

summer 2007

# portfolio

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## portfolio

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Cover: Mother and Daughter Swimming, Alfred Charles Parker. Cover illustration for *Ladies' Home Journal*, July 1940. ©1940. Collection of Kit and Donna Parker.



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## from the director

Dear Museum friends,

It's summer again in the Berkshires and at the Norman Rockwell Museum we are celebrating the return of warm weather in style. Our glamorous new exhibition, *Ephemeral Beauty: Al Parker and the American Women's Magazine, 1940-1960*, pays tribute to illustrator Al Parker, whose stylish virtuosity and the edginess of his compositions were influenced by photography, jazz, and modern painting. Many of you will recognize his work created for the major women's magazines of the day such as *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, *McCall's* and *Cosmopolitan* that had a profound influence on the values and aspirations of American women and their families during the post-war era. Read more about it on page 3, in a fascinating article about Parker and his artist contemporaries by the exhibition's curator Stephanie Haboush Plunkett.

Our Glam Gala on June 9 was a great success! The event raised more than \$60,000 to support the Museum's educational programs and exhibitions. Thank you to those who joined us for an evening of art, fashion, dining, and dancing and for bidding with such alacrity at our amazing Glam-o-rama live auction. See page 12 for photos from the event, as well as from our exhibition opening held earlier that night.

Be sure to join us Thursday afternoons at 5:30 p.m. in August for our American Pop Lecture and Performance Series. The American Pop series, supported by Bank of America, takes an entertaining and informative look at the myths, mores, and mystique of a post-World War II world—from design, fashion, and pop culture to music and vintage

cars. All programs are free with Museum admission and, of course, there is never an admission charge for members.

We are very excited to be taking Rockwell on the road this fall with an exhibition containing some of the most important works from our collection. It will explore Norman Rockwell's unparalleled role as an American icon-maker and storyteller. This comprehensive exhibition, organized by the Museum, is called *American Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell*. It will launch on November 10 at the Akron Art Museum in Akron, Ohio. A full schedule of the Museum's traveling exhibitions, including venues for *American Chronicles* is on page 10.

*American Chronicles*: has been made possible by Fidelity Investments through the Fidelity Foundation and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, American Masterpieces Program. Publication support has been provided by the Henry Luce Foundation. Media sponsorship has been provided by the Curtis Publishing Company and by the Norman Rockwell Licensing Company. Conservation support has been provided by the Stockman Family Foundation.

The Norman Rockwell Museum is honored to share its collections and exhibitions with museums all around the world. From China to Spain, to cities all across the United States, the art of Norman Rockwell and his many illustration colleagues are enjoyed by millions of visitors.

Wishing you a wonderful summer.



# Ephemeral Beauty

## Al Parker and the American Women's Magazine, 1940-1960

by Stephanie Haboush Plunkett

A founder of the modern glamour aesthetic, Alfred Charles Parker (1906-1985), defined the progressive look and feel of published imagery at a time of sweeping change, when Americans, emerging from the trials of economic depression and war, sought symbols of hope and redemption on the pages of our nation's periodicals. His innovative modernist artworks created for mass-appeal women's magazines and their advertisers captivated upwardly mobile mid-twentieth century readers, reflecting and profoundly influencing the values and aspirations of American women and their families during the post-war era.

In today's digital information age, it is difficult to imagine the role that magazines played in a society quite different from our own, in which radio and telephone offered the only technological connection between home and the larger world. Ephemeral by design and available at low cost, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, *McCall's*, *Woman's Home Companion* and other leading monthlies provided a steady stream of information, entertainment, and advice to vast, loyal audiences. While

*"I think one of the things I like best about illustration is the fact that things are always changing. It's always tomorrow."*

Al Parker, 1964

Woman on the Phone, Alfred Charles Parker. 1943.  
Illustration for Women are Awfully Important by  
Elizabeth Dunn, Ladies' Home Journal, November 1943.



*You're Always With Me*, Alfred Charles Parker. 1942. Illustration for *The American Magazine*, July 1942.

top publications boasted subscriptions of two to eight million during the 1940s and 1950s, anxiously awaited journals were shared among family and friends, bringing readership even higher. Fiction and serialized novels, poetry, articles on fashion and beauty, and guidance on marriage, child rearing, and household management were staples, second only to the array of product enticements that supported the bottom line and occupied the most space in each issue.

Richly visual, mid-twentieth-century magazines often relied upon the abilities of gifted illustrators to engage the attention and emotions of their constituents. Many artists working for publication became trusted contributors, attracting dedicated fans and attaining true celebrity status. Their ingenious, often-idealized images portrayed a compelling picture of the life that many aspired to, delineating a clear path to fulfillment and success.

Leaping beyond the constraints of traditional narrative picture making, Al Parker emerged in the 1930s to establish a vibrant visual vocabulary for the new suburban life so desired in the aftermath of the Depression and World War II. More graphic and less detailed than the paintings of the luminary Norman Rockwell, who was a contemporary and an inspiration to the artist, Parker's stylish compositions were sought after by editors and

art directors for their contemporary look and feel. "Art involves a constant metamorphosis . . . due both to the nature of the creative act and to the ineluctable march of time," Parker said. Embraced by an eagerly romantic public who aspired to the ideals of beauty and lifestyle reflected in his art, Parker's pictures revealed a penchant for reinvention, and his ongoing experiments with visual form kept him ahead of the curve for decades.

Born on October 16, 1906, in St. Louis, Missouri, Al Parker began his creative journey early in life, encouraged by parents with an affinity for the arts. Though their furniture business paid the bills, Parker's father was an aspiring painter and his mother a singer and pianist. The young artist's precocious illustrations brought song lyrics to life on the rolls of his mother's player piano, and were proudly displayed for admiring guests. Hours spent listening to jazz in the furniture store's record department and regular trips to the movies and theater inspired a lifelong love of music.

At the age of fifteen, Parker took up the saxophone, and by the following summer, was proficient enough to lead his own Mississippi riverboat band. Musical excursions on the *Golden Eagle*, *Cape Girardeau*, and other venerable vessels continued for five summers, "vacations with pay" that offered Parker the chance to sketch admiring fans between sets and play with jazz

greats like Louis Armstrong. His first year's tuition at the St. Louis School of Fine Arts at Washington University was financed by riverboat captain Charles J. Bender, Parker's grandfather, who hoped to dissuade him from making music a career.

