde replied that he did not, whereupon Rockwell went up to his balcony and, according to Linde, "let out a whoop." He came down with a small color study for *Phil the Fiddler* and, laughing to himself, inscribed "to Phil, the Fiddler from Norm the Fumbler" beneath his painted signature.

Mr. Linde has honored the museum with his donation of the painting. A copy of the book *Phil the Fiddler*, copies of the architectural drawing of Dr. Russell's office, and related prints and news clips accompany the gift. This color study is a fine addition to the museum's collections of original artwork, and enhances our ability to interpret Rockwell's artistic process. We are very grateful to Philip Linde for his generosity.

Norman Rockwell Visits a Family Doctor, oil on canvas, *Saturday Evening Post*, April 12, 1947, story illustration.



In Celebrated Company

Linda Szekely, Assistant Curator

ON MAY 3RD, THE MUSEUM will present a gallery of photographs from the Norman Rockwell archives that picture Norman Rockwell with celebrities of the twentieth century. The viewer of this exhibition may find that his impression of Norman Rockwell changes after having seen Rockwell in the situations and with the people in these photos. The variety of social niches of the people in the photos appears as a world in which Rockwell was quite comfortable. Looking at Rockwell joking with Lyndon Johnson in the Oval office for instance, or play-acting in Denver with Ann-Margret, on the movie set of *Stagecoach*,

suddenly changes your perception of him. Conversely, seeing John Wayne or Frank Sinatra in Rockwell's little studio adds a dimension of warmth and quiet intimacy to the private lives of these super-stars.

If a celebrity is someone who is known for being known, then Norman Rockwell achieved celebrity status in the late 1920s when he could be seen on the pages of national magazines endorsing products such as Mennen Shaving Cream and Wallace silver. His career as a *Saturday Evening Post* cover artist had brought him an extremely high measure of visibility. This was a pre-television era when the work of

magazine illustrators was seen in most American households, and the illustrators themselves became celebrities. In more recent years, Rockwell has become one of a handful of artists whose name is used as an adjective. An image that evokes emotions of sentiment, reverence or poignancy is now described as Rockwellian in nature, no matter who the artist or photographer is. Whether or not this is a dubious distinction remains to be decided. Because of his widespread fame in this country, Rockwell often took his holidays in Europe or the Caribbean to avoid recognition and the inevitable civic award or symbolic city key. His fame was

Frank Sinatra comes to Norman Rockwell's Stockbridge studio to sit for his portrait.



Photo by Louie Lamone.

John Wayne looks dubious as Norman Rockwell holds the six-shooter.

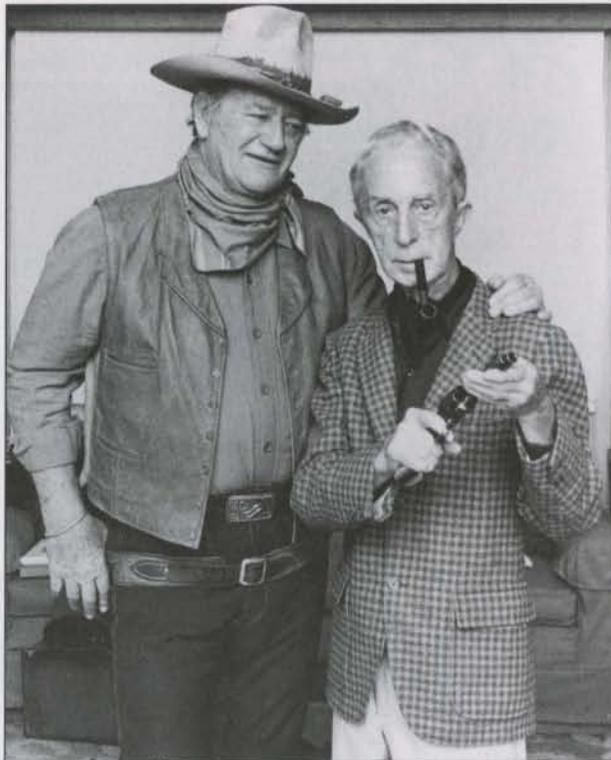


Photo by Louie Lamone.

