

FALL/WINTER 2006

portfolio

NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM



NORMAN
Rockwell

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

It's been a wonderful summer at the Norman Rockwell Museum. The exhibition *Frederic Remington and the American Civil War: A Ghost Story*, about the famed artist and illustrator of the American West, set the stage for a summer of westward-focused festivities. The season was launched in June with a boot stompin' hoe-down attended by Museum friends who donned great-looking Western attire, dined happily at an outdoor barbeque, danced up a storm to a country-western band, and bid wildly at a live auction. The event raised a whopping \$96,000 to support our educational programs! The Western-themed festivities continued in July in Santa Fe with a wonderful reception for Museum friends at the exquisite adobe home of renowned sculptor Malcolm Alexander, hosted by National Council Members Betsey and David McKernan.

The Museum's popular Thursday evening programs in July and August enhanced our understanding of the West with stimulating lectures and entertaining performances. Both Calamity Jane and Theodore Roosevelt dropped by. Dr. Homer Meade gave a powerful reading of W.E.B. DuBois's 1903 treatise, *The Souls of Black Folk*.

Guest curator Dr. Alexander Nemerov has taken a fresh look at how historical events influence subsequent generations in the exhibition, *Frederic Remington and the American Civil War*. It is a thoughtful and bold exhibition that examines how the Civil War, as experienced by Remington through photography and literature of the period, affected his depictions of the West. The Museum has published an informative catalogue to accompany the exhibition that is available through our store. A Remington symposium will be held at the Museum on October 28, with keynote speaker Dr. Nemerov and a host of Remington scholars whose presentations will deepen our understanding of the American experience of the

Western frontier from a perspective based on visual culture.

In November, the Museum will open a brilliant jewel of an exhibition. *More than Words: Artists' Illustrated Letters from the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art* will showcase beautifully illustrated letters, including some whimsical works by Norman Rockwell. Stay tuned for a season of fascinating programs that will include the art and etiquette of letter writing, intimate talks by artists, a handwriting expert, and even a world-famous advice columnist!

I'm thrilled to announce the Museum's new travel program that will commence this April with a tour of Norman Rockwell's Italy. Norman was an avid traveler who found inspiration for his masterpieces all over the world and we have custom-designed a series of exciting journeys that will retrace his steps, beginning with a trip to one of Norman and Molly's favorite destinations—Italy! We will visit Sicily and then Rome, where we will spend time with Norman's son, Peter, who will introduce us to many of his father's favorite places and give us a special tour of his sculpture studio. It is sure to be an unforgettable experience!

We're planning a fun-filled event for families and friends at the height of the foliage season—complete with the best of the Berkshire's fall produce and comestibles: crispy apples, donuts, hot cider, pumpkins and more! The opening party for *Stuffed Shirts: Sculptural Scarecrows Inspired by Rockwell*, a juried exhibition of scarecrows created by artists, will be held on Saturday, October 7, from 3 to 5 p.m. See you there!

Laurie Norton Moffatt

Norman Rockwell

year-by-year, 1965



Norman Rockwell painting *Lincoln the Railsplitter*, 1965.
Photo by Louie Lamone.

“I hope this painting might inspire the youth of this land to appreciate this man who believed so much in the value of education.”

Norman Rockwell in a letter to Donald P. Lindsay,
Lincoln First Federal Savings and Loan
Association of Spokane, Washington

In 1965, two years after leaving *The Saturday Evening Post* as their most popular cover artist, Norman Rockwell, 71, was busy as ever. The Skippy Peanut Butter ads he had done for the 1963 Best Foods “Whispering Sweepstakes” had produced a winner. The prize was an original Rockwell portrait of the winner, and the winner turned out to be a family of five—more than Rockwell had bargained for.

While working on the family portrait, Rockwell began a life-size painting of Abraham Lincoln for Lincoln First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Spokane, Washington. In 1962, the company’s president, Donald P. Lindsay, had commissioned a portrait of Abraham Lincoln for the lobby of the firm’s new building, set to open in 1964. Considering their institution was a young one, having been formed from a merger in 1950 when they assumed the name Lincoln Savings, and because Spokane was a youthful and growing city, Lindsay requested a young, vigorous Lincoln. Rockwell responded exuberantly, saying he felt Lincoln was our greatest American and “the greatest model that

ever happened.” He decided to picture him in a way that emphasized his 6-foot-4-inch stature and to include a symbolic axe and chopping block and book on one side of the figure and a picture of the White House on the other, alluding to the company’s growth and achievement. He would make the painting eight feet tall.

