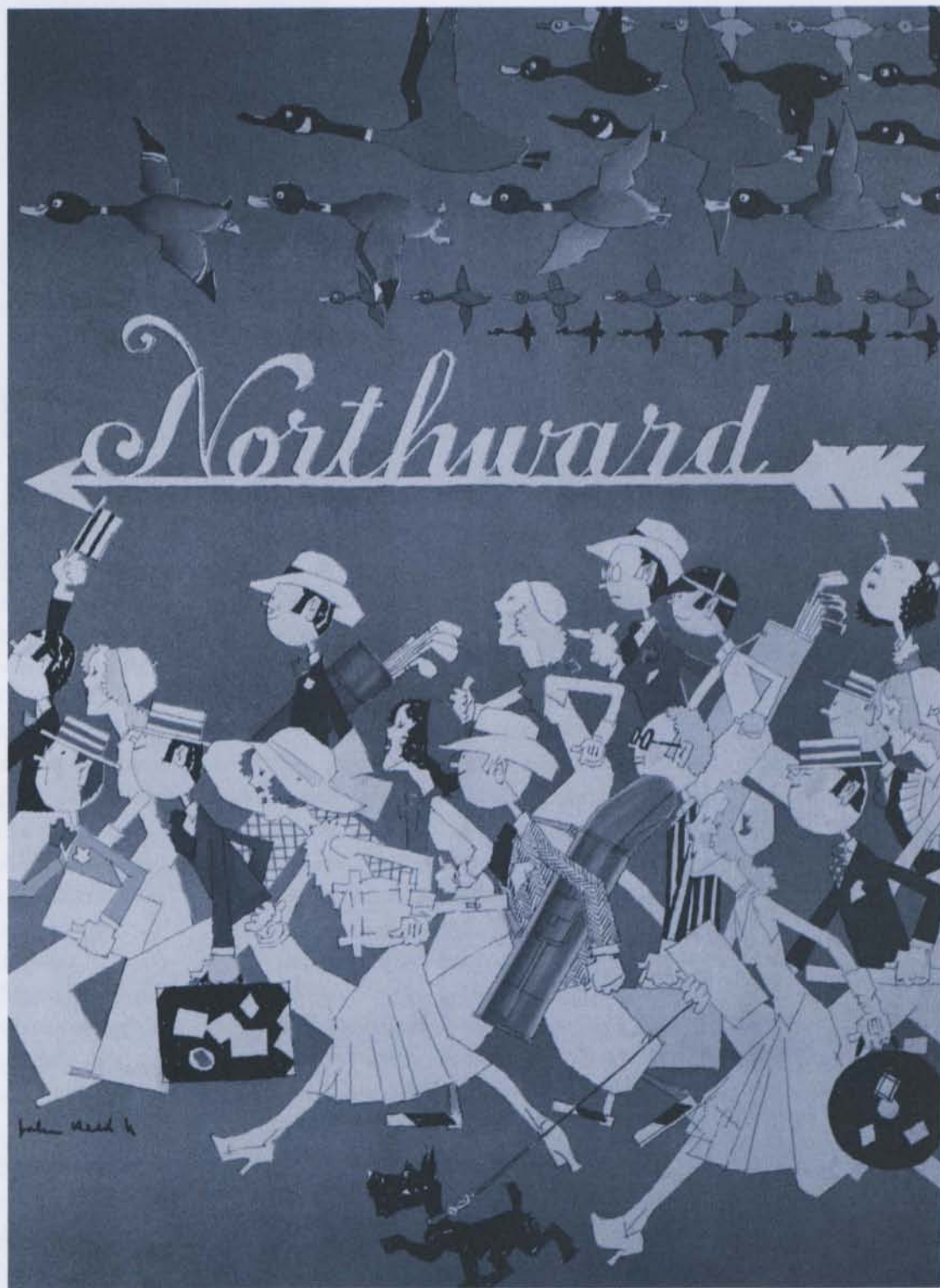


The Portfolio

Volume 19
Issue 2 2002

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The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge



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The Portfolio

Volume 19, Issue 2, 2002

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Cover: *Northward*, John Held, Jr., lithograph on paper, travel poster, The New Haven Railroad. ©1935. Reproduced with permission of Illustration House, New York City, and the estate of Margaret Held.



The Norman Rockwell Museum is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency that supports public programs in the arts, humanities, and sciences.

Berger Funds is proud to be a supporter of keeping the arts alive and well in the Berkshires.

From the Director

I am pleased to announce the formation of the Norman Rockwell Museum National Council, upon the conclusion of our national tour, *Pictures for the American People*. The Council will provide a forum for the Museum's national patrons and collectors, who will serve as ambassadors for the Museum across the nation.

The Board of Trustees has nominated a select group of friends and supporters to join us in the stewardship of our mission. The Council is advisory to and complements the work of Norman Rockwell Museum Trustees and staff. Council members will provide national outreach and offer advice in strategic planning, program initiatives and endowment and art acquisition in support of the Museum's goals. They will host and participate in occasional regional gatherings and conversations with Trustees, members and senior Museum staff. Council members will meet annually in Stockbridge to learn about Museum programs and exhibitions, share ideas about illustration and Norman Rockwell.

Our first juried sculpture exhibition held this spring was a great success. *New Digs for the Dog: Build a Better Dog House for Snoopy*, commenced with a day-long family event sponsored by Berkshire Gas, Greylock Credit Union, and Perri and Patricia Petricca. Activities included a dog show, a Snoopy look-alike contest and silent auction of the more than 50 full-sized and miniature doghouse sculptures that graced the lawns and galleries. Warm thanks to the judges Paul Ivory, former director of Chesterwood, artist Jarvis Rockwell, and Deborah Solomon, *New York Times* art critic and biographer, for their work in jurying the sculpture show.

A very special summer is unfolding at the museum in Stockbridge. For the first time,

the museum will offer a sampler of foods to museum visitors at our new Terrace Cafe during the summer and fall. Sip a refreshing iced tea and enjoy the view after your visit to our wonderful summer exhibitions. We thank the Town of Stockbridge Board of Selectmen and the Red Lion Inn for being our partner in offering hospitality to our visitors.