Norman Rockwell tells *Jim Henry*

“I can put more *chuckles* in my pictures
when I’ve had this **COOL** shave”



MENNEN MENTHOL-ICED SHAVING CREAM

Norman Rockwell's status as a celebrity is evident in this 1929 advertisement that appeared in both *The Saturday Evening Post* and *The American Magazine*.

also an entrée into a variety of social strata that brought him numerous invitations to talk shows, speaking engagements, and into the privileged position of painting the portraits of Presidents, heads of state, company CEO's, scientists, humanitarians, movie actors, and the great American hero of the 1960s—the astronaut. In his own milieu of American illustration, Rockwell was so popular that when he gave a lecture at the Society of Illustrators in New York City, the front rows were quickly filled by the veteran illustrators before the younger students could grab seats. Rockwell was the first inductee into the Society of Illustrators Hall of Fame; a distinction nonpareil in a field whose honorees consist of Howard Pyle, Maxfield Parrish, and Joseph Christian Leyendecker.

The Norman Rockwell persona as we know it today has been formed more by his role in the last half of his life, the years spent in rural New England, and by his depictions of that type of small town life. What has been forgotten, or perhaps was never really known, is the far from simple life he led as a young man in New York and New Rochelle. In the 1920s, Rockwell was a successful cover artist and illustrator living and working in what had become a haven of top-notch illustrators, the New York suburb of New Rochelle. With

its accessibility to magazine and book publishers, the Society of Illustrators and the Salamagundi Club (an artists' association), Manhattan was a nearby escape for Rockwell. He had an apartment at the Hotel des Artistes during the end of his first marriage and, after his marriage to Mary, kept it for awhile so that they would have it for their trips to the city.

In 1930, *American Magazine* described Rockwell as living “the life of the typical city man. He has ridden up and down in express elevators in tall buildings [pretend it's 1930 to get the impact of this], he has crushed his way into the subway, he has dined and danced to the music of the greatest jazz bands. His

clothes are made by a Fifth Avenue tailor and he wears a silk hat when he goes to the opera. He likes the newest plays and reads the newest books. Rockwell has never even seen a slippery slide at a swimmin' hole. He has never harnessed up a horse and buggy, nor milked a cow, nor picked blackberries, nor carried in an armful of wood through the snow.”*

Rockwell was never a country bumpkin despite the fact that, in later years, his public image began to parallel his bucolic scenes of blacksmiths and fishermen and fathers who dragged home the Christmas

**American Magazine*, November, 1930, “People We All Like,” by Jerome Beatty.



tree with their sons or shared a tête-à-tête about the facts of life. That he could, on canvas, capture experiences so disparate and foreign to his own, was part of his genius. *Post* editor Ben Hibbs once said of Rockwell, “Norman is about as naive as Nikita Khrushchev.” This was a man who felt perfectly comfortable halting the proceedings of a poetry class while he phoned Robert Frost to ask him just what it was that he meant by a certain line in a poem. This was a man to whom the famous came to have their portraits painted. That was Rockwell’s

Norman Rockwell decorates the 89th birthday cake of Anna Mary Robertson—Grandma Moses. Below, Rockwell paints Jack Benny for the March 2, 1963 *Saturday Evening Post* cover. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Carle.

rule. He was much too busy to travel to people who wanted their portraits done; they had to visit his studio unless they happened to be the President or the presidential candidate.

Most of the photographs in the exhibition are the actual archival photos, made by professional and amateur photographers, that were saved over the years by Norman Rockwell and kept in his files. However, a few enlargements, which have been made from originals that are too small for public viewing, are included. The photos are mostly candid in the sense of being unofficial, but as Rockwell was quite a ham when it came to being photographed, you really couldn’t call them unposed.

