

WINTER/SPRING 2010

# portfolio

NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM

## To Rockwell With Love: Fan Mail and *The Saturday Evening Post*

by Jessika Drmacich, Archivist

*Fan mail is the only contact I have with the people I do covers for. It's the only way I can gauge reaction to a cover... I thrive or conversely wither, according to public reaction to my work. Oh, I disagree at times, but I never consider a cover a success unless it has been favorably received.*

Norman Rockwell  
*My Adventures as an Illustrator*, 1960



Norman Rockwell Answering Fan Correspondence, Stockbridge, Massachusetts ©1973. Photograph attributed to Louie Lamone.

Historical records are filled with references to well known people. Not until the 19th century, however, did the concept of celebrity explode in mass media.

Unlike many other artists, Norman Rockwell was neither underappreciated nor unknown during his lifetime. As an illustrator for the widely disseminated *Saturday Evening Post*, he achieved celebrity status early and is still one of the few well-known and broadly loved American artists who worked solely for publication.

On the covers of *The Saturday Evening Post*, Rockwell's pictures showcase global and economic changes along with more intimate views of the private aspects of American life from personal rites of passage to our relationships with family and community. His covers were so popular that thousands of readers felt

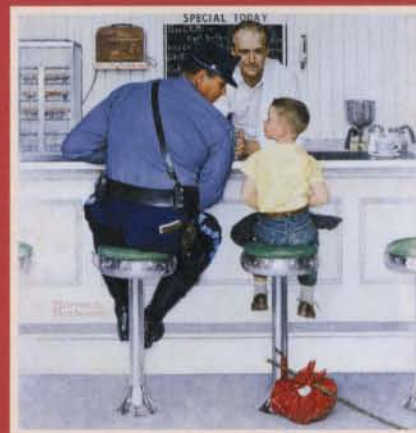
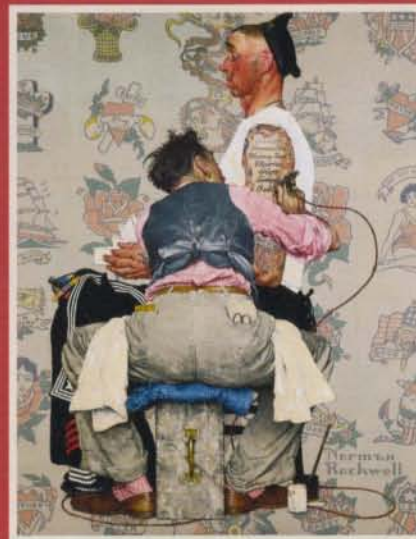
comfortable enough with Rockwell and his art to send him fan mail. This fascinating sampling of letters from a passionate international public are drawn from the Norman Rockwell Archives at the Norman Rockwell Museum, offering unique

cultural perspectives on Rockwell's best known imagery.

*I don't know whether you ever read fan mail, but I read all your letters. There is some great material in them. In fact, if I weren't self-conscious I'd write you a fan letter, but I'm afraid it would slop over and I'd go mushy and you'd say, "what a corny woman!"*

Hedda Hopper,  
Hollywood, California, February 17, 1949

Shifting cultural values, reform and the New Deal, World War II and the rise of national identity, the Baby Boom and the growth of the middle class, are some of the themes brought to life through image and word in this rare and engaging look back on the American 20th century.



## Rockwell on the Road

Norman Rockwell Museum exhibitions and staff are on the move! Our active Traveling Exhibitions Program brings the art of Norman Rockwell and the art of illustration to audiences throughout the nation.

*American Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell* traces the evolution of Rockwell's art and iconography. The exhibit has engaged audiences at the Akron Art Museum, Orlando Museum of Art, Chrysler Museum of Art, Detroit Institute of Arts, and Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, receiving rave reviews and record-breaking visitation. In March 2010, the exhibition will make its way to the Wichita Museum of Art in Kansas, and may even be on view in a city near you before the conclusion of its national tour.