As part of the Berkshire County-wide arts festival, the Vienna Project, the museum opened Viennese illustrator Lisbeth Zwerger's *Land of Oz* with a Viennese coffee house, remarks by Dr. Harald Miltner, Austrian Consul General from New York, and beautiful floral displays by the Berkshire District Garden Clubs. This exhibition complements *Toast of the Town: Norman Rockwell and the Artists of New Rochelle*, and *John Held, Jr. and the Jazz Age*, our summer exhibits. Members danced to music of the Roaring Twenties in costume on the Museum terrace in early June. We thank Tom and Carol McCann and two very generous members who wish to remain anonymous for sponsoring this summer's offerings.

I close with thanks to a very special museum volunteer, Cris Raymond, who for more than 10 years has assisted the Museum as editor of the *Portfolio*. She has also made an important contribution to the organization of the Norman Rockwell archives. Her work has been a labor of love and we will miss her. We wish you all the best Cris!

I hope to see you in Stockbridge this summer!

Laurie Norton Moffatt



Current & Upcoming Exhibitions



Art Critic, Norman Rockwell, oil on canvas, *Saturday Evening Post*. © 1955 SEPS: Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN.

Return of the Permanent Collection

Following the closing of the enormously successful national tour, *Pictures for the American People*, the Museum is celebrating the reinstallation of its Norman Rockwell permanent collection. Favorites such as *Triple Self-Portrait*, *The Art Critic*, *Girl at Mirror* and the *Four Freedoms* paintings have returned to the Museum.

Toast of the Town:

Norman Rockwell and the Artists of New Rochelle

During the 1920s and 1930s, New Rochelle attracted many of the nation's leading illustrators, who were drawn to the town's proximity to the hustle and bustle of that mecca for artists—Manhattan. Such artists as J.C. and F.X. Leyendecker, C. Coles Phillips, Walter Beach Humphrey, Clare Briggs, Clyde Forsythe, Frederic Remington, Worth Brehm and Edward Penfield lived in the community. The works of Rockwell and his artist neighbors are presented in this exhibition, which runs through October 27.

John Held, Jr. and the Jazz Age

Journey back to the days of flappers, jazz bands and bathtub gin! More than any other artist of his time, John Held, Jr. expressed in his paintings the brash spirit of the Roaring Twenties. His highly stylized drawings perfectly matched the aesthetics of the era, and his work was in high demand by the publications of the day. This exhibition examines Held's artistic evolution through original drawings and paintings, sculpture, artifacts and archival photographs. Discover why John Held, Jr. was considered the "the cat's meow" during the Jazz Age! This exhibition is on view through September 8.



Lisbeth Zwerger's Land of Oz

June 29, 2002–Sept. 2, 2002

Explore the art and process of renowned Austrian children's book illustrator Lisbeth Zwerger in these delightful new illustrations of L. Frank Baum's classic tale, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

© 1996 by Michael Neugebauer, Verlag AG, Gossau Zurich, Switzerland.

Dancing by the Light of the Moon:

The Art of Fred Marcellino

Nov. 9, 2002–Jan. 26, 2003

See how the illustrator of such classics as *Puss in Boots* permanently changed the look and feel of book covers and jackets for children's books and adult fiction.

Puss from *Puss in Boots* © 1990 Fred Marcellino.



The Berenstain Bears Celebrate:

The Art of Stan and Jan Berenstain

Feb. 8, 2003–May 27, 2003

Enjoy the art of one of the most successful author/illustrator teams in publishing history, from early magazine covers to their popular family of cartoon bears.

John Held, Jr. ~ Irreverent

Walt Reed, founder of Illustration House and guest curator of *John Held, Jr. and the Jazz Age*



The Adventures of Miss Cella Lloyd, pen and ink wash on board. ©1926, McClure's magazine, reproduced with permission of Illustration House, New York City, and the estate of Margaret Held.

John Held, Jr. (1889–1958) was a complete artist with talents in many directions, all of which he employed at various times in his long career. Born in Salt Lake City, of Mormon parentage, he drew from early childhood and was given some basic art instruction by the sculptor Mahonri Young (grandson of the Mormon leader Brigham Young). Held's interests, however, were entirely secular. He landed a job as a sports cartoonist on the *Salt Lake City Tribune*, where he worked alongside cub reporter Harold Ross, the future founder of *The New Yorker* magazine. Held married the newspaper's pretty society editor and together they soon left for fame and fortune in the big city, arriving in New York in 1910.

Fame was quite a while coming. Held had not yet developed an individual

artistic style, and he wasn't able to sell his gags to the humor magazine he had set his sights on, so he had to settle for any kind of art job he could find. His first employment was with the Collier's Street Railway Advertising Company, where he lettered streetcar cards. After gaining more experience, he graduated to making advertising ads and posters for the John Wanamaker department store, where he stayed for a year and a half.

He also kept submitting gag cartoons, but was still being rejected with monotonous regularity. Finally, using the stratagem of trading on his wife's good looks, he signed his drawings "Myrtle" Held, and she visited the art editors in person to try to sell the pictures. Her charm worked. By 1916, John, as Myrtle, was selling to *Vanity Fair*, *Life*, *Judge* and other top magazines.

The First World War interrupted all this. John joined the Navy and was assigned to intelligence, where he employed his artistic abilities. Sent to Central America, ostensibly as a civilian working for the Carnegie Institute making copies of Mayan ruins, John's real work was to make maps and spy on nearby German military installations and U-boat activities. Enduring the heat, mosquitoes and sand fleas, he also managed to paint many watercolors of the tropic sites for himself.

Separated from his wife, and a post-war civilian again, John was ready to reclaim his own artistic name. He also was armed with a new authority in his drawing and a new subject. While he did not exactly invent the "Flapper," he recognized the potential attraction of the post-war emancipated woman and evolved the perfect style to interpret and magnify her. His long-legged, short-skirted, flat-bosomed, bobbed-hair heroines were provocative and irreverent. The magazines and public could not get enough of them. Although flappers and their "Joe Prep" consorts were presented as hedonistic simpletons, they provided the perfect foil to be spoofed. Held was enough older than his subjects that he could see their foibles more objectively than they could see themselves. What was satire to him became reality to them.