In May 1963, Lindsay asked Rockwell to appear at the unveiling of the portrait. Knowing Rockwell had recently traveled to India (to paint Nehru) and Yugoslavia (to paint Tito), Lindsay added, “If you could find your way to Pakistan and Yugoslavia, I am sure you could find your way to Spokane.” In September, after receiving a preliminary color sketch from Rockwell, Lindsay had his designer choose carpeting, drapes, and a ceiling color to complement the painting, and he gave Rockwell a July 1, 1964 deadline. Rockwell replied that 1964 was an election year and he was obliged to paint portraits of candidates Lyndon B. Johnson and Barry Goldwater for *Look* and portraits of their wives for *McCall’s*.

In June 1964, Lindsay sent a curt reply stating that he was disappointed with Rockwell’s inability to meet the deadline and that there was a considerable blank space on the west wall of their main room. He asked Rockwell to accept a new deadline of no later than January 1, 1965, and reminded him that he and his wife were expected for the unveiling. A letter in August urged Rockwell for reassurance that he would meet the new deadline. In November, Lindsay wrote to say he was releasing information to the media and that if the painting was not completed by the first of the year, Rockwell would put them in a very embarrassing position.

When he didn’t receive the painting by January 1, Lindsay, now sounding resigned, asked Rockwell for the tentative date of its completion and when the unveiling might take place. In the meantime, the company, which had published Rockwell’s preliminary sketch in *Reader’s Digest*, had received numerous requests for reprints. Since the final painting would be different from the original color sketch, and as the company was receiving so many requests, Lindsay argued that he needed a new color sketch to send out. Noting this would further delay the final painting, Rockwell declined the request.

On January 19, Rockwell received a call from 20th Century-Fox asking him to go to Hollywood that summer to paint a series of portraits for a remake of John Ford’s 1939 movie *Stagecoach*. Rockwell was thrilled. In the interim, Rockwell worked on Lincoln as well as new sketches of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Hester Prynne and William Thackeray’s Becky Sharp, for a proposed book on famous fictional women. He started his annual calendar illustration for Boy Scouts of America and a Pepsi Cola ad of a jolly Santa Claus, and he continued work begun the previous year on a series of drawings of American women who had sacrificed their lives in war. These were to be reinterpreted in bas-relief bronze tablets by his son Peter in Peter’s Rome studio and installed in the Bell Tower of Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, New Hampshire.

After leaving the *Post* in 1963, Rockwell agreed to work for *Look*, a magazine that used abundant photos and some illustrations for its focus on current events. *The Problem We All Live With*, Rockwell’s first commission for *Look*, gave readers throughout the country a look at school desegregation in the south. Portraits of presidential candidates and a 1964 painting for NASA’s space program followed. *Murder in Mississippi*, the first of three *Look* commissions in 1965, shed light on another aspect of racial prejudice in America. It produced stunned and complex reactions from viewers. After finishing the piece, Rockwell, on his calendar, summarized his own visceral reaction as “big nerves a tingle.”

By early spring, Rockwell finished *Murder in Mississippi*, the Pepsi Cola Santa and the massive 7-foot-4-inch *Lincoln the Railsplitter*. Lincoln First Federal had thousands of prints made of the final painting and sent them to customers with a copy of a letter they asked Rockwell to write about Lincoln. The letters, reproduced by a lithographer, looked so original that, to this day, the Norman Rockwell Museum receives correspondence from people who insist they own the original. In August, after returning from the set of *Stagecoach*, Rockwell again heard from Lindsay regarding his presence at an unveiling. But he told Lindsay that, after his wild and hectic trip, he had to concentrate on his work for *Stagecoach*. In 1985, Lincoln Mutual Savings Bank



Norman Rockwell painting the first version of *Stagecoach*, 1965. Photo by Louie Lamone.

(known as Lincoln First Federal prior to 1976) merged into Washington Mutual Savings Bank and moved from the “Lincoln” building to a new location. Rockwell’s painting, no longer a symbol for the bank, was sold. In April 1992, *People* magazine pictured Ross Perot gazing up at the painting in his art collection.

Rockwell’s next work for *Look* was painted to accompany *How Goes the War on Poverty*, an article by Sargent Shriver on the problems facing the VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program. The illustration was captioned, “The poor are cynical. They have been exploited, and they know it.” Rockwell first considered painting hands of different races, but then decided to show one strong young hand grasping a frail elderly hand, against a background of Native American, African American, elderly and young faces. Though hands are one of the hardest things for an artist to

draw or paint and often are concealed in gloves or pockets, Rockwell seemed to look for opportunities to include them, such as in *Freedom of Worship* and on the dying man in the foreground of *Murder in Mississippi*. Faces and hands are the most expressive parts of human beings and to exclude or minimize them would have been to forfeit the opportunity to fully express a story.