Parker played the saxophone, clarinet, and drums to fund his education, but from 1923 to 1928, he became immersed in the study of art. "Oil paint was the medium in 1924," he recalled, but drawing was key. "At the time, [teachers] frowned on modern or abstract artists. You can always depart from the academic in figures, but you have to know how to draw well before you can do it. I learned composition and color mostly by doing."

While in school, Parker met fellow student Evelyn Buchroeder, a gifted painter who earned but declined a scholarship to attend the Art Students League in New York City. Placing her career on hold, she remained in St. Louis, where the couple was wed in 1930. During their fifty-five-year union, Evelyn was a frequent model for her husband's illustrations and a loving mother to the Parkers' three children.

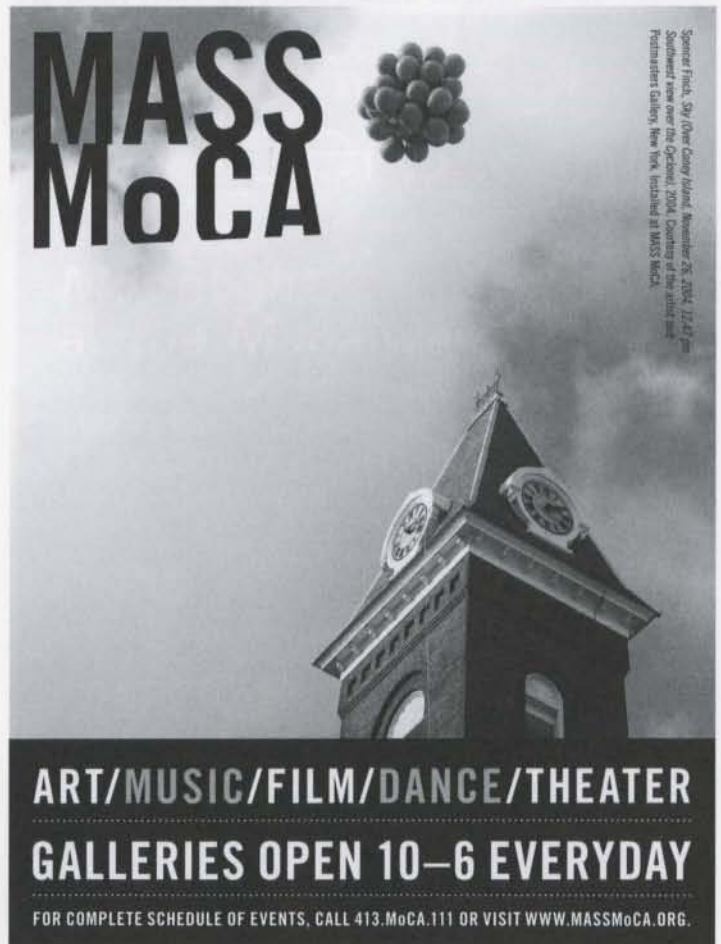
Parker's first professional assignment, a series of window displays for a St. Louis department store, caught the attention of Wallace Bassford, a commercial art studio head, who invited the artist to join his team of illustrators and graphic designers. Imposing deadlines underscored the speed and facility required to complete illustrations for the agency's diverse client base, providing invaluable experience. But Parker noted that "the studio's strange practice of signing its name to my efforts brought a frustrating tag of anonymity," and inspired him to set out on his own. He established a business with designer Russel Viehman and rented studio space to fashion artist Janet Lane, a collaboration that would inform the dynamic compositions and stylish subject matter that Parker became known for.

In 1930, a cover contest sponsored by House Beautiful brought Parker an honorable mention and entrée into the world of national magazine publishing. The visibility of cover illustration and its viability as a lucrative outlet during the depression era, when commercial assignments grew thin, were strong incentives to make eastern contacts. "Saving model fees," Parker said, "I posed Ev, Frances, and our coronet player's girlfriend, dashing off three heads rendered in colored pencils." His elegant, stylized drawings were sent to a New

York artists' representative and soon sold to Ladies' Home Journal. Judged to be "too far out" for fiction, which tended to be accompanied by more literal representations, his art first appeared on the magazine's fashion pages, initiating a long association with the prominent women's monthly.

Ladies' Home Journal editors, impressed by Parker's creativity, began forwarding chic clothing and accessories to his St. Louis studio for rendering. Though he was not a fashion illustrator by trade, he mastered the art of "radical anatomy," drawing "figures eight heads tall" and delineating the flow of fabric and hemlines. The artist's first fiction manuscript came from Woman's Home Companion in 1934, turning the tide toward the steady stream of assignments from Good Housekeeping, McCall's, Collier's, Cosmopolitan, American, and Pictorial Review that followed.

In 1936, Parker and his family moved to the nation's publishing center, taking up residence on New York City's



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Government Girl, Alfred Charles Parker, 1943. Illustration for Government Girl by Adela Rogers St. John, *Ladies' Home Journal*, March 1943.

Central Park West. Commencing a vigorous schedule of deadline-driven days, he worked at the legendary Hotel des Artistes, a gothic building that had also provided studio space to Isadora Duncan, Noel Coward, Norman Rockwell, and other celebrated creators. Lauded for his visual eclecticism and fearless experiments with media and compositional design, his popularity with editors and readers soared. Cropped compositions and extreme close-ups inspired by film, and by photography, which was a prime competitor for magazine pages at the time, made him the artist to emulate. “Al and I were more or less contemporaries and worked for . . . the same magazines, but our professional relationship might be described more accurately as master and disciple,” said glamour artist Jon Whitcomb, one of many professional illustrators who followed Parker’s artistic lead.