Not that he was apart from the twenties mania himself. It was a boom time. He was making a lot of

Chronicler of the Jazz Age

money—advertisers and publishers competed for his talents with open checkbooks. He bought a large farm in Connecticut that he could only manage part-time, had a beach house in Florida that he seldom visited and a handsome New York penthouse studio and apartment. Held's pictures of flappers were used everywhere—on magazine covers, for story illustrations, gag cartoons, cocktail glasses, card games and jigsaw puzzles; they advertised products from roller bearings to clothing dyes. At the same time, Held was publishing a series of linoleum block prints that mimicked the crude wood engravings of the old *Police Gazette* and ridiculed the Victorian era. These were targeted for *The New Yorker* magazine at the request of his old friend Harold Ross. Held was a regular judge at Miss America beauty contests. He was also active in the theater. He designed the sets and costumes for Broadway plays and revues in 1925 and 1926, as well as posters for Hollywood films.

At the height of this frenetic pace, in March 1925, Held, who retreated to his farm whenever he could, suffered a major accident that nearly ended his life. He had hitched his heavy Percheron mare to a wagon and was headed to town down a steep incline when the wagon box came loose. Held was thrown onto the road, and the agitated horse, trying to free itself from the entangled harness, stepped on his head. Held was immediately rushed to

the hospital, where an expert brain surgeon repaired a severed artery and an indented fracture, thereby saving his life.

During the months of recovery, friends filled in for him at his comic strip by reworking his old drawings and sketches to new dialogue, with the assistance of fellow cartoonist Charles Winner. As soon as Held was back at work, he picked up his same frantic pace. Shortly afterwards, newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst made an offer to Held with a guarantee five to six times larger than what he had previously been paid for his *Oh! Margy* comic strips. John quipped that he was never successful as an artist until he got kicked in the head by a horse.

In addition to the *Oh! Margy* strip, Held resumed his load of magazine and advertising work. In October 1925, a typical month, Held's work was published in the *New Yorker* four times, once in *College Humor* (a double-page spread), in *Life* three times and in *Judge* ten times with reproductions. As he described the pace, he hardly had time to look up from his drawing board.

Held's second wife, "Johnny," was a twenties party girl who matched his workload with her own social pace. The house was always filled with guests, noise and celebrating, which interfered with his work. Yet he had to maintain a consistent output to keep



She Missed the Boat, gouache on board. © 1927, *Life* magazine, courtesy of Illustration House, New York City, and the estate of Margaret Held.

up with her spending. They also adopted three children, but the marriage was coming apart and soon ended. Held buried himself in even more work and retreated to Manhattan.

This all ended with the crash of the stock market. He lost all of his money, some \$6 million, as well as his means to recoup the losses. The Flapper image became irrelevant as the Depression deepened, and Held's mode of expression was too closely identified with her. Even his comic strip, then renamed *Merely Margy*, could not counter the gloomy national mood, and it ended in 1935. Having to reinvent himself, Held turned to writing. A natural theme was a look back at the twenties, not as a protagonist, but as a critic. He wrote an unproduced play and several novels. However, their disillusioned viewpoint was rather too

EXHIBITION

John Held, Jr. and the Jazz Age will be on view through September 8, 2002



And How Many Carbons, Sir? ©1931, reproduced with permission of Illustration House, New York City, and the estate of Margaret Held.

grim, and although his books were published, they did not sell well. The public expected him to be funny. Two songbooks illustrated with Victorian-style linoleum cuts were published and sold somewhat better, but the royalties were limited.

Held next tried sculpture, focusing on horses and other animals. He had a sure sense of the medium, and several of his casts sold at his New York exhibition, but not enough to support him. Next, in a related field of metal work, Held experimented with wrought iron, making signs, weather vanes and other artifacts in his forge. He also continued to paint, using watercolors to record his travels—scenes from the wildlife of the Adirondacks to the canyons of New York skyscrapers.

In 1932, he married “Miss New Orleans.” Their brief union produced a daughter, but she was not enough to hold the marriage together. Alone again, his fortune began to change for the better. He conducted a popular college variety show for NBC radio and became a consultant and, in 1938, a designer for the hit Broadway review, *Hellzapoppin!* In 1940, he was chosen as artist in residence at Harvard University, and later at the University of Georgia, where he continued with his sculpture.

Held tried to enlist when World War II came along, but the army turned him down because

of his age. Instead, he worked as a civilian for the Signal Corps, assigned to a unit in New Jersey working on the development of a secret project later known as radar. He also married his fourth wife, Maggie James. Together, they bought a small five-acre farm that they gardened and stocked with a range of animals from chickens, guinea hens and goats to a carefully trained dog that acted as a shepherd and kept the goats and roosters in line. These animals also became models and subjects for several successful children’s stories that combined his writing and art in a new phase of his career.

Held collaborated with the author Frank B. Gilbreth, Jr. to produce a more successful book, *Held’s Angels*. It reprinted many of his earlier cartoons and led to a revival of interest in his old work. A new audience was discovering him.

Despite the wide swings of his fortunes, the most constant of Held’s characteristics was an irrepressible and irreverent sense of humor.

“It’s something like a mild form of half-wittedness that makes a man want to earn his living in some such ridiculous way as this.... Every child can create, but almost every child grows up and goes into some sensible business like selling bonds. Some don’t. I think there’s a door in the back of everybody’s head that lets out the dreams, or the creative instinct, or the mild madness or whatever you want to call it that makes us want to make our living this way, and not sensibly. For the lucky ones, that door closes at puberty; the unfortunates go on all their lives fighting with publishers or art dealers. They never grow up, and don’t say ‘Peter Pan’ or I’ll sock you.”