*Picturing Health: Norman Rockwell and the Art of Illustration*, *Building Books: The Art of David Macaulay*, *Dinotopia: The Fantastical World of James Gurney* and *LitGraphic: The World of the Graphic Novel* are among the fine exhibitions that will be on the road in the coming year. Check the Museum's website for locations and dates!

## High School Art Show: 24 Years and Counting!



Don't miss the 24th Annual Berkshire County High School Art Show this winter! The Museum is the perfect place to celebrate the art of the region's talented youth, whose

paintings, drawings, photography, and mixed media works are sure to inspire. Norman Rockwell began the serious study of art after his sophomore year at Mamaroneck High School in Westchester County, New York. On February 6, 2010, award-winning illustrator John Roman will offer opening commentary about his own artistic journey, and just what it takes to be a professional illustrator in the twenty-first century. Museum admission. This exhibition is generously sponsored by Legacy Banks.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year! What an exciting year 2009 was. During our 40th anniversary, we saw the return of many dear friends, from Norman Rockwell's family to Museum Trustees Emeriti Norma Ogden, Jane Fitzpatrick, and Lila Berle. Our birthday celebration in July was a joyous occasion, shared by friends old and new.

In February we launched the Rockwell Center for American Visual Studies, [www.rcavs.org](http://www.rcavs.org), the nation's first research institute devoted to the art of illustration. We have received many wonderful art donations this year. Our traveling exhibitions continue to thrive, with *American Chronicles* bringing Rockwell's message around the nation. ProjectNORMAN, our archival digitization project, became accessible to Museum visitors through *Norman Rockwell: Behind the Camera*. The exhibition and companion book by author/curator Ron Schick have received widespread press coverage from *Vanity Fair*, NPR, and *Smithsonian*. Our most recent exhibition, *To Rockwell With Love*, was made possible through our digital collections, which will be available on our newly expanded Web site in the coming months.

2009 ended on a high note for me personally, as I was privileged to serve as a cultural delegate on a U.S. diplomacy trip to Russia with the U.S. Department of State as a member of the Bi-lateral Joint Presidential Commission. Joined by American and Russian leaders in the areas of education, sports, media, and culture, the Commission met in Moscow in December to discuss ways to foster positive relations between our two countries. I was honored to take part and represent the nation's museum community as a trustee of the American Association of Museums.



I'm pleased to introduce our new web community to you in this issue of the Portfolio, [www.nrm.org](http://www.nrm.org). As the Museum continues to be a leader in green initiatives, we will be reducing our printed communications and moving toward lively and timely electronic communications. Please send us your e-mail to Kathy Dowler [kdowler@nrm.org](mailto:kdowler@nrm.org) to be sure to receive our bi-monthly e-newsletter, invitations and blog posts.

Heartfelt thanks for your support during this year filled with merry accomplishment amidst reduced resources resulting from the recessionary economy. Through your visits, donations, and participation, we have truly become an internationally recognized cultural center. We have many exciting initiatives planned for the New Year as we continue to share Rockwell's artistic gifts around the world. We look forward to seeing you often.

Laurie Norton Moffatt  
Director/CEO



**kids and teens free!**  
A gift to families from Country Curtains,  
Blantyre, and The Red Lion Inn.

# The Illustrator and the Camera

On view through May 24, 2010, *Norman Rockwell: Behind the Camera* is the first frame-by-frame study of the artist's personally orchestrated photographic references, which helped bring his ideas to life for millions on the covers and pages of our nation's most prominent periodicals. Selections from the Museum's singular collection of Rockwell's photographic images mirror his masterworks in a tangible parallel universe, evidenced in the exhibition's rare assemblage of original artworks from the Berkshire Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Cincinnati Art Museum, Connecticut Valley Historical Museum, National Air and Space Museum/Smithsonian Institution, National Press Club, Taubman Museum of Art, and of course, Norman Rockwell Museum.

Like most creators of art for commerce, Norman Rockwell worked within the realm of both aesthetics and technology. Cameras and projection devices have been in use by artists for centuries, sometimes surreptitiously by those wishing to obscure any technical intervention in their process, and opinion was certainly mixed.