Despite the accolades, the path to a finished illustration “was not strewn with roses,” for “innumerable taboos abounded.” Uplifting images reflecting prevailing cultural attitudes were required and the preferences of art directors were employed as points of departure. “If one editor favored green, green predominated the palette. Red was reserved for the editor who abhorred green,” Parker observed. Publications striving to please the broadest possible audience did not often embrace invention. “An exceptionally innovating performance from the brush . . . depended to a great extent on the capacity of the art

director to evoke it,” Parker said. “Once evoked, the art director expounded its merits to the magazine, which usually demanded a watered down version, innovation being reserved for failing magazines in their dying gasp for attention.”

For all of its exhilaration, life in New York was filled with unrelenting activity. Parker produced up to ten finished assignments each month and carried out the requisite social life that accompanied his success. Publishers gave “luncheons, cocktail parties and dinners . . . for their illustrators, where one could hobnob with other contributors, celebrities and VIPs, from Eleanor Roosevelt to Humphrey Bogart, whose mother was an illustrator,” he wrote. Though he enjoyed living the life that he portrayed, the artist sought a place to work that would afford more space and less distraction. In 1938, Parker and his family moved north to rural Larchmont, an easy train ride away, and rented studio space in nearby New Rochelle, a haven for illustrators since the late nineteenth century.

That year, the first of the artist’s famed mother-and-daughter covers for *Ladies’ Home Journal* was commissioned. Published in February 1939, his graceful silhouettes of a mother and her young daughter gliding across the ice in perfect unison and in matching outfits created a sensation. Over the course of the next thirteen years, Parker’s fair-haired cover girls celebrated holiday traditions and shared a love of sport but also played their part during World War II. Resourceful and good-natured, they modeled best behavior by rationing, sending letters abroad, and taking on dad’s chores at home and in the garden. America’s ideal family was reunited in July 1945 when Parker’s mother and daughter welcomed their returning soldier, a powerful image that inspired another narrative at the outset of the baby-boomer generation. By that December, two knitted booties—one pink and one blue—were already underway, and in 1946, a son was born.

The power of Parker’s illustrations was underscored in a 1949 *Ladies’ Home Journal* campaign designed to attract advertisers. Thirty of the artist’s mother-and-daughter cover illustrations were featured on a poster that read, “These cover girls *really* started something! Since their introduction in 1939, American women have been adopting them, copying

their clothes, flooding us with letters—making them ‘part of the family.’ Mother and daughter sparked a fashion trend that sprang from Journal covers to stores across the country. They demonstrate Journal power to put personalities (and products) into American marts and homes.”

The origins of Parker’s mother-and-daughter series was explained toward the end of its life span in a 1951 letter from Ladies’ Home Journal editor Bruce Gould to Richard S. Chenault, art editor of The American Magazine. “Al Parker’s famous Mother and Daughter covers grew out of the fact that Mrs. Gould and I used to skate on Sunday afternoon in Princeton at Baker’s Rink. Since neither of us skate very well, we had plenty of time to watch those who did. One thing particularly attracted our attention. Mothers who were very good skaters themselves . . . were teaching their little daughters and taking more pride in their daughters’ progress than in their own undisputed prowess. This spectacle of the proud mother and aspiring daughter seemed to us to have cover possibilities,” he wrote.

Gould and his wife, Beatrice Blackmar Gould, who was also a Ladies’ Home Journal editor, communicated their concept to Parker, who began experiments on the theme. After several tries, he eliminated distracting backgrounds in favor of a clean poster design that emphasized strong, simple forms and recognizable narratives. “After that, everything was easy,” Gould said. “Seventh Avenue saw a good idea and mothers and daughters throughout the United States have been wearing similar costumes, similar jewelry, etcetera, etcetera, since.”

Al Parker’s last mother-and-daughter cover was published in May 1952. His idyllic portrayal of an officer’s joyful return to his still-beautiful wife and growing family during the Korean War conflict brought an era of the artist’s career, and the magazine’s history, to a close. Ladies’ Home Journal’s covers were solely photographic after that, completing the transition away from traditional narrative illustration that had begun in the latter part of the previous decade. Photography captured the moment for many publications that were striving to remain

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Expression of Love, Alfred Charles Parker. 1956. Illustration for Expression of Love by Jack Finney, *Good Housekeeping*, February 1956.

current, ultimately relegating the art of illustration to a more decorative or conceptual function.

Parker and his family lived in Westport, Connecticut, from 1940 to 1955, where his studio, surrounded by “cornfields and crickets,” was in close proximity to a community of noted magazine illustrators who made the town their home. There, he maintained his focus on editorial and advertising assignments but also made time for music. During World War II, Parker became the drummer in a jazz band populated by instrument-playing members of New York’s Society of Illustrators, including cartoonist Cliff Sterrett, illustrator Ken Thompson, and art directors Clark Agnew and Paul Smith. Performances in hospitals and on bases were punctuated by drawing sessions that produced cast inscriptions and personal portraits as mementos. Parker’s celebrity appearances and donations of original art inspired the sale of war bonds, raising substantial subsidies for the war effort.

Though he graciously offered advice to aspiring professionals throughout his career, in 1948, Parker became a founding member of the Institute of Commercial Art in Westport. This popular correspondence course initiated by Albert Dorne became better known as the Famous Artists School, and boasted a celebrated faculty that featured illustrators Norman Rockwell, Stevan Dohanos, Robert Fawcett, Ben Stahl, Harold von Schmidt, Austin Briggs, Jon Whitcomb, Peter Helk, Fred Ludekens, and John Atherton. “Their belief is that anyone with the time and desire can master the craftsmanship

of art,” wrote Arthur D. Morse in a 1950 article for *Collier’s*. “They agree that the inner flame which inspires *great* art is the inherent personal property of the individual.”

Though the tenets of draftsmanship and design were carefully documented in his curriculum, Parker’s inexhaustible quest to find new visual solutions could not be taught. Continuing his experiments, the artist made magazine history by creating illustrations for five fiction articles in the September 1954 issue of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, each under a pen name in a different artistic style. “Change is a style in itself,” Parker said. “Developing an approach and then dropping it in favor of something fresh is a completely calculated move on my part.”