Critics have carved a niche for Rockwell as the painter of the common man, and this is partly correct. However, as we approach the next millennium, it is a good time to review and remember the connections between Rockwell the illustrator and those personalities that helped to shape American culture, popular and political, in the twentieth century. In doing so, we gain a greater understanding and clearer picture of the man whose artistic talent, liberal attitudes, and genuine interest in and appreciation of people brought him the friendship of people from all of society’s strata—from heads of state to Vermont dairy farmers.



Watch Your Collection Grow with an April Shower

Jo Ann Losinger, Director of Marketing

PICTURE YOURSELF AS A budding artist, perched on a scenic hillside with your portable easel and travel paint box. Dressed in beret and smock, there you are capturing the view on canvas. Then boom! The weather turns to thunder and rain and the scene resembles *Wet Paint*, Norman Rockwell's version of an April shower.

According to Linda Szekely, Assistant Curator at the Norman Rockwell Museum, Norman

Rockwell would never have been in this situation himself. He rarely painted *en plein air* (in the open air), and most likely never had to escape from an April shower. The practice of *plein air* painting was introduced in the early 18th century, and was later embraced with enthusiasm by the Impressionists. This April 12, 1930 *Saturday Evening Post* cover could be considered one of Mr.



Wet Paint, Saturday Evening Post, April 12, 1930, cover, signed collotype, 24" x 30".

Rockwell's private-joke paintings. Collectors of prints signed by Norman Rockwell may purchase *Wet Paint* and other images in the dry comfort of their homes by calling the Museum Store: 1-800-742-9450.

The purchase of signed prints supports the museum's endowment fund.

ARTIST
Norman Rockwell
SAYS

"Growing numbers of my guests appreciate a chance to say, 'I'll take WINE'"

One of America's foremost artists, Norman Rockwell is known to millions in the realm of brilliant magazine covers and illustrations. At his home in New Rochelle, N.Y., Mr. Rockwell plays host to many well-known people. He notes that a growing number of them now prefer wine.

It's Easy to be a Wine Expert

This advertisement, showing Norman Rockwell as the spokesperson for the wine growers of California, Wine Advisory Board, appeared in *Life Magazine*, 1940. A tear sheet of the ad, a donation of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Rattner, will be in the silent auction.

Savor and Sip at the NRM!

IT IS NOT TOO EARLY TO save this date, *October 18, 1997*, for the Norman Rockwell Museum Benefit—The Great Wine Auction! Plans are in the works for a festive event celebrating fall harvest and benefiting the museum's Art Acquisition Fund. Since it will still be fall foliage season in the Berkshires, make reservations early if you plan on spending an overnight in the region. Invitations to follow this summer. For further information call 413-298-4120. Cheers!

It's a Family Affair

Melinda Georgeson, *Manager of Youth Services*

OFTEN, WHEN ONE OF our museum workshops ends and the parent announces that it is time to leave, the answer to, "Are you ready? It's time to go," is, "Not yet. We want to stay."

Invariably, a surprised parent remarks, "They are having such a good time, what did you do to get them so motivated to draw? These are teenagers! Do you know how rare this is?"

The many families that visit us represent the fastest growing group of Norman Rockwell Museum visitors. Increasingly, young and old alike are looking for "family centered" experiences that encourage sharing, active involvement, and FUN! Weekend groups often consist of two to three generations—babies, young children, teens, parents, cousins, grandparents

and friends. In response to the special interests of families, staff have created new ways of inviting everyone to look with the eyes of children, and discover both the new and the familiar in the art of Norman Rockwell.

To inspire independent investigation in the galleries, pedestals placed beneath selected images present extended information and ways of looking at the pictures. Comment books and "question" pedestals invite personal responses from visitors of all ages. Discussion brochures for families, "Kid Cards," are organized by themes and objects that appeal to children. Ever ready, our knowledgeable museum guides help families extend their museum experience through observations, comparisons, and engaging questions.

It's not unusual, after lengthy discussions with a guide, to find families engaged in active conversation with each other about what they are seeing in the pictures.