Rockwell's fellow *Saturday Evening Post* illustrator J.C. Leyendecker insisted on abstaining from the use of photography completely. This classically trained cover artist and creator of the Arrow Collar Man, made, in Rockwell's words, "endless little sketches from the model—two or three of the hands, a couple of the head, a torso, the eyes, the folds of the dress and the shoes—until he had drawn everything exactly as he wanted it." Twenty years Rockwell's senior, Leyendecker incited, "Are you going to be an artist or a photographer?" Despite this admonition, the creation of photographic reference was an important aspect of Rockwell's process by the 1930s. "I still feel guilty about it," he wrote thirty years later. "But I comfort myself with the thought that many of the great painters used aids to



PHOTOGRAPH: Reference photos for Norman Rockwell's *The Gossips*, (detail), 1948. Photos by Gene Feltman. Photo montage created by Ron Schick. Licensed by Norman Rockwell Licensing, Niles, IL.  
ILLUSTRATION: *The Gossips* (detail), Norman Rockwell. ©1948 SEPS. Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN.

drawing; the camera obscura, the camera lucida, mirrors, et cetera."

Many masters of American illustration took their lead from the likes of Hans Holbein, Albrecht Dürer, Jan Vermeer, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Edgar Degas, who employed the technology at hand to facilitate their work. Frederic Remington, an eastern artist who rose to fame as a reportorial illustrator, brought the West to life for millions of readers who encountered his art in *Harper's*, *Collier's*, and other prominent publications of his day. George Eastman's original "point-and-shoot" box camera for roll film, introduced in 1888, popularized photography and made it accessible to the public. The new and improved No. 2 Kodak, which Remington purchased the following year, was a valuable tool for the artist correspondent, who used it to gather information in the field.

The camera also enabled illustrator N.C. Wyeth to capture the authenticity of his surroundings on the American frontier. In 1904, the young artist traveled west to Colorado from Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, in search of compelling subjects to paint. He remembered a brief, intensive immersion in the lives of cow punchers on the Hashknife Ranch as the "wildest and most strenuous three weeks of my life." Four important works, including *Roping Horses*

*in the Corral*, were painted shortly after in Denver, made possible by the photographs, sketches, and diary entries that were testament to his experience. In the studio, costumed models and an array of props stood in to provide additional support.

A private man with an interest in architecture and invention, Maxfield Parrish embraced the photographic process and devised image transfer methods that became integral to his art. No good at "the little telling sketch," he preferred to work only from the photographed model and posed family and friends for the assignments at hand. Pictures were developed in positive form on glass plates and projected, allowing him to enlarge and trace all or part of an image for development.

In book and magazine cover art, as in story illustration, narrative imagery reigned supreme even as painters began to reject it. While illustrators and fine artists explored similar motifs, such as the portrayal of everyday life, illustration emphasized accuracy, technical virtuosity, and anecdote rather than personal expression. The camera captured extreme perspectives and countless necessary details, from the subtleties of facial expression and body language to the folds of a model's dress. "Now anybody could pose for me," Rockwell said, continuously refining his vision for a vast and appreciative audience.

# Rockwell and the Movies

by Joyce K. Schiller, Curator, Rockwell Center for American Visual Studies



Norman Rockwell creating a painting for *Stagecoach*, 1965. Photo by Louie Lamone.

Storytellers come in all stripes: some merely write the stories; some are tellers of tall tales—*raconteurs*; and some tell their stories through pictures. Norman Rockwell was a great storyteller. Norman Rockwell was an illustrator.

Rockwell was always partly focused on the world of the imagination and partly on the visible world around him. What better mix could inspire images of and for the movies?

Rockwell's first foray into the make-believe world of the movies was in 1930 when he was in Los Angeles visiting his friend, the illustrator and cartoonist Clyde Forsythe. With the help of the publicity director of Paramount Studios, Rockwell painted Gary Cooper in the process of getting made up for *The Texan*. Later in 1937, when Cooper was producing the movie *Along Came Jones*, with himself as the lead character, Rockwell painted the full-length portrait that was used as the centerpiece of the movie's poster.