—John Held Jr. in the *New Orleans Times Picayune*, 1934

Toast of the Town

Norman Rockwell and the Artists of New Rochelle

Maureen Hart Hennessey, Chief Curator, and Stephanie Plunkett, Curator of Illustration

"In New Rochelle I was surrounded by success.... Downtown I often saw Coles Phillips, the celebrated pretty-girl artist, or Clare Briggs, the well-known cartoonist. Almost every day on my way to work I'd pass J.C. Leyendecker, the famous Saturday Evening Post illustrator, walking to the railroad station to catch the train for New York, where he had his studio. Sometimes, as I was taking a model home at dusk, I'd pass his palatial mansion with its formal gardens, wide lawns and white-graveled drive."

—Norman Rockwell

Known as the Queen City of the Sound, New Rochelle, New York, a northern suburb of New York City, was one of America's most popular enclaves for illustrators during the early twentieth century. Commuter trains to Grand Central Station, just 16 miles away, provided easy access to New York City, the country's primary center of publishing. With its sophisticated social and cultural milieu, many prominent artists and illustrators were inspired to become a part of New Rochelle's vibrant community.

In 1928, "two pretty harbors ... with many inlets that comb the shoreline" of the Long Island Sound, and the evidences of artistic influence that "meet you at every entrance of town and color every quarter of it," were

touted by the Chamber of Commerce. In its illustrated booklet, the Chamber featured the work of New Rochelle's most celebrated picture makers—Norman Rockwell, J.C. Leyendecker, F.X. Leyendecker, Edward Penfield, Orson Lowell, Walter Beach Humphrey, Edward Penfield, C. Coles Phillips and George T. Tobin. The influence of these outstanding artists, who were among the celebrities of their day, was strongly felt on the pages of the magazines, newspapers and illustrated books of the period.

Norman Rockwell lived in New Rochelle for the better part of 27 years, from 1913 to 1940. He was 19 when his family took up residence in a local boardinghouse, and he set out to build his career as a successful



No Swimming, illustrated by Norman Rockwell, oil on canvas, *The Saturday Evening Post*, June 4, 1921, cover. © 1921 SEPS: Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN.

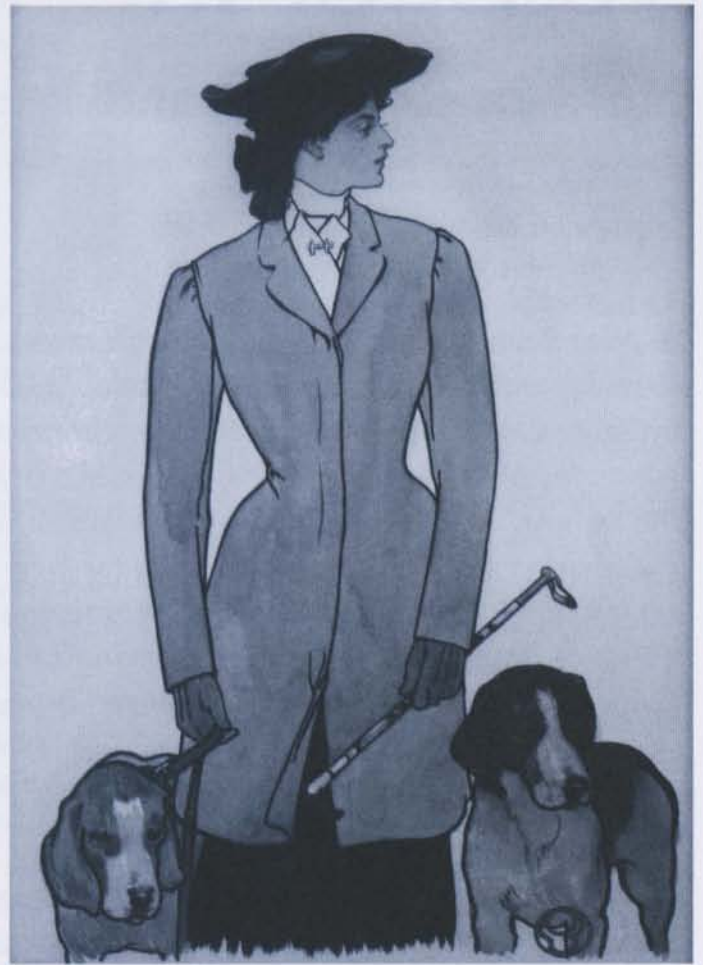
illustrator. After three years as an art editor of *Boys' Life* and with a portfolio of work for other clients, he sold his first cover to *The Saturday Evening Post* in 1916. This was an important step for the artist.

Following a brief stint in the United States Navy during World War I, his professional reputation grew, as did the list of publications that commissioned his art. In 1925, the first of Rockwell's Boy Scout calendars was published—a series that was to continue until 1976. In addition, his works featuring such products as Edison Mazda electric lights and Raybestos automobile brakes were highly regarded advertisements.

During his years in New Rochelle, Rockwell formed close friendships



A Modern Witch, illustrated by FX. Leyendecker, *Life* magazine, 1923. © The Kelly Collection of American Illustration.



Woman with Hounds, illustrated by Edward Penfield, watercolor on board, 1906. © The Kelly Collection of American Illustration.

with resident artists Joe and Frank Leyendecker and noted cartoonist Victor Clyde Forsythe, who encouraged Rockwell to submit cover ideas to the *Post*. The two of them shared Frederic Remington's former sculpture studio. At events sponsored by the New Rochelle Art Association, which held annual exhibitions featuring the work of regional artists, Rockwell had the opportunity to mingle with famous American illustrators.

In 1939, while his professional accomplishments and active social life flourished, Rockwell's 13-year

marriage to Irene O'Connor ended. In 1930, while visiting Forsythe, who had moved to California, Rockwell met and married a young schoolteacher named Mary Barstow, and the two returned to New Rochelle to live. The 1930s would prove to be one of the richest in Rockwell's personal and professional life. The couple had three sons, and, in addition to his illustrations for the *Post* and other magazines, he received important commissions to illustrate Mark Twain's classics *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Toast of the Town: Norman Rockwell and the Artists of New Rochelle will be on view at the Museum through October 27, 2002. This special exhibition offers an in-depth look at the community of illustrators who lived and worked in New Rochelle, New York, during Rockwell's time there. It also explores the relationships, styles and influences of these outstanding artists as well as the unique nature of New Rochelle as an artistic outpost during the early twentieth century.