Later in the year, Rockwell completed a third commission for *Look*. Typical of his pattern of painting something lighthearted after a stretch of serious works, *Picasso versus Sargent* looked at 1960s society in a style reminiscent of Rockwell’s *Post* cover subjects. When he began work on the painting that summer, his initial concept was a kind of reprise of *The Connoisseur*, in which the painting and the museum patron are mismatched. He would show a girl in curlers and stretch pants looking at John Singer Sargent’s

1897 *Portrait of Mrs. George Swinton* in an Art Institute of Chicago gallery. But the idea developed into a 1960s housewife and her daughter, both in curlers, viewing Sargent's portrait, juxtaposed with an art student in tight jeans and a turtleneck viewing Pablo Picasso's 1931 portrait, *The Red Arm Chair*. The change pushed the painting into a more complex statement about society, making it especially relevant to *Look's* readers.

In June, Rockwell received the first of several attempts to lure him back to the *Post*—a letter from its managing editor, Bill Emerson, and then a visit from art editor Frank Kilker. It isn't known what proposal the *Post* made, but Rockwell dismissed it as “a cure for my nostalgia.” By the end of June, Rockwell finished his 1967 Boy Scout calendar, *Breakthrough for Freedom*, of six scouts from six nations marching at a Jamboree. “Not art, but adequate,” Rockwell proclaimed. During these projects, Rockwell also prepared for *Stagecoach*. He read both the 1939 screenplay and a draft of the new version, studied photos of the actors, and negotiated his contract. A travel lover and a frustrated actor, Rockwell was getting the opportunity to paint portraits of cast members in Hollywood and to go on location in Colorado to research scenes of the stagecoach bouncing and careening on its perilous journey through Wyoming Indian territory. What most excited him, however, was his chance to play a bit part—a card player named Busted Flush who appears in an early barroom scene.

To warm up for Hollywood, Rockwell made several portrait sketches in his studio, including one of Anne Lamone, daughter of his assistant Louie Lamone, and of Ian Story, a psychologist at the nearby Austen Riggs Center. On June 28, Rockwell and his wife Molly departed for Hollywood. They were met by Pete Todd and his wife Zev. Todd, a Los Angeles photographer who often helped Rockwell when he worked in Southern California, would assist him on the *Stagecoach* project. From July 1 to 9, Rockwell posed and painted cast



Norman Rockwell as Busted Flush.

members Alex Cord, Slim Pickens (of whom Rockwell said a “lousy model—late, moved all the time and talk, talk, talk”), and Mike Connors (of whom Rockwell said “Mike posed fine”).

On July 10, the Rockwells traveled to Denver, Colorado, 56 miles southeast of the movie's second location, where Rockwell painted Van Heflin (“wonderful guy”). On July 14, after asking to be closer to the set, the cast moved to quarters in Boulder where, from July 14 to 19, Rockwell painted the remaining cast: Ann-Margret, Keenan Wynn (“whata character”), Red Buttons, Bing Crosby, Bob Cummings (“awful guy”), and Stefanie Powers (“wonderful girl”).

Rockwell had spent a lot of time in the early 1960s sketching and painting portraits from life with a group of Stockbridge artists. During trips to India and Russia in 1962 and 1964, he did a series of portraits from life that were featured in *American Artist*. Confident of this more spontaneous work, Rockwell tried to convince Martin Rackin, the movie's producer, to use his oil sketches of the actors. “I just feel they are a lot more exciting than the type of portrait I do from photographs,” he argued. “After all, *Stagecoach* is an exciting, dramatic thing and I think the more exciting and dramatic type of sketches would be a little more appropriate.” But Rackin preferred the more polished, detailed portraits based on photographs, and told Rockwell “the many years of *Saturday Evening Post* training that you have given the American public has become your own trap.” Rockwell's portraits, along with symbols he created that represented the essence of each character, appeared with the actors' credits at the end of the movie.