Between 1937 and 1966, Rockwell created paintings which were used in the promotional material for such movies as *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *The Song of Bernadette*, *The Razor's Edge*, *Sampson and Delilah*, *Cinderfella*, and *Stagecoach*. During the filming of *Stagecoach*, Rockwell sat in as a silent extra, an old gambler called, "Busted Flush," for the filming of a poker game.

When he wasn't painting movie promotional pieces, Rockwell painted portraits of some of Hollywood's greatest: Spencer Tracy, Jack Benny, John Wayne, Walter Brennan, and Bob Hope.

Rockwell's fondness for tinsel town prompted him to pursue an idea for a *Saturday Evening Post* cover, called "Who-Dun-It." It was intended to be a parody of an English murder mystery. Again in Los Angeles, Rockwell enlisted that aid of Twentieth Century-Fox to arrange for various movie stars to sit as models for the picture. Though the piece was never published, the cast of this fictitious scene were Ethel Barrymore, Boris Karloff, Linda Darnell, Loretta Young, Richard Widmark, Clifton Webb, Lassie, and as the corpse whose feet were the only thing seen, Van Johnson.

Experience classic Hollywood through Rockwell's eyes in this celebrity filled exhibition, opening this summer.

programs & events

January - May 2010

## for adults

### EXHIBITION OPENING & PERFORMANCE

#### To Rockwell, With Love: Fan Mail and *The Saturday Evening Post*

Saturday, January 16, 2 - 6 p.m.

Step back in time to explore Rockwell's imagery for *The Saturday Evening Post*, which prompted an outpouring of reader reaction during the artist's forty-seven year tenure with the magazine. From 2 to 4 p.m., create an illustrated appreciation for a friend. At 4:30 p.m., *The Fierce Fashionistas*, featuring WSBS's dynamic Mimi Rosenblatt & Hope Aaron, will perform a dramatic reading of letters inspired by Rockwell's art from around the world. Free with Museum admission.

#### Norman Rockwell's Civil Rights Paintings: An Illustrated Talk

Monday, January 18, 1:30 p.m.

Join Museum educator Al DeMaio for an in-depth look at Norman Rockwell's powerful Civil Rights paintings, which reflect the artist's ongoing belief in tolerance and human rights. Free with Museum admission.

#### Wine & Roses: Valentine's Eve with the Sweet Adelines

Saturday, February 13, 5:30 p.m. with festive reception to follow

Enjoy a Valentine's Eve filled with song! *The Sweet Adelines/Berkshire Hills Chorus*, an outstanding group of women singers committed to advancing the musical art form of barbershop harmony, will perform. A festive reception and heartwarming treats will follow. \$10, \$7 members.

#### The Artist & The Photograph: Contemporary Perspectives

Saturday Series on February 27, March 27, & April 24, 5:30 p.m. with reception to follow

Inspiring evenings with noted photographers Kevin Sprague, February 27; Gregory Crewdson, March 27; and Jonathan Doster, April 24; explore contemporary pathways in photography, from assembled narration to the moving image. \$10, \$7 members.

#### Norman Rockwell's American Dream: An Evening with David Kamp

Saturday, May 29, 5:30 p.m. with reception to follow

Join us in a conversation with author David Kamp, contributing editor to *Vanity Fair*, whose commentary on *Norman Rockwell: Behind the Camera* appeared in the magazine's November 2009 issue. \$10, \$7 members or free with Museum admission

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT:  
A LUNCHTIME LECTURE SERIES**

**Uncovering the Covers of the Post**  
*Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.*

This engaging lunchtime lecture series offers lively cultural perspectives on one of 20th century America's most popular magazines, *The Saturday Evening Post*.

*January 14*, Archivist **Jessika Drmacich** will discuss *To Rockwell, With Love: Fan Mail and The Saturday Evening Post*.