Original works by Norman Rockwell and 25 noted illustrators are featured,

EXHIBITION

Toast of the Town: Norman Rockwell and the Artists of New Rochelle will be on view through October 27, 2002



Bar Scene, illustrated by Franklin Booth, date unknown. © The Kelly Collection of American Illustration.



The Magic Hour, illustrated by C. Coles Phillips, 1924, advertisement, Oneida SilverPlate. © The Kelly Collection of American Illustration

including Harold Anderson, Franklin Booth, George Brehm, Worth Brehm, Clare Briggs, Nell Brinkley, Daniel Content, Dean Cornwell, John Philip Falter, Victor Clyde Forsythe, Walter Beach Humphrey, F.X. Leyendecker, J.C. Leyendecker, Orson Byron Lowell, Tom Lovell, Al Parker, Edward Penfield, C. Coles Phillips, Frederic Remington, Mead Schaeffer, Remington Schuyler, Donald Teague, George T. Tobin, Edmund F. Ward and Revere Wisteffuff.



The Other Women Criticize Her, illustrated by Orson Byron Lowell, ink on paper, *Judge* magazine, 1906. © The Kelly Collection of American Illustration.



CAN COMPUTERS REALLY

Steve Buchanan, illustrator

In his autobiography, Norman Rockwell wrote that he was somewhat embarrassed to admit to his colleagues that he had gone over to the “new technology” and was using photography as an aid to his art. He wrote, “It was quicker, easier, and you could catch the model’s expression (no more frozen smiles) and any action you wanted.” We asked a contemporary illustrator how today’s technology—computer graphics—has effected his work and the field of illustration.

The creation of art has always been an exercise of technology that realizes the artist’s vision. We frequently lose sight of that fact because so many of our artistic icons, from old-master paintings to the work of the great twentieth-century illustrators, used tools that had not changed much for generations—pencils, charcoal, oil paint or watercolor. In the last century, every improvement in art technology has been accompanied by an uneasy feeling, both among artists and among their viewers, that these new methods were somehow not artistic, or that they signaled a general aesthetic decline, or that they were in some vague way “cheating.”

Seventy-five years ago, many felt that the use of photographs as quick substitutes for live sketches was beneath “real” artists. As recently as

15 years ago, I occasionally encountered the attitude that the use of “modern” inventions like acrylic paint or airbrushes were lamentable expedients of the commercial art world, not to be confused with true art. Today, it is computer graphic tools that are suspect. There is a feeling that computers are cold, mechanical and unexpressive; and the fear that computers might drive some beloved traditional media to extinction. And there is uncertainty over just exactly what we should regard as the “original” work of art: is it the file on a CD, the image on a monitor, the image the artist produces on his desktop printer, or is it something else? How can we call it art if there is no unique “original” painting?

Having spent a decade exploring the potential of computers as an art medium, I’m happy to report that they offer many advantages of speed and fluency as well as exciting new “painting” strategies that have no equivalent in older media. But, like preceding technological innovations, they haven’t really changed the visual skills and conceptual processes artists use to realize their vision. Artists who lack skills of draftsmanship, knowledge of the rendering of light on form, perspective, anatomy, atmospheric effects, etc., or who do not understand their subjects or their

audience will find that computers do not magically automate those skills. For illustrators who primarily create images destined for print reproduction, computers have one further advantage. Since every step of commercial printing, from page design to typesetting to scanning to color separation to press operation, is computer controlled today, creating original images digitally comes very close to “painting” directly in the medium of the printing press.

Most digital art can be done on ordinary desktop computers with commonly available software. To my traditionally trained sensibilities, the tool that gives a general image-editing program like Adobe Photoshop the potential to be a fluent drawing/ painting medium is the pen tablet (sometimes called a digitizing tablet). It is a plastic tablet (mine is about 12 inches square) that comes equipped with a plastic stylus resembling a cheap ballpoint pen. Touch the stylus to the tablet, and corresponding marks appear on the monitor. The tablet responds to pressure and speed as sensitively as any conventional pencil or brush. Best of all, it is possible to direct programs to make it work as everyone intuitively expects, e.g., when you press harder on the stylus, marks get darker and/or wider.

MAKE ART?

To look at how computer art is created today, we can follow the development of the imagery for the *Carnivorous Plants* commemorative stamps that the United States Postal Service commissioned me to illustrate. Every stamp illustration (like most other illustration assignments) requires a lot of research. For this assignment, I visited several botanical gardens to photograph and sketch native carnivorous plants on display. My research in the New York Botanical Garden library included tracking down books, photos, maps and diagrams. For every species native to the United States, I needed to know its size, color variations within the species, the

morphological details that define it, its native range and anything else that might be useful in choosing appropriate examples for a stamp design.



One of many concept sketches for the Carnivorous Plants commemorative stamps.



From approved concept sketches, this final outline of important scientific details was used as a guide for rendering.

I bought several common varieties of carnivorous plants at nearby nurseries to use as guides for surface texture and degree of transparency, which are not captured well in photographs or sketches.