By the late 1950s, magazine publishing had undergone substantial change inspired by a trend toward suburban living that reduced newsstand sales, making women’s periodicals less appealing to advertisers. Rising production and circulation costs produced shrinking profit margins and television became the media of choice for information and entertainment. To combat this trend, a range of creative marketing techniques were employed. Geographically specialized and split editions allowed manufacturers to test advertisements by reaching segmented markets. Striking graphics, product samples, and foldouts engaged audiences but could not stem the tide that would ultimately create less opportunity for artists, and even Parker was not immune. By the end of the 1960s, illustration-friendly publications like *The Woman’s Home Companion*, *Collier’s*, and *The Saturday*



Evening Post had ceased publication, and many others had changed course.

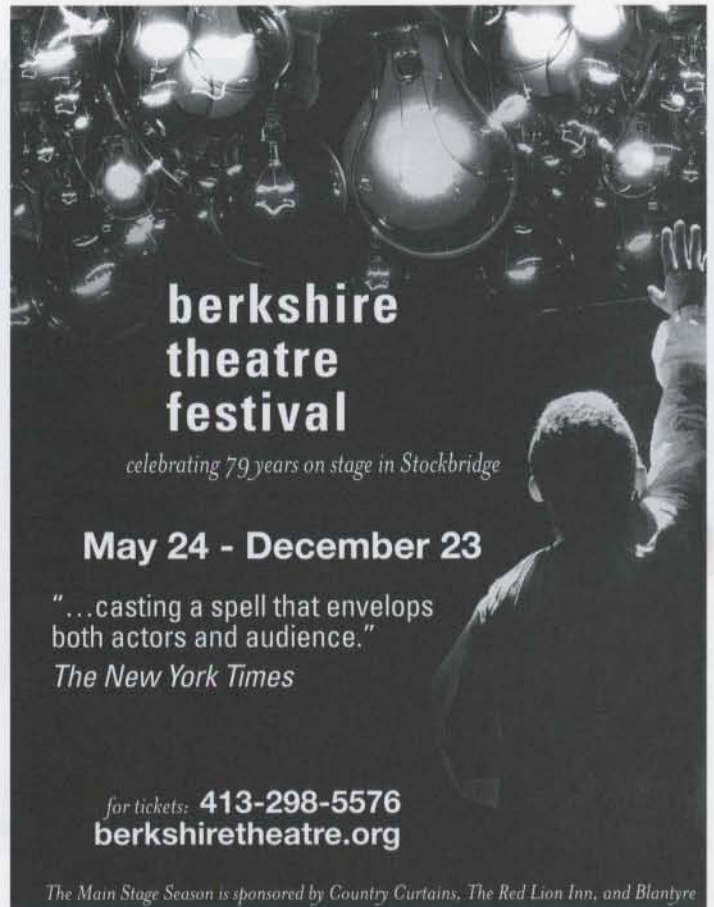
Parker and others found some relief on the pages of magazines like Sports Illustrated and Fortune, which continued to reserve space for expressive entries by artists. Sports Illustrated invited him to capture the excitement of premier auto racing at the Monaco Grand Prix for its readers, a highlight of his career. Painting and photographing on location with little editorial oversight, he produced a masterful suite of paintings that spread across eight pages of the May 11, 1964, issue. Experiential and documentary, this vibrant visual essay conveys a true sense of local color and an intimate glimpse of both racers and spectators.

As Westport grew more crowded, Parker, who suffered from asthma, sought a change of climate and went west. In 1955, the Parker family lived briefly in Scottsdale, Arizona, where he was “knee deep in American Airlines ad art,” but finally settled in Carmel Valley, California, where he continued to work and to play music until his death in 1985. Sought after as a speaker by arts organizations and schools throughout the United States, Parker exhibited his work and received the highest professional honors for his contributions to the field. In 1965, he was elected to the Society of Illustrators’ Hall of Fame, an award bestowed to him by legendary illustrator Arthur William Brown. Honorary doctorate degrees from the Rhode Island School of Design and the California College of Arts and Crafts in 1978 and 1979, respectively, were sources of pride for the artist.

Frank Eltonhead, a gifted art director who worked with Parker at Ladies’ Home Journal and Cosmopolitan, reflected on his accomplishments. “Perhaps once in an art director’s lifetime a person will enter the field of illustration with a viewpoint and talent so individual, so strong, and so right . . . that in a comparatively short time this person’s feeling and thinking and work has affected the thinking and work of his contemporaries.” Parker’s influence ran deep, and his vibrant images, borne of diverse methodologies and aesthetic approaches, inspired and entertained millions who encountered his art at the turn of a page.

Editor’s note: *The artwork from Ephemeral Beauty: Al Parker and the American Women’s Magazine, 1940-1960 is on exhibition at the Museum through October 28.*

Stephanie Haboush Plunkett is associate director of exhibitions and programs, and chief curator at the Norman Rockwell Museum.



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JULY 11 - 22 Nikos Stage

**The FRONT PAGE**  
JULY 4 - 15 Main Stage

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JULY 18 - 29 Main Stage

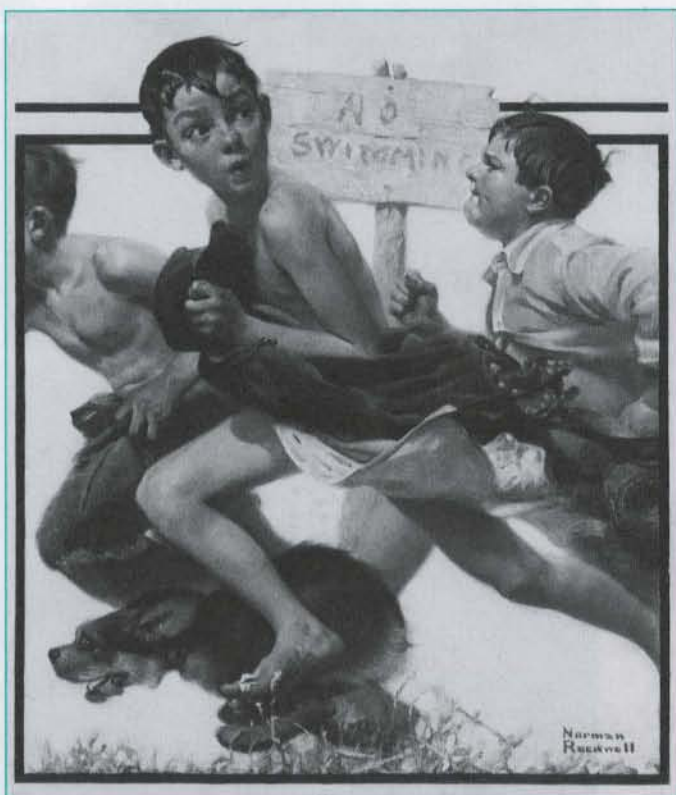
*Party Come Here*  
JULY 25 - AUG 5 Nikos Stage