At the Norman Rockwell Museum, families enjoy programs and opportunities that explore the creative process. Monthly "Family Times" involve people in activities designed to stimulate individual expression through making art or exploring themes such as shapes or colors found in the art. School vacation week workshops allow children to investigate certain techniques or mediums. These experiences range from painting self-portraits in acrylics to exploring the specialized aura of Japanese sumi-e ink, from illustrating a story in colored earthenware



Right, Flowers, sunshine and a happy face express a mood of joy in this *original* watercolor! Far right, *Family Time* is Fun Time as evidenced by the scene from an outdoor multimedia class.



clay to investigating the printmaking process. With all of this year-round action at the museum, it is no wonder that new family memberships have increased by 24% in 1996!

A very special exhibition called *Eye Opener*, on view in the Stockbridge Room from March 8-April 27, is one of our current museum experiments. *Eye Opener* reflects the museum's commitment to

becoming a center for learning, and provides visitors with "hands-on" and "brains-on" activities that teach observation and perception skills. This exhibit probes into works from the museum's permanent collection, through the use of prints and reproductions, in an informal and fun environment. Colorful tables and chairs invite visitors to interpret paintings. Entertaining self-guided activi-

ties help everyone become art explorers by finding clues, answering questions and drawing together.

We hope that you will have the chance to join some of these programs as the Norman Rockwell Museum offers families something special. The rewards are seen in appreciative smiles and in moments of shared discovery that might inspire a relationship to last a lifetime.

Try This!

Try these activities taken from the *Eye Opener* exhibit. Find a Rockwell image that you like, or use this detail of *Stockbridge Main Street at Christmas*. Answer as many of the following questions as you can about that painting.

IMAGINE

Imagine what each character might be saying. Are the people in the picture friends, family, or strangers? What details are shown that make you think this?

Imagine how different this picture might be if it were painted today. What would be included and what would be left out?

AS IF

Approach the picture as if you were present in the scene.

What different sounds might you be able to hear? What kinds of smells would you be able to smell there? Or choose the other senses of touch or taste, and describe how they might be present in the scene. Remember, look for the details in the painting to help you.

RHYTHMS

Often, a painting will contain a rhythm of repeated shapes or repeated colors.

An example of this can be seen in Rockwell's painting *The Choirboy* (see page 3). What geometric shapes are repeated in the picture? Do you see any shapes from nature?



Museum Mourns Loss of Two Friends

THE NORMAN ROCKWELL Museum community was saddened recently by the death of two long-time friends and supporters of the museum—Pat Deely (Mrs. James S.) and Dot Perkins (Mrs. George F.).

Museum director Laurie Norton Moffatt commented, "We see the passing of history with the loss of two of the museum's greatest champions. However, the spirit and commitment Pat and Dot brought to the museum lives on through the many people whom they touched and to whom they brought great joy. Septuagenarian and octogenarian respectively, Pat and Dot were among the youngest-at-heart people I

know. Both of them were literally hands-on people. Before we moved Norman Rockwell's studio to Linwood in 1986, Dot plunged in and helped pack up and then reinstall all the objects and artifacts. I remember that in 1992 Pat and a few other volunteers personally put in place the initial plantings around the studio. Both of them loved to entertain, and they held many parties to encourage others to support the museum. As members of the Board of Trustees and as friends, Pat and Dot gave their all to a generation of museum staff members. We will miss their boundless energies and enthusiasm."



Dot Perkins, *d. January 11, 1997*, trustee of the Old Corner House and of the Norman Rockwell Museum, was an active volunteer and supporter.



Pat Deely, *d. December 15, 1996*, one of the original founders of the museum at the Old Corner House, was a supporter and Trustee of the museum from 1967.