When Rockwell returned to Stockbridge on July 22, he started roughing out a 14-foot-long sketch of the stagecoach on its journey to Cheyenne. The next day he decided to limit it to 8 feet. From time to time he would have producer Rackin send him reference material from Hollywood or information about the rebuses. At one point he requested

an Indian wig and costume, in order to pose an Indian falling off a horse. Rather than hire a model for the pose, Rockwell had himself photographed, lying on the floor with his arms and legs flailing about as if rolling down a mountainside. He also had Denver photographer Art Bilsten take photos of Mt. Wilson, near Telluride, to get just the right perspective and color of the impressive mountainous landscape. Bilsten sent transparencies of the mountain, taken between 6:30 and 7 a.m., and in the evening, when the late sun cast a warm glow. Rockwell was so conditioned from his *Post* cover days to having his work scrutinized for accuracy that he expressed concern that people might recognize Mt. Wilson, though the movie's setting was supposed to be Wyoming.



Norman Rockwell poses with Ann-Margret on the set of *Stagecoach*. Photographer unknown.

Perhaps remembering the work required for *Lincoln the Railsplitter*—a 7-foot-4-inch-tall canvas that had required a pyramid of platforms to perch on to paint the top portions—Rockwell realized he was not up to painting a landscape on that scale. He wrote Rackin it was essential that he not make it 8-foot-long but half that size. Confident that a smaller version would be fine, Rackin gave Rockwell the go-ahead and added the news that he intended to include Rockwell's name in the screen credits. "This should make you a very big man in Stockbridge. I never heard of Matisse being in a picture or Braque. See what happens when you have influential friends." The final painting of the stagecoach chase scene was 4-foot-long. Moviegoers saw it in the center of the movie house poster surrounded by cameos of the ten actors' portraits.

The artwork for *Stagecoach* inspired an exhibition of 96 Rockwell paintings and drawings at the Municipal Art Gallery in Barnsdall Park, Los Angeles, from January 4 to February 6, 1966. *Look* devoted four pages of their March 8, 1966 issue to *Norman Rockwell: 'silent' film star*, about Rockwell's participation in the movie, getting a jump on the *Saturday Evening Post's* April 9, 1966 story, *Stagecoach*, 'Do it Right

Kid. You'll be Dead if you Don't, a tell-all exposé by sister journalists Muriel Davidson and Janet Rale, who posed as a bit-part actress and publicity coordinator while secretly keeping a journal of the movie's production.

On September 1, Rockwell received word that Lady Bird Johnson wanted his 1964 *Look* portrait of her husband. Rockwell complied. In 1967 the portrait would be part of the imbroglio over Peter Hurd's portrait of Johnson, commissioned as the official White House portrait. Johnson complained that Hurd's portrait was "the ugliest thing I ever saw" and pointed to Rockwell's as a really good likeness of himself. After the portrait was rejected by Johnson, Hurd gave it to the National Portrait Gallery.

In early October, the Rockwells departed for a three-week vacation to Mexico where they visited Taxco, Tepotzlan, Cuernavaca, Mexico City, and Xochicalpo. When Rockwell returned he was ready to tackle his *Sargent versus Picasso* painting, which had been giving him problems. When it was finished and *Look* art director Allen Hurlburt said he loved it, Rockwell was relieved. He then concentrated on finishing the mountains and then the Indians in the stagecoach chase scene. By Thanksgiving, he shipped it off.

Rockwell's last work of 1965 was the first painting in a series of eight, annual gift-catalogue covers for Top Value Stamps. *The Music Man* pictures a boy in cowboy attire accompanying his song on a guitar purchased with Top Value Stamps. A little girl standing in the background holds her hands over her ears to prevent hearing his discordant singing and strumming. Rockwell remarked it was "awfully corny, but it's what they want."

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The artwork from Stagecoach is on exhibition at the Museum through October 29.*

LINDA SZEKELY PERO is curator of Norman Rockwell Collections at the Norman Rockwell Museum.

A Rockwell Rediscovered

The Tale of Two Paintings



Breaking Home Ties, ©1954 SEPS: Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN.



Detail of Norman Rockwell's *Breaking Home Ties*



Replica of Norman Rockwell's *Breaking Home Ties*

On April 6, 2006, Norman Rockwell Museum held a press conference to announce that a real-life art mystery had been solved. An iconic Norman Rockwell painting, not previously known to have been missing, had been found. The painting, *Breaking Home Ties*, first appeared on the September 25, 1954 cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*.

In 1960, *Breaking Home Ties* was purchased from Norman Rockwell by his friend and fellow artist, Don Trachte, Sr. Trachte, a cartoonist for the syndicated comic strip *Henry*, was a talented and multi-faceted artist who spent hours in Rockwell's studio observing his technique and painting methodology. In 1970, Trachte and his wife separated and, of the eight original paintings in their collection, the one of greatest personal value to Trachte was clearly *Breaking Home Ties*. As part of the divorce settlement the paintings were given to the children, however the parents could hang the paintings in their respective homes. Trachte kept the Rockwell painting and his wife kept the additional seven paintings. Over the years, the family received numerous inquiries from collectors and dealers interested in purchas-

ing the Rockwell, most notably repeated requests from Ross Perot.