**THE PHYSICISTS**  
AUG 7 - 18 Center Stage

**The Corn is Green**  
AUG 1 - 12 Main Stage

*The Autumn Garden*  
AUG 15 - 26 Main Stage

**Crimes of the Heart**  
AUG 8 - 19 Nikos Stage



# The American Spirit

## Norman Rockwell's Artworks Go On National Tour

by Kimberly Rawson

A rare exhibition from the collection of the Norman Rockwell Museum, exploring Norman Rockwell's unparalleled role as an American icon-maker and storyteller, will embark on a national tour this year. *American Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell* opens November 10, 2007, at the Akron Art Museum in Akron, Ohio, and will continue on to nine additional venues nationwide. The exhibition is organized by Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

*American Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell* has been generously supported by lead sponsor Fidelity Investments, through the Fidelity Foundation. Additional support has been provided by an American Masterpieces Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Henry Luce Foundation, The Curtis Publishing Company, the Norman Rockwell Estate Licensing Company, and the Stockman Family Foundation Trust.

Norman Rockwell (1894-1978) painted the best of America, creating indelible images of the lives, hopes, and dreams of Americans in the 20th century. Expertly weaving both narrative and painterly images, he was a consummate visual storyteller with a finely honed sense of what made an image successful in the new, rapidly changing era of mass media. Rockwell's unique artistic legacy, established during 65 years of painting, offers a personal chronicle of 20th century life and aspirations that has both reflected and profoundly influenced American perceptions and ideals.

All of the original works on view in *American Chronicles* are drawn from the permanent collection of Norman Rockwell Museum, including such beloved and well-known images as *Triple Self-Portrait* (1960), *Girl at Mirror* (1954), *Going and Coming* (1947), and *Art Critic* (1955). The exhibition will

**LEFT:** No Swimming, Norman Rockwell. 1921. Oil on canvas. Cover illustration for *The Saturday Evening Post*, June 4, 1921 From the permanent collection of Norman Rockwell Museum. ©1921 SEPS: Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN. **RIGHT:** Mine America's Coal (Portrait of a Coal Miner), Norman Rockwell. 1943. Oil on canvas. Poster for U.S. Office of War Information. From the permanent collection of Norman Rockwell Museum. Licensed by Norman Rockwell Licensing Company, Niles, IL.

include materials from the Museum's archives demonstrating how Rockwell worked, proceeding from preliminary sketches, photographs, color studies, and detailed drawings to the finished painting.

"We are delighted to have the opportunity to share these extraordinary works from our collection with a national audience," says Norman Rockwell Museum Director Laurie Norton Moffatt.

### Five Themes in the Career of an American Icon Maker

*American Chronicles* traces the evolution of Rockwell's art and iconography throughout his career—from carefully choreographed reflections on childhood innocence in such paintings as *No Swimming* (1921) to powerful, consciousness-raising images like *The Problem We All Live With* (1964), which documented the traumatic realities of desegregation in the South. Commentary focusing on recurring personal themes, artistic and cultural influences, and the commercial climate that influenced Rockwell's creative process will be woven throughout the exhibition.

*American Chronicles* is divided into five thematic groups to demonstrate how Rockwell's images provided Americans with a vocabulary for describing and celebrating themselves, their country, and their experiences in the 20th century. Themes explored in the exhibition include: *American Roots*; *Reflecting and Shaping American Character*; *Idealism, Attitude and the American Dream*; *Shaping the American Aesthetic*; and *The Artist's Process*, which offers insight into the development of *Murder in Mississippi* (1965), Rockwell's haunting depiction of a civil rights tragedy in the South, from first idea to finished painting and published work. The exhibition will bring visitors into Rockwell's creative process, tracing the artist's complex, time-consuming working method, from original concept to the final painting and the published image. A complete set of all 323 of Rockwell's covers for *The Saturday Evening Post* are also included in the exhibition. Rockwell's work for the *Post* spanned a remarkable 47 years, and the artist became a household name in the process.

### AMERICAN CHRONICLES: THE ART OF NORMAN ROCKWELL


Akron Art Museum	Akron, Ohio	November 10, 2007 – February 3, 2008
Orlando Museum of Art	Orlando, Florida	March 1 – May 26, 2008
Chrysler Museum of Art	Norfolk, Virginia	November 8, 2008 – February 1, 2009
Detroit Institute of Arts Museum of Art	Detroit, Michigan Fort Lauderdale, Florida	March 8 – May 31, 2009 November 14, 2009 – February 7, 2010
Wichita Art Museum*	Wichita, Kansas	March 6 – May 30, 2010
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art*	Bentonville, Arkansas	November 6, 2010 – February 5, 2011
Tacoma Art Museum*	Tacoma, Washington	March 3 – May 27, 2011
North Carolina Museum of Art*	Raleigh, North Carolina	November 13 – 2011—February 5, 2012
Available	—	March 3 – May 27, 2012

\*pending

### Major Publication Accompanies Tour

A fully illustrated, 250-page accompanying exhibition catalog will be published this fall by the Norman Rockwell Museum that will provide an unprecedented written perspective on Rockwell's work. The volume offers an unusually broad approach to the artist's life and work, using visual analysis, cultural history, and mass media studies to look critically at Rockwell's role in influencing American perceptions of the 20th century. The catalog features high-quality color plates, as well as reproductions of archival photographs.

Kimberly Rawson is associate director of marketing and communications for the Norman Rockwell Museum.