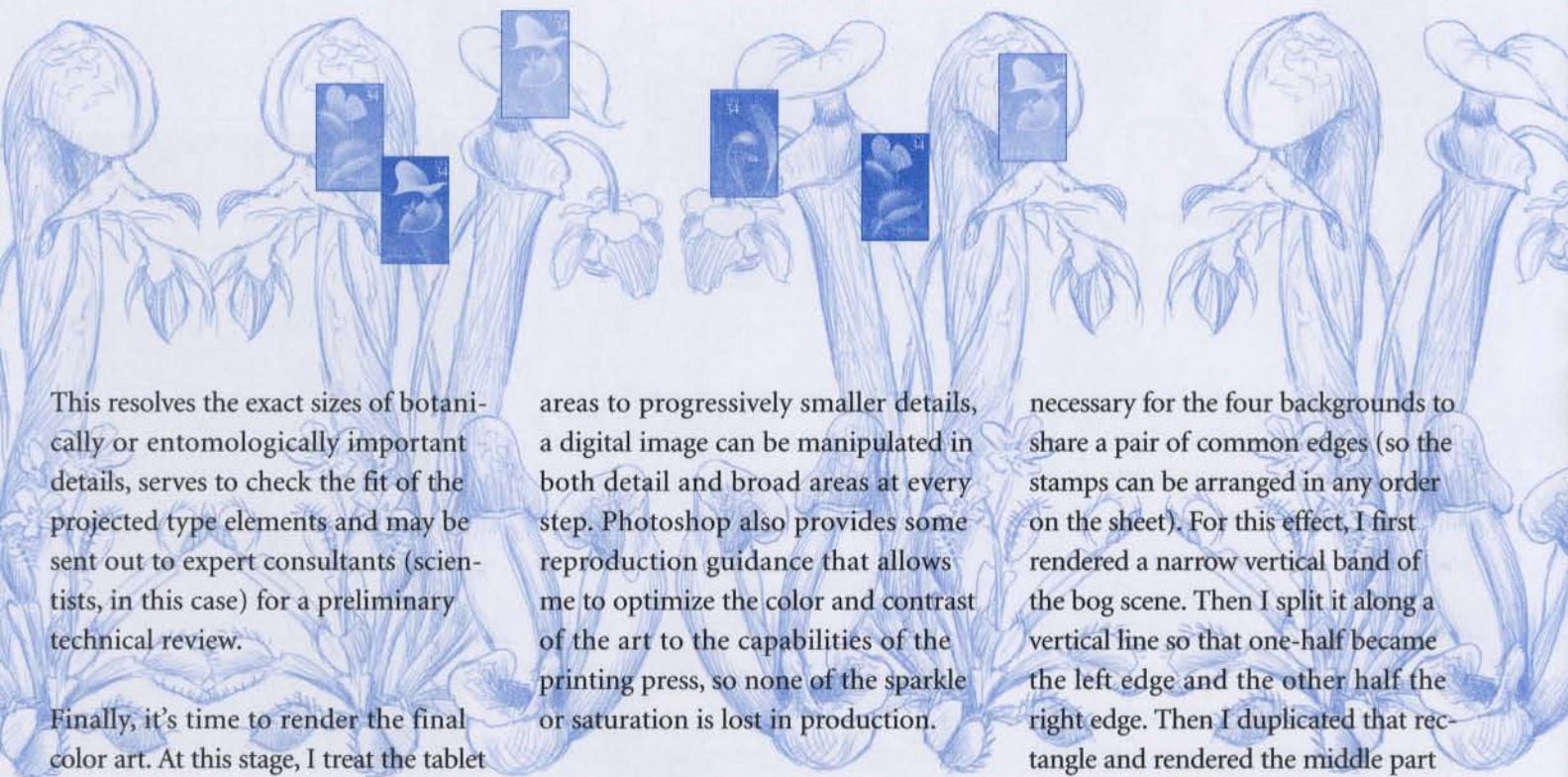
Next, I made a few concept sketches for the art director, Phil Jordan. For these, I started with the blank stamp format at its actual size, which is bounded by the wavy line of the self-adhesive perforation, along with



The finished stamp design.

dummy type to show the space that will be needed for the stamp's face value. Adobe Photoshop enables the stylus to act like a black pencil, so the resulting sketches look quite similar to ordinary pencil drawings. With Photoshop, it is easy to overlay a quick color wash that is separate from the "pencil" drawing underneath, and to duplicate the sketches to mock up a standard pane of 20 stamps in different patterns. This gives a fairly good sense of the concept design effect with not much more work than would be required for traditional pencil roughs of the separate stamps. Furthermore, since I can send the sketch files to my art director via e-mail, and since it is easy to make changes to the e-sketches, we have much more flexibility to experiment and exchange ideas at the earliest design stages.

Once a direction is approved, I make a more accurate black-and-white drawing of the individual stamp subjects.



This resolves the exact sizes of botanically or entomologically important details, serves to check the fit of the projected type elements and may be sent out to expert consultants (scientists, in this case) for a preliminary technical review.

Finally, it's time to render the final color art. At this stage, I treat the tablet and Photoshop as a generalized painting medium. It can "paint" with individual strokes like a paintbrush. It can cut masks and create airbrush effects and it can apply color as if it were opaque (like oil paint) or transparent (like watercolor). So the basic painting strategies are familiar ones, but the computer makes it possible to choose among them with the click of a mouse. The printed result is frequently mistaken for a reproduction of a conventional painting because, like painting, it records every nuance of handmade marks. Beyond that, the global adjustment functions permit systematic changes to the whole image, or any part of it, at any stage of progress. An example of such adjustments is to shift all the colors in the green range to make them a bit more blue or to reduce their saturation. These processing capabilities permit whole new strategies of image development that don't exist with traditional media. Unlike oil painting, where image development proceeds from large design

areas to progressively smaller details, a digital image can be manipulated in both detail and broad areas at every step. Photoshop also provides some reproduction guidance that allows me to optimize the color and contrast of the art to the capabilities of the printing press, so none of the sparkle or saturation is lost in production.

Computer rendering provides an important practical advantage in assignments such as the postage stamp, where many experts and committees scrutinize every phase and where changes are likely at each step. By keeping the various parts of the image separate in the file—e.g., the background is independent of the plants painted over it—the image is much easier to edit even at the final stages of rendering. In the Venus Flytrap stamp, at the suggestion of our science consultants, we changed the species of butterfly after the art was otherwise completed. In anticipating this possibility, I had structured the file so that the butterfly was a completely independent component of the document.

The background bog scene of Carnivorous Plants presented an interesting surface design problem that computer development solved elegantly. Since the individual stamps form a continuous image across the pane of 20, it is

necessary for the four backgrounds to share a pair of common edges (so the stamps can be arranged in any order on the sheet). For this effect, I first rendered a narrow vertical band of the bog scene. Then I split it along a vertical line so that one-half became the left edge and the other half the right edge. Then I duplicated that rectangle and rendered the middle part of the background for each separate plant. The resulting images appear to have individually varied backgrounds but each subject can be joined seamlessly to any of the others.