Breaking Home Ties is well-traveled. It has been included in a number of international exhibitions from the 1950s to 70s, most notably in Moscow and Cairo in 1964. In 2002, Trachte's children approached the Norman Rockwell Museum about housing the painting for safe keeping. For the first time in decades, the painting was put on view in 2003 at an exhibition about Rockwell's Vermont years at the Museum.

Prior to exhibition, the Museum took *Breaking Home Ties* to an art conservation lab for cleaning, as it had acquired a layer of grime due to its proximity to a wood stove in Trachte's home. When it arrived back at the Museum, curators closely examined some discrepancies in the painting from the original magazine cover tear sheet. The boy's face was not quite the same, and the coloration was slightly different.

The curators concluded that these variations were due to the effects of time as well as the painting's history of travel,



Dave and Don Trachte, Jr. solve the mystery of the false wall that had sheltered Rockwell's original painting.

including the fact that it had experienced severe climatic changes. Most importantly they held the belief that the painting had, at some point, been poorly conserved. Questions about the authenticity of the painting were raised but, given its provenance and the understanding that the painting had been retouched by a less than deft hand, they were put aside.

In May 2005 when Don Trachte, Sr. died, ownership and access to their father's studio and home moved to his four children. In late 2005, the authenticity of another painting owned by the Trachte family, a Mead Schaeffer, was questioned by Illustration House in New York, who had considered it for inclusion in an exhibition.

Don Trachte, Jr. began, early this year, to question what he believed to be his family's collection of original paintings by Arlington artists. At first he thought nothing had been done to the paintings; then, that there were conservation problems; then, that his father may have tried to do his own conservation work; and then, that his father may have made copies of the paintings. It was plausible, if inconceivable, that his father had made a replica of the original Rockwell.

In February 2006, Dave and his brother Don began a concerted effort to search for clues about the painting in their father's home, which had remained untouched since his death almost a year earlier. Dave found two paintings by artist George Hughes in Trachte's studio that were almost exactly the same and, disturbed by his discovery, immediately called Don. The brothers then found film prints in the studio, which revealed that their father had possessed two, nearly identical versions of *Breaking Home Ties*.

On Thursday, March 16, Dave began looking for places in his father's house where a painting could be hidden. On a

thinly-paneled wall where the painting hung, next to an inset bookcase, he noticed a gap in the paneling. When he pushed the wall, for the panel seemed to move freely. He then pulled the paneling away, about an inch, to look behind the wall and saw the edges of some small paintings and what he thought was the edge of a large painting.

According to Don, "The wall pulled quite hard, but was movable. We pulled the wall about six inches and I saw the two Gene Pelham paintings hanging on a clean, paneled wall, behind the wall, and identical to the wall that we were moving. I knew in an instant that I was looking at the eight paintings disputed in my parents divorce in 1973.

"We moved the wall a little more and I could see the Mead Schaeffer painting . . . I looked behind the wall at an angle and told Dave that I believed the Rockwell was behind the next wall. We began to move the second wall and, as we did, we saw the tail of the dog emerge, then the truck and the boy. We stopped and looked at the boy and knew instantly that this was the original."

What was revealed was that it appeared that Don Trachte, Sr. made replicas of the seven most important works to him in his collection and secretly hid the originals. In his lifetime, he had been especially zealous in protecting his family's inheritance. The Trachte children believe that this was the underlying motivation that drove their father to this unusual and improbable act of having copied the eight works.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *A Rockwell Rediscovered: The Tale of Two Paintings* will be on view at the Museum through October 21.

KIMBERLY RAWSON is Associate Director for Marketing and Communications at the Norman Rockwell Museum.

brush *strokes*

*Character is my chief concern when painting a head.
I want to create an individual with a definite personality.*

Norman Rockwell, from My Adventures as an Illustrator



Left to right: Norman Rockwell Museum Director Laurie Norton Moffatt presents actor Sam Waterston, a longtime Frederic Remington fan, with a parody of Norman Rockwell's Triple Self-Portrait, featuring the "Law and Order" star's likeness. Gala auctioneer Charles Flint. Jack and Jane Fitzpatrick. Deb and Jim McMenamy. Musician Bobby Sweet. Holly Coleman, Tyra Mazzer, and Ann Brown. Cindy and Lee Williams. Perri and Trish Petricca.