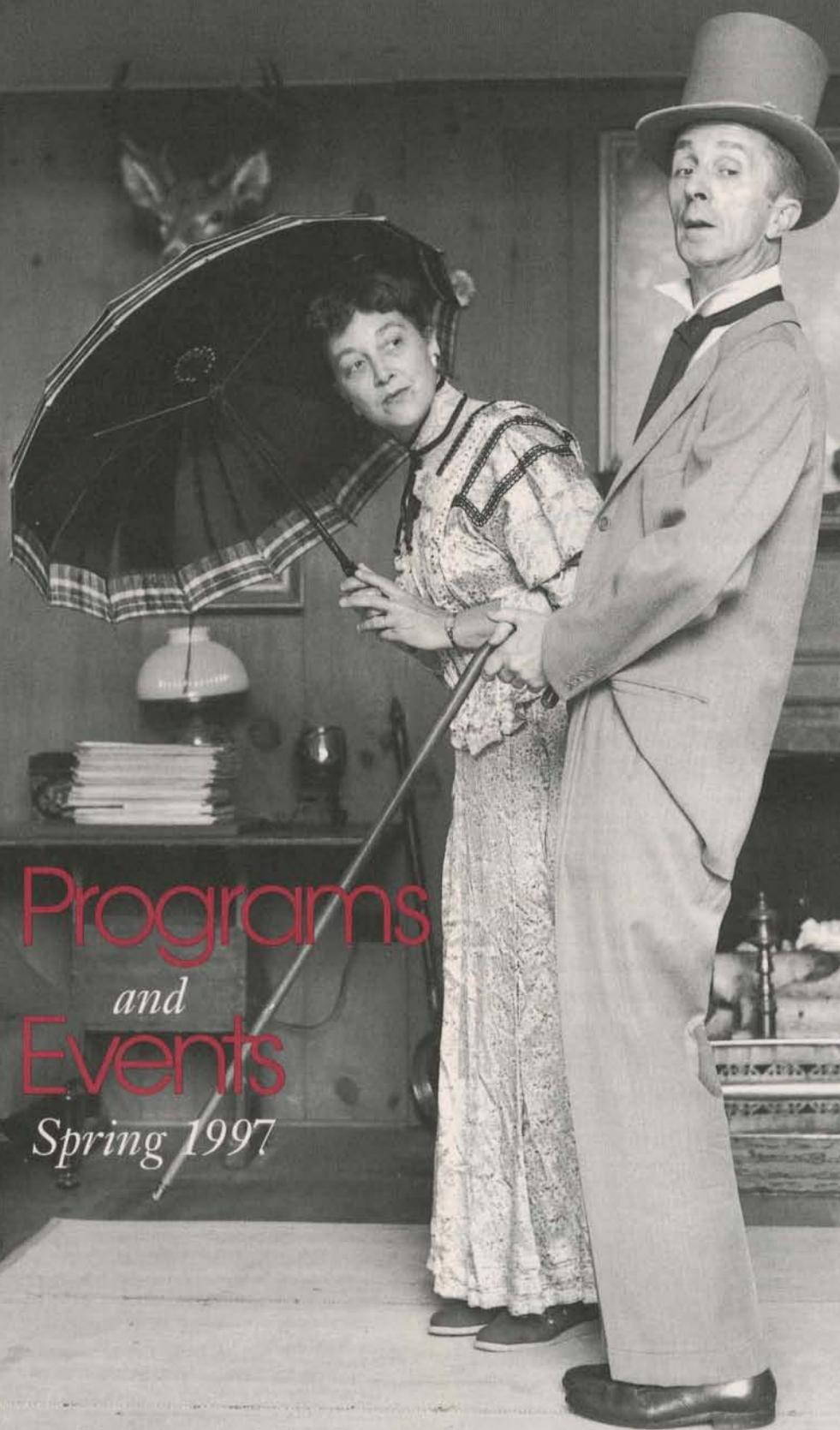
The
Norman
Rockwell
Museum
at Stockbridge

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The Norman Rockwell Museum *at Stockbridge*



Programs
and
Events
Spring 1997

ANCHUTIS, 1997

The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge

For Adults

Saturday, April 5, 9 am to 4 pm

SPECIAL SEMINAR

American Icons: Creating a National Identity

Enjoy an invigorating day of tours and talks that explores the nature of American self-definition through the visual imagery of the 19th and 20th centuries. Designed in conjunction with our special exhibition, *Currier & Ives: Printmakers to the American People*, the program examines aspects of fine and commercial art.