Finally, when the artwork is completed, there's no danger of an irreplaceable original painting being lost or damaged in shipment. Digital illustrators can sleep soundly at night.



Behind the Scenes of an Exhibition

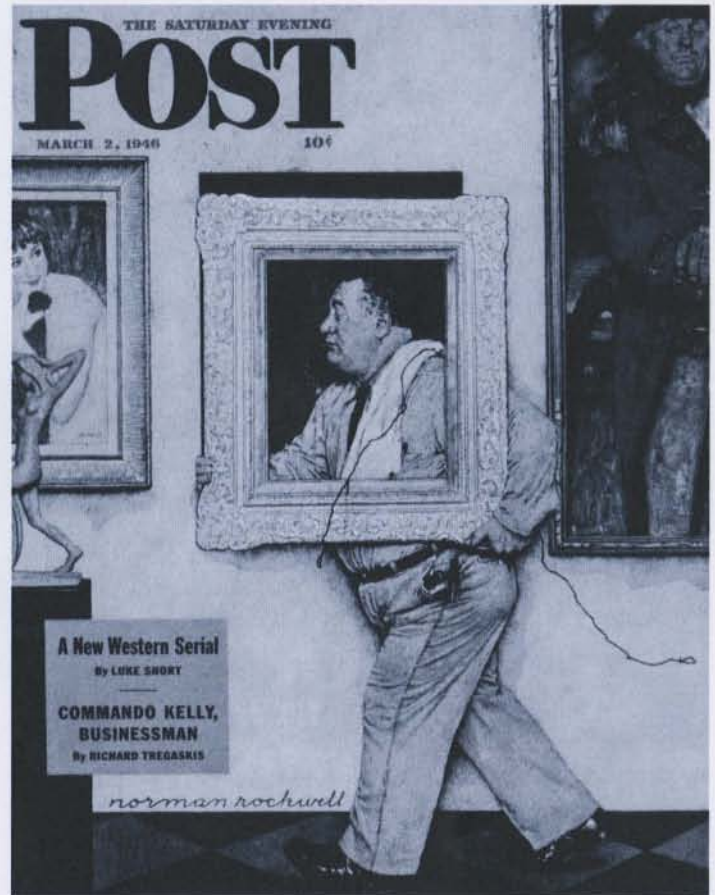
Cris Raymond, *The Portfolio* editor

Museum exhibitions can enthrall us, soothe us and sometimes even overwhelm us with their beauty and richness. Creating such an experience is the product of long and careful planning, and very few people understand the level of work involved in assembling a show at a museum. Here is an abbreviated glimpse of what goes on behind the scenes of an exhibition.

At the Norman Rockwell Museum, every exhibition begins with Director Laurie Norton Moffatt and the curatorial, education and exhibitions departments. Concepts are presented, a theme takes hold and the show's idea is developed. As the concept evolves, a team headed by the curator is formed to develop the exhibition's content, create a visual design and lead the project to fruition. The exhibition curator focuses on which artist or artists, what paintings and what theme will be pursued. Sometimes the initial idea comes from outside the Museum. In the case of our popular national exhibition, *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People*, the High Museum in Atlanta, Georgia, contacted us with the idea of having a Rockwell exhibition. After many discussions, the idea evolved to have a joint venture between both our museums to bring the works of Norman Rockwell to sites across the nation. This exhibition was *five* years in the making from its concept to its opening in Atlanta.

The team of curators selected the paintings on the basis of which ones best represent the artist's work, are best known to the public and are able to withstand the stress of travel. The venue sites were selected on the basis of geographic distribution, urban locales and the desire to reach diverse audiences.

Approximately half of the paintings in the national show belonged to private and corporate collections. As with all



Framed, illustrated by Norman Rockwell, oil on canvas, *The Saturday Evening Post*, 1946, cover. © SEPS: Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN.

exhibitions, Chief Curator Maureen Hart Hennessey negotiated for loans of paintings and drawings. *Pictures for the American People* traveled to seven museums, and some lenders were willing to loan paintings for only a few of the venues. Thus, the works in any touring exhibition may vary from venue to venue. Also, the unexpected may occur. During the tour, one of the most famous paintings in the exhibition was sold. Fortunately, the new owner was willing to include the work at all the venues.

Then budgets must be worked out. There are many costs involved in every exhibition. Sometimes an institution may charge a loan fee for borrowing its painting. Also, high-value exhibitions often necessitate the procurement of a special fine-arts insurance policy to cover the exhibition in its entirety.

Add to this the costs involved in packing and shipping the art and the cost of museum couriers who must travel with the exhibition to oversee the care and handling of the objects as they are unpacked and installed. In addition,



The Connoisseur, illustrated by Norman Rockwell, oil on canvas, *The Saturday Evening Post*, 1962, cover. © SEPS; Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN.

there are advertising expenses, posters, graphics, press kits and other incidentals that are not so incidental.

Another responsibility of the exhibition's curator is writing the identification labels. All of the printed information on the walls is researched and written by the curator. The color of the labels, the print and type sizes and the selection of wall colors are important items that the team must consider. Finally, the curator makes an object list describing every single item included in an exhibition.

Once the list of exhibition objects has been established and the initial planning stages are complete, the Museum's registrar, Andrew Wallace, and the assistant registrar, Elizabeth Aldred, take over. The registrar's primary role is to represent the needs of the objects and the lenders.

The responsibility of a registrar is to oversee the care and the handling of the artwork as well as to manage the formal loan documentation that accompanies each object included in an exhibition. The details of each loan agreement must be worked out. Once that phase is settled, arrangements are made for shipping.

The registrar arranges the transportation for all the objects on loan. This may also include designing and arranging for the fabrication of custom packing cases; courier travel arrangements (including hotel and air travel); medical

insurance and, on occasion, playing host to a courier who has traveled from abroad. Also, arrangements for deliveries have to be made to satisfy the needs of the lender. Packing exhibition works is a specialized field, and there are many companies whose only job is packing and transporting works of art. The registrar works closely with these companies to see that the lender's requirements are followed exactly.