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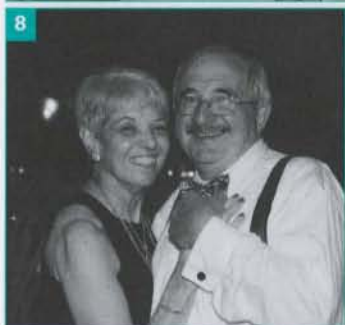
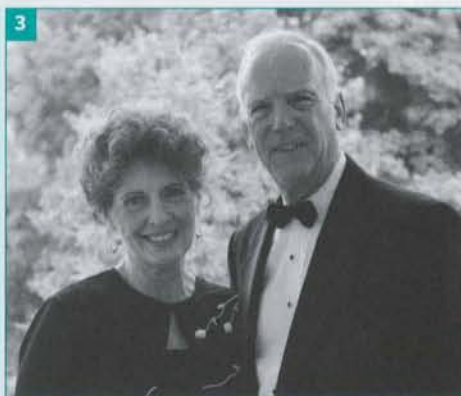
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# brush *strokes*

While the rest of us are working knee-deep in a groove, you are forever changing and improving.

*Norman Rockwell, from a letter to illustrator Al Parker.*



Norman Rockwell Museum rolled out the red carpet on June 9, for the Glam Gala, inspired by *Ephemeral Beauty: Al Parker and the American Women's Magazine, 1940-1960*. Over 200 celebrants got their glam on at the special dinner dance and live auction, including Kit Parker, son of the illustrator Al Parker, who helped to define our modern-day beauty aesthetic during the 1940s to 1960s. Revelers revisited the age of glamour by dancing to the swinging sounds of The Ross Novgrad Sextet. Proceeds from the evening's event will benefit the Museum's educational programs and exhibitions.

**Photos:** clockwise from top left  
 1. Lew and Margery Steinberg.  
 2. Board President Dan Cain and Director Laurie Norton Moffatt.  
 3. Suzanne and David Klausmeyer.  
 4. Norman Rockwell model Wray Gunn and Ruby Bridges Hall.  
 5. Jane and Neil Golub.  
 6. Illustrator Peter de Sève and his wife Randall  
 7. Nancy Kalodner.

8. Mary Jo and Walter Engels.  
 9. Murry and Carol Tinkelman with Norman Rockwell Museum Chief Curator Stephanie Plunkett.  
 10. Richard and Kellie Wright and Kimberly Rawson, Associate Director for Marketing and Communications for Norman Rockwell Museum.

*Photos by Walter Engels and Jeremy Clowe.*



## Rockwell's studio gets a new roof

Norman Rockwell Museum received a grant from the 1772 Foundation to preserve the roof on Norman Rockwell's Stockbridge studio, one of the Museum's most important holdings. The grant funded the installation of new roofing materials that provide enhanced moisture control and improve weather resistance.

In 1976, Norman Rockwell placed his studio and its contents in trust to the Norman Rockwell Museum. It was in this studio, adapted from a rustic carriage barn, that Rockwell created some of his most renowned works, including *Triple Self-Portrait* and *The Problem We All Live With*. Honoring Rockwell's wish that his Stockbridge workplace be made

accessible to the public, the studio and its contents were moved in 1986 from the center of Stockbridge to the Museum's grounds. Rockwell's studio is open to Museum visitors from May through October and contains Rockwell's 500-volume art library, his furnishings, ethnographic objects, mementos from his world travels, and artwork sent by admirers.

The 1772 Foundation's mission is to preserve and enhance American historical entities for future generations to enjoy with particular interest in farming, industrial development, transportation, and unusual historical buildings. The 1772 Foundation has funded over 200 preservation projects throughout the United States.

## New tax law benefits for those 70 1/2 and older

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows individuals age 70 1/2 or older to make tax-free distributions directly to charitable organizations, such as the Norman Rockwell Museum, from either a traditional retirement account (IRA) or a Roth IRA of up to \$100,000.

The distribution to a charity generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so even those who do not

itemize their tax returns receive the benefit. The gifts may be made in addition to any other charitable giving a donor has planned for the year. As the law is only in effect through 2007, act now to make a gift to the Norman Rockwell Museum.

For more information, please call the External Relations Department at 413.298.4100, ext. 233.



## Let there be light

Norman Rockwell Museum received generous gifts of donated services from several Berkshire County contractors for repairs to the light poles in the Museum's main parking lot. Museum Trustee Perri Petricca coordinated the project with in-kind donations or services from Dave Comalli of Comalli Electric, Todd Driscoll of Berkshire Fence, and Pete Libardi of Petricca Construction. Craig Moffatt of Craig Moffatt Restorations engineered the design repair concept.

When the Museum was built in 1993, 24 light poles were installed in the main parking lot. Over the years many of the poles' bases had been damaged by the elements and their stability had become a concern. Last summer and this spring the contractors removed the broken poles and defective bases, installed new poles with longer lasting metal bases and replaced broken light fixtures. The Museum thanks the generous contractors who contributed to this critical project.



# The Cold Facts: Preserving the Museum's Photographic Negative Collection

by Corry Kanzenberg

The Norman Rockwell Museum is home to more than 18,000 acetate-based photographic negatives, most of which are reference images Norman Rockwell used in his illustrations. Many images in the negative collection have never been published, and are rarely seen by the public.

The negatives are composed of cellulose acetate (a type of plastic material), making them susceptible to deterioration and potentially irreparable losses of imagery, and requiring unique

storage methods to ensure their long-term preservation. Cellulose acetate is a modified type of cellulose and, when exposed to heat and moisture, may produce acetic acid, which can give off a strong, vinegar-like odor. This odor serves as a warning sign that the material is about to undergo physical deterioration. The degradation begins with the shrinkage of the acetate base, which may then separate from the gelatine emulsion, causing the emulsion to buckle into channels, or pieces to possibly break off, which would result in losses of the actual image on the

**Photo 1:** A scanned negative of Rockwell showing a model how to pose for *The Bartender's Birthday*, a 1941 story illustration published in *American Magazine*. This is one of only 278 negatives known to have survived Rockwell's 1943 studio fire. To our knowledge, this image has no corresponding positives, making its preservation essential.

**Photo 2:** This negative was severely damaged due to poor storage conditions before being donated to the museum. The image is of *Homecoming*, a Christmas card Rockwell did for Hallmark in 1949.