Speakers include Steven Miller, Executive Director of the Bennington Museum; Jan Cohn, Professor of American Literature and American Studies at Trinity College; and Gretchen Sullivan Sorin, Director of the Cooperstown Graduate Program of SUNY Oneonta. \$65, \$58 members, lunch available at \$5. Professional development credits are available.

Sunday, April 6, 3 pm

GALLERY TALK

Theme and Variation: Looking at Currier & Ives

Take a fascinating look at the famous lithography firm and its popular variations on the theme of 19th-century American life, with museum guide Lillian Smith. Free with museum admission.

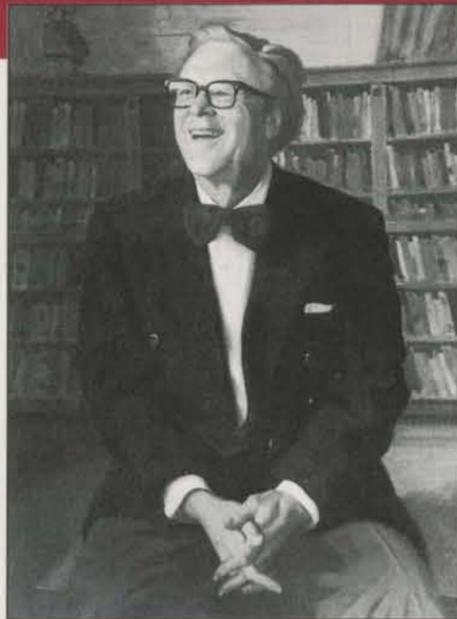
Saturdays, April 12, 19 & 26, 10 am to 4 pm

ADULT ART WORKSHOP

The Drawn and Painted Portrait

Artist/educator Tom Orlando will inspire students to take a thinking approach to the drawn and painted head. Through observation of a live model, the class stresses the careful analysis of value, shape and color and encourages a greater clarity of vision and accuracy of portrayal. Individual and group critiques will offer positive perspectives for personal growth. Appropriate for all levels of experience. A materials list will be provided.

Award-winning artist Tom Orlando has been an Associate Professor of Drawing and Painting at Pratt/Manhattan for twenty eight years. His work is included in many public and private collections, and he currently works from his studio in Sheffield, MA. \$150; \$135 members.



Portrait of Sam Levenson, American Humorist and Writer, by Tom Orlando. *The Drawn and Painted Portrait*, April 12, 19, & 26.

Saturday, April 12, 3 pm

TEA & TALK

Currier & Ives:

American Imagemakers

The American printmaking firm of Currier & Ives is often considered the country's best-known commercial creators and publishers of images for the general public. Join Steven Miller for this fascinating overview of the firm's history and broad range of imagery. The technology involved in producing the prints, the firm's ingenious marketing techniques, the artists employed by the company, and the current collectibility of the prints also will be discussed.

Steven Miller is the Executive Director of the Bennington Museum in Vermont. Enjoy this feast for body and soul. \$12, \$10 members.

Sunday, April 20, 3 pm

GALLERY TALK

An Eye on the Times

For any commercial artist, understanding one's audience, responding to opportunities and providing timely, desirable images is imperative. Explore what the images of Currier & Ives and Norman Rockwell reveal about consumer tastes of their day, with museum guide George Church. Free with museum admission.

Saturday, May 3, 12 pm to 5 pm

SPECIAL OPEN HOUSE

Berkshire County Day

Join us for this activity-filled Rockwell celebration! Meet the artist's models, and enjoy gallery talks, panel discussions and art activities that highlight aspects of his life and art. Free with museum admission. Berkshire County residents free.

Saturday, May 3

EXHIBITION OPENING

In Celebrated Company

Sunday, May 4, 3 pm

GALLERY TALK

Taking Art Apart

Take a revealing look at the artistic underpinnings of Norman Rockwell's images, and the visual elements that make his works successful images of communication. Free with museum admission.

Sunday, May 11, 11 am

SPECIAL MOTHER'S DAY

BRUNCH/PERFORMANCE

Artful Lives: Three Women Artists

Spend Mothers' Day morning with Georgia O'Keeffe, Frida Kahlo and Mary Cassatt!