Individual works of art and entire exhibitions are shipped from venue to venue by specialized fine-art shippers. Once a painting arrives at its destination, it must sit crated for a minimum of 24 hours to acclimatize in a museum's climate-controlled art-storage area before it can be unpacked.

One of the most important responsibilities of a registrar is to prepare a condition report for each object on the checklist. Some lenders provide a condition report that the registrar compares with his/her own notes. With a skilled eye, and years of experience, the registrar looks for anything that may represent a recent change in an object's condition. Most notably, the registrar checks for cracks in the paint, unstable or lifting areas in the paint layer, holes, tears, losses or abrasions to the decorated surface. In addition, he or she checks for accretions—the term for anything foreign to the work that might be stuck to the painting. Accretions are generally superficial and can be anything from dust to

the excretion of an insect. If there is any serious issue that renders the piece unstable, a conservator is called. A new condition might have occurred in the shipping, such as paint loss from a previous cracking. The borrowing museum often covers the cost of repair for objects in need of treatment prior to exhibition. As the condition of an object is closely monitored at the venue, the initial condition report plays a critical role in determining the state of each object. This process is repeated every time a work is packed and unpacked. Also, artworks within an exhibition are checked weekly while on display.

While an exhibition is on tour, a courier from the museum may accompany the artwork while it is in transit. Exhibition transport is generally done with no layovers. As *Pictures for the American People* crisscrossed the country, couriers rode in the truck with the two drivers—day and night. The tractors for the two semis that transported the artwork were equipped with sleeper units with double-sized bunk beds. The drivers rotate in shifts sleeping and driving, over a twenty-four hour period. At each brief stop, one member of the driving team always remains with the truck and secure trailer while the other driver takes a break. The typical large sleeper “power unit,” as it is called in the industry, is capable of travelling nearly 2,000 miles on one load of fuel, about two-thirds of the distance from coast-to-coast. Where air shipment of art is involved, a museum courier may accompany the shipment. Air couriership requires a totally different way of handling the artwork. On occasion, our couriers have gone over 24 hours without sleep!

When the objects are ready for exhibition, Russell Horton, the Museum’s exhibition manager/preparator becomes fully involved in the exhibition work. The preparator is the person in charge of hanging the works on the walls, but may also be responsible for framing works that arrive unframed. Where objects are placed within an exhibition is a decision made between the exhibition team and/or the preparator and curator.

Once the preparator has the objects list, he knows the medium and the size of each painting. With a computer-aided design (CAD) program, he enters the dimensions of each work into the program and shifts the shapes around the screen to form a layout or exhibition plan. The program

allows the preparator to experiment with the spacing and placement of artwork on the wall, without ever having to physically move a thing.

Lighting the artwork is another important element in the presentation of an exhibition. A lighting design is created based on the layout plan. Light fixtures have different beam widths and are able to both highlight a single object or to wash an entire wall with a soft flood of light. The preparator begins with a generalized wash of light, then adds mesh filters to specific fixtures to soften the light and dim it. Finally, each piece is highlighted to add a touch of drama to the overall presentation.

Another major consideration is climate control. The Museum’s climate control is continually monitored. In our galleries, the temperature range is between 68–72 degrees and humidity between 45–58 percent. When everything is in place, there is the constant work of “housekeeping.” Paintings are checked regularly and frames are dusted with a soft brush.

Still, there is so much more work involved in an exhibition. The communications department promotes the exhibit; the external relations department solicits underwriters to help defray costs; the education department designs programs; the Museum guides learn about the new exhibit; and the facility and safety staffs ensure the accessibility and safety of the public. Every single person associated with the Museum contributes to the final presentation. From beginning to end, an exhibition is the result of teamwork. The next time you visit the Norman Rockwell Museum, think about all the silent partners involved behind the scenes!



Registrar Andrew Wallace and Preparator Russell Horton carefully hang *The Problem We All Live With*.

Get Drawn into the Who's Who of Illustrators

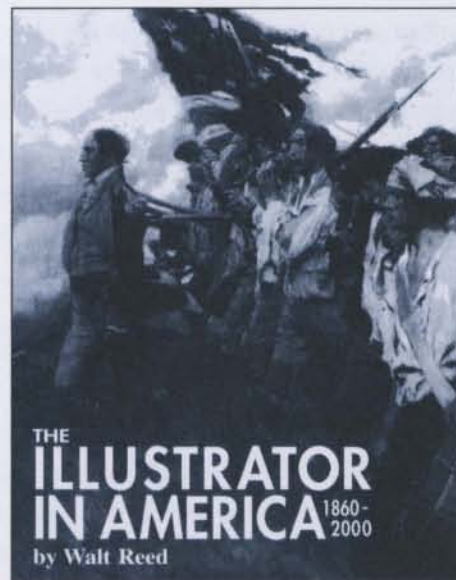
Jo Ann Losinger, Director of Earned Revenue

Immerse yourself in the company of 650 artists with *The Illustrator in America 1860-2000* by Walt Reed. Reed is a leading authority on the art of American illustration. Founder of Illustration House, a gallery specializing in works of illustration, he was on the instruction staff with Norman Rockwell and other noted illustrators at the Famous Artists School. Walt Reed is the curator of the Norman Rockwell Museum's current exhibition *John Held, Jr. and the Jazz Age*.

The Illustrator in America is published by the Society of Illustrators. The timeline of this book spans 140

years of history and art. March through the Civil War with artist reporters, celebrate the Golden Age of illustration, dance with the Jazz Age artists and then move through the decades to the present era of computer graphics and digital printing.

First published in 1964, this third edition of *The Illustrator in America* contains 444 pages of stunning reproductions of well-known illustrations, biographies and authentic signatures of the artists. Norman Rockwell and John Held, Jr. played an important part in this illustrious society!



The Illustrator in America 1860-2000, \$50 (\$45 for members). Cover illustration, *The Nation Makers*, by Howard Pyle, collection of the Brandywine River Museum.

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