Snapshots from
The Rockwell Remington
Ranch Gala, June 10



Left to right: Denise Ulick, William Caligari, Jr., and Hope Sullivan. Dan Cain, Laurie Norton Moffatt, and Lynn and Sam Waterston. Jamie and Lois Williamson and Sam Waterston. Gala co-chairs Sherrye Dantzker and Kathy Cain. Auction items and table decorations. Lynda Mulvey and Bernie Shaw. Kip Sheridan and Matt Heim engage in a friendly game of "draw."

brush *strokes*

The Norman Rockwell Code

A famous museum . . . a shocking murder . . . a distinguished symbolologist . . . secrets written in code— no, it's not that "other" story.



Associate Director for Marketing and Communications Kimberly Rawson (far left) with cast and crew members from *The Norman Rockwell Code*, including writer/director Alfred Thomas Catalfo (at podium) and actor Mike Walsh (far right).

Since its debut on the Internet in May, *The Norman Rockwell Code* was an instant sensation, attracting over 1 million hits on the movie's Web site, international press coverage, and a spot in *Entertainment Weekly* magazine's The Must List.

The Norman Rockwell Museum is the fictional setting for this short film parody based on *The Da Vinci Code*. On June 25, a sold out, world-premiere screening of the film was held at the real Norman Rockwell Museum.

The movie can be viewed at www.thenormanrockwellcode.com

Remington's Ghosts

Alexander Nemerov, Ph.D., noted author and professor of art history at Yale University, explained his groundbreaking theory regarding the influences of American Civil War imagery on artist Frederic Remington's art of the West in a lecture at the Museum on June 11, 2006.

The exhibition, *Frederic Remington and the American Civil War: A Ghost Story*, opened on June 10, illuminating Nemerov's thesis with a haunting collection of Remington's depictions of the American West. Masterworks such as *What An Unbranded Cow Has Cost* (1895) are displayed alongside photographic prints from the Civil War, which appear eerily similar in composition. Though Remington rarely painted



Alexander Nemerov

Civil War scenes, Dr. Nemerov speculates that the conflict haunted his work in compelling and unexpected ways.

Frederic Remington (1861-1909), noted illustrator, painter, sculptor, and author, started making Western

art in the mid-1880s, just when two dominant attitudes emerged nationally about the Civil War: Reconciliation and the Lost Cause. "It was a time when Southerners were viewed increasingly—even in the North—as glorious heroes fighting against all odds for their homes and honor," remarked Nemerov, who also curated the exhibition. "It was a time when former enemies shook hands and the war's enormous bloodshed became increasingly repressed and romanticized, he said."

"A consummate reporter-artist, Frederic Remington became best known for the vigor and authenticity of his illustrations," noted Chief Curator Stephanie Plunkett. "While he defined national sensibilities through romanticized images of the cowboy on the American frontier, this exhibition brings together a rich tapestry of visual materials and cultural artifacts that invite a new understanding of Remington's West."

Frederic Remington produced more than 3,000 drawings and paintings, 22 bronze sculptures, a novel, a Broadway play, and over 100 articles and stories. At the end of the 19th century, Remington immortalized the Western experience. His romanticized vision of the heroic nature of American settlers defined a nation's character as one of independence, individualism, and stoic heroism, qualities that still resonate in American popular culture.

A Scout's Honor



Model Robert Waldrop posing in front of *Breaking Home Ties* during a recent visit to the Museum.

Norman Rockwell attended the Boy Scout Jamboree in Irvine, California, and the Philmont Scout Ranch, in Cimarron, New Mexico, in the summer of 1953. It was during this time that he began developing the concept for one of his most popular *Post* cover illustrations, *Breaking Home Ties*. Robert Waldrop was a teenage Eagle Scout who was working at the ranch at the time of Rockwell's visit. Because of this confluence of events he was to become immortalized as the college-bound son in Rockwell's famous painting. Waldrop tells the *Portfolio* more about his extraordinary experience.

Portfolio: *How did you come to pose for Norman Rockwell?*

Robert Waldrop: I was introduced to Norman Rockwell on July 27, 1953, at the Philmont Scout Ranch. He asked me if I would like to pose for a painting for the *Post*. At that time I wasn't sure who he or the *Post* was, but I said I would do it.

Mr. Rockwell talked about the theme of the painting and how he

wanted me to pose. I remember him holding my chin as he showed me the way he wanted me to look down the railroad tracks for the coming train. He then spoke with Alex (the ranch's horse wrangler, who portrays the boy's father in the picture) about his pose. The suit he asked me to wear was a little large, but they pinned it in the back so it would fit.