Highly acclaimed for her sharply-etched theatrical depiction's of historical figures, actress Robin Lane performs this insightful one-woman dramatization of the lives of three extraordinary women artists. Enjoy this feast for body and soul.

\$15, \$12 members and mothers.

May 14, All Day

SPECIAL BUS TOUR

The Gilded Age: Nineteenth Century Life Remembered

Step back in time and enjoy this fascinating glimpse into nineteenth century American life! In honor of Historic Preservation Week, Chesterwood, The Trustees of Reservations and The Norman Rockwell Museum will host a full-day bus tour



Robin Lane, *Artful Lives: Three Women Artists*, May 11.

that begins with a private tour of our *Currier and Ives* exhibition. After an in-depth look at the astonishing growth in material comforts, leisure time and technological innovations of the age, board a coach to Connecticut to see the legacies of Hartford's "gilded age" at the Mark Twain House and the Wadsworth Atheneum. Call 413-298-4100 x220 for further information.

Saturday, May 17, 3 pm

TEA & TALK

Berkshire Splendor: The Great Estates of the Berkshires

Join us for tea and treats, and enjoy this fascinating look at life in the country cottages of the Berkshires—past, present and future. Susan Frisch Lehrer highlights the architecture and interior decoration of the Berkshire's splendid mansions, and introduce us to the artists who designed them and the families who inhabited them.

Susan Frisch Lehrer is the Manager of Education and Visitor Services at Chesterwood, a museum property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. \$12, \$10 members.

Sunday, May 18, 3 pm

GALLERY TALK

My Best Studio Yet

Stroll our scenic grounds with Abigail Diamant, Assistant Manager of Visitor Services and Programs and discover more about Norman Rockwell's life as a working artist in his "best studio yet," which was relocated to the museum site. Free with museum admission.

Saturday, May 24, 5:30 pm

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

Victorian Voices:

Songs of Victorian America

With a refreshing mix of reverence and humor, Anabel Graetz and Deborah Goss of The Proper Ladies will serenade us with songs and parlor ballads of nineteenth century America, bringing the images in our Currier & Ives exhibition to life. In both image and song, subjects such as temperance, western expansion, industrialization, and the beauty of the American landscape are explored. Enjoy recitations and descriptions of the period, and join in the chorus of melodies that should never be forgotten. Refreshments with the performers will follow. \$15, \$12 members.

Sunday, June 1, 3 pm

GALLERY TALK

Berkshire Vistas

Take in the view with Abigail Diamant, Assistant Manager of Visitor Services and Programs, as she traces the history of the museum's beautiful site and tours the outdoor sculpture of Peter Rockwell. Free with museum admission.



The Proper Ladies, *Victorian Voices*, May 24.

Sunday, June 8, 11 am

INSIGHTS: TALK & BRUNCH

Family Ties: Rockwell's Art for Family, Friends and Fun

Learn more about the man behind the art as Assistant Curator Linda Szekely explores the personal life of the artist through images of family members, travel sketches and art made for friends. She will also discuss the private collection that Norman Rockwell retained because of its personal significance. Enjoy this feast for body and mind. \$15, \$12 members.

Saturday, June 14, 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm

MEMBERS EXHIBITION OPENING

Family Ties: Rockwell's Art for Family, Friends and Fun

Sunday, June 15, 3 pm

GALLERY TALK

For Keeps

As an illustrator, Norman Rockwell appreciated and was inspired by the work of many artists. Discover the images by other artists that Rockwell collected over the years, and learn more about their creators. With museum guide Mary England. Free with museum admission.

Sunday, June 29 at 7:00am

BIRDING AT THE

NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM

Join Ginnie Ramsay of the Hoffman Bird Club on this enjoyable watch for feathered friends that reside on museum grounds. Call Ms. Ramsay at 413-637-0231 for details.

Exhibitions

Through April 27

EYE OPENER

An interactive exhibition that encourages visitors of all ages to increase their observation and perceptual skills through Norman Rockwell's images.