**Photo 3:** Cataloguer Lauren Simmons carefully organizes a row of boxes containing

negatives in cold storage. The negatives are organized inside the freezer primarily by row, shelf, and accession number.

**Photo 4:** A portion of the negative collection currently housed in the freezer.

negative. Other deteriorating effects of acetate negatives can include discoloration, and embrittlement.

According to current conservation practices, the best way to prevent acetate negatives from decomposition is to freeze them. Before being frozen, a high-resolution digital image is made of each negative for future research and reproduction purposes. Through a Save America's Treasures grant, the Museum was able to outsource scanning of the collection by Chicago Albumen Works, a leading firm in the conservation of photographic materials. The scans are then linked to a digital record in the Museum's collections management database with descriptive information about the negative, such as its physical aspects, and the illustration for which it was used.

Mark H. McCormick-Goodhart, a scientist specializing in photographic conservation, developed a low-cost cold storage method<sup>1</sup> for freezing film-based materials which was funded in part by the Smithsonian, and is now in the public domain. The curatorial staff at the Norman Rockwell Museum, in consultation with photographic conservators, adopted Mr. McCormick-Goodhart's technique for freezer storage of the collection.

#### How the process works-

Each negative is placed into a PAT<sup>2</sup>-passed acid-free paper envelope. The negatives are then housed in an acid-free box. Then, a moisture trap is created to absorb any moisture in the air that may migrate into the box, and to additionally isolate the negatives from the environment of the freezer. The moisture trap consists of 6 pieces of 4-ply archival mat board—one piece to align with each side of the box. The mat boards are desiccated in a conventional oven at 212 degrees Fahrenheit for three minutes, which brings the boards to a moisture content of about 1 percent. Small groups of negatives are then put into 4 millimeter thick polyethylene freezer bags, and all of the extra air inside is carefully pressed out. The bagged negatives are then placed back in their acid-free box, now lined with mat board. Lastly, the entire box of negatives is placed into another polyethylene freezer bag, with a moisture indicator placed between the box and the bag, all of the extra air is pressed out, and finally, the box is placed into the freezer. The purpose of the moisture indicator is to let us know if moisture has migrated into the first bag, which would probably indicate a tear or opening in the bag, and we would have to take the box out of the freezer and repeat the entire process. It is critical to constantly monitor the negatives for moisture levels within the freezer.

According to current studies, re-housing acetate negatives into cold storage can prevent them from further deterioration for up to 1,000 years. The process of desiccating the mat-boards and bagging up all the materials, needs to be repeated about every 19 years.

Having scanned versions of the negatives available to staff has greatly reduced the physical handling of the corresponding photographs in the collection. We are now able to retrieve the digital images for research and reproduction purposes, instead of using the actual prints. As part of ProjectNORMAN, it is the ultimate goal of the Museum to get the negatives, and many of the other objects in our collection, on-line via a searchable version of our collections database.

Corry Kanzenberg is assistant curator at Norman Rockwell Museum.

<sup>1</sup> Mark H. McCormick-Goodhart. *On the Cold Storage of Photographic Materials in a Conventional Freezer Using the Critical Moisture Indicator(CMI) Packaging Method* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1994)

<sup>2</sup> Photographic Activity Test

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# Making a Difference

by Leslie Shatz

Claire Williams knows the Norman Rockwell Museum like the palm of her hand. The daughter of French émigrés, she was born and raised in Stockbridge, the quintessential New England town made immortal by Norman Rockwell's painting, *Home for Christmas*. Claire and her husband, Bob, raised their daughter Hope and son Rolf less than two miles from the Old Corner House and the Norman Rockwell Museum.

As a young woman Claire was spotted by Norman Rockwell when she was modeling for Peggy Best, a local art teacher and artist. Rockwell asked Claire to come by his studio to model for a series of advertisements he was preparing for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance. Rockwell's reference photographers Bill Scovill and Louie Lamone photographed Claire during the session and she was given props and various articles of

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clothing to wear as the artist sketched. On January 5, 1959 she received a check from Mr. Rockwell for \$25. (Claire's husband modeled for Rockwell in 1970 and was paid only \$10!)

When her children were in high school, Claire went to work at the Berkshire Botanical Garden. Tending her greenhouse and her gardens is a passion of Claire's. One Sunday morning in 1984, Margaret Batty, the Director of the Old Corner House, spotted Claire singing in the Stockbridge Congregational Church choir and thought she would make a fine addition to the museum staff. Mrs. Batty offered her a position as a docent—with the incentive of a raise of 25-cents-an-hour. Thus began Claire's 22-year association with the Norman Rockwell Museum.

As a docent, Claire has introduced countless visitors from all over the world to Norman Rockwell and other American illustrators of the 20th and 21st centuries. Her tours are impressive. In fact, she was recently described by one visitor, an experienced museum-goer, as "by far, the most inspiring, interesting, captivating, genuine, thought-provoking, informative and lovely" guide.

Claire's love of Norman Rockwell and her 22 years as a docent at the Museum has informed her philanthropy. When she and her son Rolf, a CPA, discussed her estate plan with a financial advisor following Bob's death, she listened carefully to Rolf's advice. "Focus your philanthropy, Mom, and make a difference."

Claire decided to make the Norman Rockwell Museum a beneficiary of her estate. Her planned gift reflects her commitment to the Museum and her desire to continue to "make a difference."

For information on how you can have a meaningful impact on the mission of the Norman Rockwell Museum, beyond your lifetime and far into the future, please click on the Norman Rockwell Museum website: [www.nrm.org](http://www.nrm.org) or contact Mary Ellen Hern, Associate Director for External Relations 413.298.4100 x 233, [mehern@nrm.org](mailto:mehern@nrm.org)

Leslie Shatz is the Norman Rockwell Museum's major gifts and campaign officer.