Portfolio: *Did you know when the cover would be published?*

Waldrop: No. Every Wednesday I drove my Mom to the grocery store. On September 29, 1954, while she was shopping, I headed toward the magazine rack at the grocery store and, from 20 feet away, saw myself on the cover of the *Post*! I was very surprised! My Mom bought the whole stack of magazines that day.

Years later, in 2003, a friend told me that she had just seen the *Breaking Home Ties* painting at the Norman Rockwell Museum. I had never seen the original painting, so I planned a visit to the Museum to see 'my cover.' I ended up having to cancel the trip, but this April, when the news broke about the original painting being found in Don Trachte's wall, I contacted the Museum. When I heard that it was on exhibit, I made plans to visit Stockbridge as soon as possible.

Seeing the original was an emotional and dramatic moment. The staff interviewed me for the Museum's archives and also showed me all the materials used to create the painting. Being a model for Mr. Rockwell was a high point of my life.



Stephanie Plunkett, Claire Williams and Laurie Norton Moffatt.

A Model Employee

Norman Rockwell Museum guide Claire Williams was awarded the Governor's prestigious Hospitality Award from the Massachusetts State Office of Travel and Tourism at a special awards dinner held on March 29. Williams received the award in recognition of her service at Norman Rockwell Museum.

NRM Wins Design Awards

Norman Rockwell Museum has received six publications awards for creative work completed in 2005. The prestigious awards are from the New England Museum Association and the national organization, the American Association of Museums, who award excellence in design, production, and effective communication in all aspects of museum publishing on paper. Awards were received by designers Mary Herrmann and Toni Kenny, project director Kimberly Rawson and educator Melinda Georgeson.

When Words are Not Enough

Suffering from e-mail fatigue? Information overload? In a world giddy with high-speed connections and hooked on instant messaging, *More Than Words: Artists' Illustrated Letters* from the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art, opening at the Norman Rockwell Museum on November 11, 2006, reconnects us with the vanishing tradition of epistolary correspondence. The exhibition showcases more than 65 handwritten, illustrated letters from some of the most important artists of the 19th and 20th centuries, including Alexander Calder, Dale Chihuly, Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer, Frida Kahlo, Norman Rockwell, Andy Warhol, and Andrew Wyeth. For these artists, words were not enough.

"Like Rockwell, many of the artists in this exhibition made a steady income from their illustrations, so it is not surprising that they would embellish their letters with a sketch or two," says Laurie Norton Moffatt, director of the Norman Rockwell Museum. "What is fascinating about *More than Words* is how the intimate process of letter writing offered them a greater freedom of self-expression, stretching their powers of observation and ingenuity, often in the most whimsical and charming ways. The illustrations do more than simply enliven the letters—they provide a potent sense of immediacy in the artist's life."

"One should never forget that the power of words is limited," writes painter Walter Kuhn in a 1913 note illustrated with animated sketches of pinch-faced ladies in berets. His decorated pages and the works of the other artists in the exhibition provide clues to their creative personalities through spontaneous drawings, caricatures, watercolors, or collages. Kuhn, who was an organizer of the International Exhibition of Modern Art of 1913, known as the Armory Show, was a painter, etcher, lithographer, and popular cartoonist, and his letters to wife Vera display his flair for caricature. Sculptor Alexander Calder made a map to his home in bold strokes of color that looks just like one of his mobiles. A letter from fiery artist Frida Kahlo is sealed with passionate red lipstick kisses.



Letter from Allen Tupper True to Jane True (detail) ©1947 Courtesy of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. All rights reserved.

"The personal letters featured in *More Than Words* uncover new insights into the personalities and creative processes of some of America's finest artists," said Liza Kirwin, the exhibition's curator and curator of manuscripts at the Archives of American Art. The exhibition was inspired by Kirwin's book of the same name, published by Princeton Architectural Press (2005). The exhibition has been organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Norman Rockwell Museum will be the first venue to host the exhibition before it begins a 10-city national tour.

Throughout the exhibition, letters are arranged in sections by theme. The sections include "Bon Voyage," containing letters written to and from travelers; "I Do," consisting of letters written from the heart; "Plays on Words," featuring creative letters using metaphors, puns or rebuses (picture puzzles); "Visual Events," describing key personal, professional and political events; "Graphic Instructions," providing illustrated directives to the reader; and "Thank You," showing letters of gratitude.