Through May 26

CURRIER AND IVES, PRINTMAKERS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE:

Highlights from the Collections of the Museum of the City of New York

An exhibit of seventy-nine selected works that illustrate the breadth of subjects depicted by the Currier and Ives firm during its seventy year existence.

May 3 through October 26

IN CELEBRATED COMPANY

A selection of photographs from Norman Rockwell's personal archive featuring the illustrator in the company of celebrated figures from the worlds of entertainment, politics and art.

June 7 through October 26

FAMILY TIES: ROCKWELL'S ART FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND FUN

An exhibition that examines aspects of the artist's personal life through images of family members, travel destinations, and art created for friends.

Permanent Exhibits

MY ADVENTURES AS AN ILLUSTRATOR
MIRROR ON AMERICA
MY BEST STUDIO YET

For Children & Families



Making one's mark.

Saturday, April 19, 10 am to 2 pm

FAMILY TIME

Eye Opener

Think, write and draw together as a family by discovering interesting aspects of Rockwell's art in our experimental learning center. Children \$2, ages 5 and under free, half price museum admission for adults with children.

Monday, April 21, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

TECHNIQUES

On the Border

Explore printing techniques with found objects, and create border designs for writing paper, book covers, gift paper and more! For ages 8 and up. \$10, \$8 members, includes museum admissions.

Tuesday, April 22, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

TECHNIQUES

What a Relief!

Continue the exploration of printing processes by making relief prints and composing an imaginative scene. Sculpting tools will be used to carve into Styrofoam to make templates to print. For ages 8 and up. \$10, \$8 members, includes museum admission.

Wednesday, April 23, 11am to 12 noon

IN THE STUDIO CLASSROOM

The Wild World of Print Making

Press, rub, and roll! Printing techniques of many kinds will be explained in this lively and colorful class for children ages 4 and up. Please wear clothing appropriate for an active art class. \$10, \$8 members, includes museum admission.

Thursday, April 24, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

TECHNIQUES

Monoprints

Express yourself! Try your hand at the intriguing technique of making monoprints. Design posters to decorate your walls or to give as gifts! For ages 8 and up. \$10, \$8 members, includes museum admission.

Friday, April 25, 11am to 12 noon

IN THE STUDIO CLASSROOM

Bugs, Bugs, Bugs

Hear an original children's tale about the insect world, and create some fun toys to play with including bug eyes and dragonflies. For ages 4 and up. \$10, \$8 members, includes museum admission

Saturday, May 17, 10 am to 2 pm

FAMILY TIME

Balloon People

Silly, fun and full of "hot air," these balloon people will inspire playful interaction among your family! Simply designed cardboard shoes allow these characters to always land on their feet. Children \$2, ages 5 and under free, half price museum admission for adults with children.

Saturday, June 21, 10 am to 2 pm

FAMILY TIME

Circus Friends

Rockwell created the colorful world of the circus in his painting called *Checkers*. Design your own scene for "under the big top," and share your imaginative circus world with your family! Children \$2, ages 5 and under free, half price museum admission for adults with children.

This organization is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency that supports public programs in the arts, humanities, and sciences.

Please call (413) 298-4100 ext. 220 for reservations or information about programs and exhibitions. Pre-registration for all programs is requested, and includes museum admission. All programs take place at the Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, Route 183, Stockbridge, MA 01262. Museum members receive special program discounts and more! For membership information, please call (413) 298-4100 ext. 234.

Cover Photo Captions and Credits:

Norman and Mary Rockwell posing in preparatory photo for *The Street Was Never the Same Again*, detail, circa 1952. Gene Pelham, photographer.

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Programs and Events Spring 1997

Program Registration Form

Name	_____	Number of Reservations	_____
Address	_____	Number of Reservations	_____
Phone	_____	Are You a Member?	_____
Program Title	_____	Amount Enclosed	_____
Program Date	_____	Child/Teen Registrant's age(s)	_____
Program Title	_____	Check	_____
Program Date	_____	Credit Card #	_____
Signature	_____	exp. date	_____