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# spotlight



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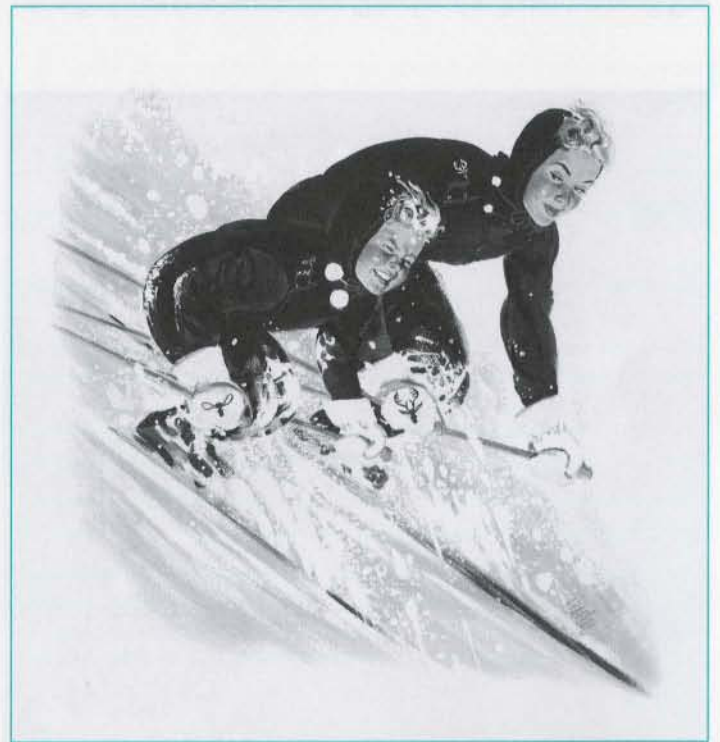
A comprehensive exhibition of original Saturday Evening Post cover tear sheets features all of Norman Rockwell's illustrations for the publication, created between 1916 and 1963.



## Ephemeral Beauty: Al Parker and the American Women's Magazine, 1940-1960

JUNE 9 - OCTOBER 28, 2007

A true innovator of American illustration, Al Parker defined the progressive look of published images from the 1940s through the 1960s. His art for *Cosmopolitan*, *McCall's*, *Collier's*, *Good Housekeeping* and other major women's magazines shaped the fashions, attitudes and aspirations of post-war America. This exhibition examines Parker's influences, his impact on American publishing, his peers, and the perceptions and expectations of generations of American readers.



**Clockwise from top left:**

*Girl Reading The Post*. Cover illustration for *The Saturday Evening Post*, March 1, 1941. ©1941 SEPS: Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN

*Mother and Daughter Skiing*, Alfred Charles Parker. 1942. Cover illustration for *Ladies' Home Journal*, March 1942. Gouache on board. Collection of Kit and Donna Parker.

*I Shall Make a Bathhouse (Woman in Tub)*, Alfred Charles Parker. 1948. Illustration for *Kinfolk* by Pearl S. Buck, *Ladies' Home Journal*, December 1948.



## LitGraphic: The World of the Graphic Novel

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Detail from Mail Order Bride, Mark Kalesniko. ©2001 Mark Kalesniko. All rights reserved.

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IN THE GALLERIES

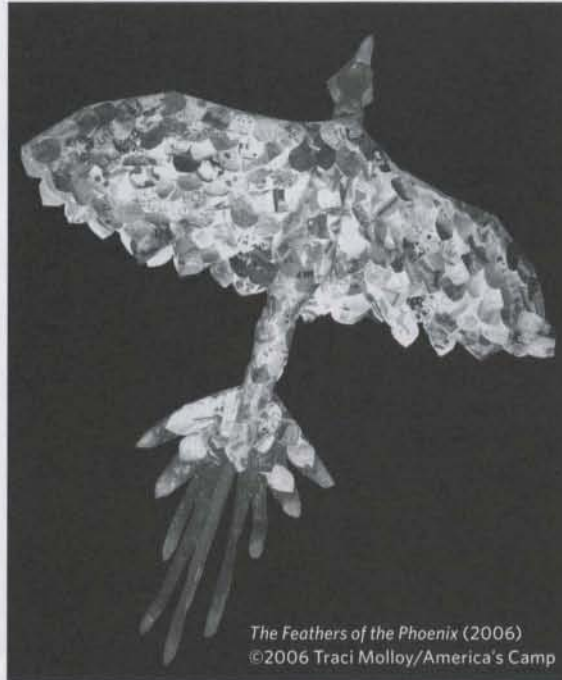
# America's Camp: Images of Hope and Healing from the Children of 9/11

by Cris Raymond

From August 18 to September 16, Norman Rockwell Museum is presenting an exhibition of artworks created at America's Camp in the Berkshires by children who were deeply affected by the tragic events of September 11, 2001. These are the children and close relatives of firemen, policemen, municipal workers, flight attendants and others who lost their lives as a result of the World Trade Center tragedy. Their art tells of unique stories of loss, love, and hope.

For the last four summers Camp Mah-Kee-Nac, located on Stockbridge Bowl, has hosted the children of 9/11 for a week of camp, where they have participated in annual group art projects with artist Traci Molloy. The four works in this exhibition are poignant and heartfelt.

*Quilt Slam: Through Their Eyes* (2003) is a thirty-five-foot-long by five-foot-high tapestry composed of about 300 squares that individually and collectively tell a tale of loss, love, anger, and hope. Some



squares reflect the fun experience of being at camp, while others honor the lives of loved ones who perished.

*The Sky Project* (2004) is a mixed-media mural with forty, two-foot by two-foot wooden panels. Its dark blue background depicts the night sky spangled with stars. The idea for this piece evolved when one

child said that she liked to look up at the stars when talking to her late father.

*Apollo's Ascent* (2005) features a series of mono-prints created as "postcards" of tribute. Three copies were made of each print. The children kept one copy, a second was attached to one of three weather balloons that were sent aloft, and the third set of prints are in the exhibition.

*The Feathers of the Phoenix* (2006) was inspired by a camper who chose to paint a Phoenix for her postcard the previous year because "the phoenix lives forever." Each child made a feather for the underbelly of the Phoenix and camp staff members made feathers for the top of the bird, which stands about twenty-feet-tall by fifteen-feet-wide. As the Phoenix rises, the children's artwork is displayed. This Phoenix, on view in the Museum's lobby, even glows in the dark.

Cris Raymond is a Berkshire County-based community advocate and was formerly editor of the Portfolio.

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