To complement the exhibition at the Norman Rockwell Museum, rarely seen poems and letters written and illustrated by Norman Rockwell selected from the Museum's archives will also be on view. Several pictographs (words represented by pictures) by Rockwell will give viewers an opportunity to sharpen decoding skills, and three amusing school-absence letters Rockwell wrote for his son Tommy, each illustrated with the reason for his absence, show Rockwell at his most lighthearted. Unlike most of his work-for-hire which was painstakingly planned-out and executed in final form in oil paint, Rockwell's letter embellishments are often in watercolor and are always whimsical, unselfconscious, unstudied images taken straight from his imagination and imbued with Rockwell's legendary sense of humor.

KIMBERLY RAWSON is Associate Director for Marketing and Communications at the Norman Rockwell Museum.

spotlight

A Rockwell Rediscovered: The Tale of Two Paintings

ON VIEW THROUGH OCTOBER 21, 2006



Through an improbable convergence of circumstances, an iconic painting, not known to have been missing, has been found after more than 35 years. Norman Rockwell's *Breaking Home Ties* was painted for the September 25, 1954 cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*. This exhibition tells the story of a series of events that

led to the astonishing discovery of the hidden existence of the original painting and an expertly crafted replica.

Frederic Remington and the American Civil War: A Ghost Story

ON VIEW THROUGH OCTOBER 29, 2006



At the dawn of the American Century, Frederic Remington, an artist best known for his illustrations in the periodicals of the day, defined national values through his romanticized depictions of cowboys on the American frontier. He created powerful images that conveyed a sense of strong individual-

ism and identity that was embraced by President Theodore Roosevelt and millions of other admirers who encountered his art in the press. In this landmark exhibition, guest curator and art historian Alexander Nemerov, Ph.D., of Yale University, examines the impact of Civil War photography on Remington's work.

This exhibition is sponsored by  BERKSHIRE BANK

Breaking Home Ties (Detail) ©1954 SEPS; Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN. *The Bronco Buster*, Frederic Remington. ©1895. Collection of the Frederic Remington Art Museum. Letter from Paul Bransom to Kicki Hays (detail) ©1947 Courtesy of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. All rights reserved.

Saturday Evening Post Covers

ON VIEW THROUGH JANUARY 28, 2007

Take a trip through time with Norman Rockwell's *Saturday Evening Post* covers, from his first illustration, printed in 1916, when the artist was only 22. Rockwell painted 321 different images for the weekly publication through 1963. This collection of original tear sheets is a remarkable visual history of an artist's development and a fascinating pictorial summary of life in 20th-century America.

Stuffed Shirts: Sculptural Scarecrows Inspired by Rockwell

OCTOBER 7 THROUGH 31, 2006

Celebrate harvest season at the Norman Rockwell Museum! Visit this fall and be spooked and sparked by a special exhibition of scarecrows created by artists. Each scarecrow is unique, but all are based on the art of Norman Rockwell. The scarecrows will be standing patient watch over the Museum's lovely lawns and fields through October. They'll be waiting for you!

More than Words: Artists' Illustrated Letters from the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art

NOVEMBER 11, 2006 THROUGH JANUARY 14, 2007



More than Words: Illustrated Letters from the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art is an exhibition featuring intimate works of art by some of the 19th- and 20th-century's most admired artists, including Alexander Calder, Dale Chihuly, Frederic Edwin Church, Frida Kahlo, Norman Rockwell and Andrew Wyeth. This exhibition

will appeal to anyone curious for an inside glimpse into the professional, personal, and creative lives of some of the art world's biggest names.

Norman Rockwell's Italy

April 22 - May 3, 2007

Rome • Garfagnana • Carrara

This is the first of our series of travel programs designed to retrace Norman Rockwell's world travels, revealing some of the inspirations and influences in his life and art. With Museum Director Laurie Norton Moffatt, you will visit some of Europe's finest museums, view artistic treasures and historic sights, revel in extraordinary landscapes, and dine at Norman Rockwell's favorite bistros and ristoranti. Sculptor Peter Rockwell, Norman's son, will be our guide in Rome, where he will give a personal tour of his sculpture studio and share family stories over wine on his terrace. Peter and Laurie will lead an additional art and sculpture tour, post-trip, to the Marble Mountains of Carrara and the beautiful cities of Lucca and Pisa.



Norman Rockwell relaxes in Italy.

You will be receiving a travel brochure in the mail for this program, managed by Siemer & Hand Travel, with the tour itinerary and cost. For more information, call Lynda Mulvey, special events coordinator, at 413-298-4100, ext. 235.

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