*February 11, March 18, and April 8*, **Joyce K. Schiller, Ph.D.**, Norman Rockwell Museum Curator of the Rockwell Center for American Visual Studies, will offer a lively look at shifting trends in fashion, haberdashery, and furnishings of the 20th century through *Saturday Evening Post* imagery.

*May 13*, Chief Curator **Stephanie Plunkett** will take visitors *Behind the Camera* to explore Rockwell's extensive use of photography in creating his famous covers for the Post.

Bring lunch, beverages and dessert are provided. \$6, \$4 members, or free with Museum admission.

**Meet Rockwell's Models!**

*First Wednesdays,*  
*February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, 2:30 p.m.*  
Meet the models that inspired Rockwell's art! Free with Museum admission.

**A WORKSHOP FOR EDUCATORS**

**Digital Resources:  
ProjectNORMAN in the Classroom**  
*Saturday, March 20, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.*

This media-filled workshop for educators will explore applications for ProjectNORMAN, the Museum's new online digital database. Diverse approaches to digital education in the classroom will also be explored. \$20, \$15 members.

**Camera Clinic! Get More Out of  
Your Digital Camera**

*Saturday, April 17, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.*  
Talented photographer **Sabine Vollmer von Falken** will help you navigate your digital camera to achieve outstanding results. Fledgling and experienced photographers are welcome! \$12, \$8 members.

**for children & families**



**Kids Create! A Pre-School Art Program**  
*Wednesdays January 27, February 24, March 31,  
April 28, May 26, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.*

Join us for these dynamic, interactive hands-on gallery experiences for young art lovers and their caregivers. Kids \$2, Grownups Free!

**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**24th Annual Berkshire County  
High School Art Show**

*Saturday, February 6, 1 - 5 p.m.*  
This exciting exhibition of original works by Berkshire County high school art students celebrates the region's talented youth. At 2 p.m., Massachusetts illustrator/cartoonist **John Roman** will offer commentary for budding artists and their families. Free! Sponsored by Legacy Banks.

**Pop-Up Party!  
A Valentine's Day Workshop**  
*Sunday, February 14, 1 - 4 p.m.*

Design unique pop-up Valentines for family and friends in celebration of the holiday. Sweet sentiments and delicious treats will be enjoyed by all! Free with Museum admission.

**school vacation weeks**

**FEBRUARY WORKSHOPS**

**Paint Up a Storm!**  
*Monday through Friday, February 15 - 19, 1 - 4 p.m.*  
Paint up a storm in this exciting program for budding artists! Children will experiment with a variety of painting media and techniques to create colorful, memorable works of art. Ages 7 and up. Take one or take them all! \$6, \$5 members.

**APRIL WORKSHOPS**

**Gallery Sleuths!**  
*Monday through Friday, April 19 - 23, 1 - 4 p.m.*  
Young gallery sleuths are invited to explore the art on view! This exciting program filled with art-making and interactive activities is sure to inspire. Ages 7 and up. Take one or take them all! \$6, \$5 members.

**art workshops for teens**

**Got Ink? Creating a Graphic Novel**  
*Saturday, February 20, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.*

Gifted educator/graphic novelist **Tim Callahan** will guide young cartoonists through the process of moving an idea from first frame to finished comic. Ages 13 and up. \$8, \$6 members.

**Moving Pictures: Creating Animation**  
*Saturday, April 24, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.*

Inspiring illustrator/ animator **Elizabeth Buttler** will take young artists through the process of creating moving pictures with traditional animation techniques, from the creation of flip books to the use of a zoetrope. Ages 13 and up. \$8, \$6 members.



**Festival!**  
**World Rhythms Community Day**  
*Sunday, May 2, noon - 4 p.m.*

Join us for this festive celebration of art and culture from around the world! Music and dance performances, art-making workshops, gallery talks and outdoor experiences are inspired by Norman Rockwell's *Golden Rule*, a 1961 *Saturday Evening Post* cover emphasizing the importance of cultural and interpersonal understanding. Free with Museum admission.

**workshops for adults**

**Face to Face: The Art of the  
Photographic Portrait**

*Saturday, February 13, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.*  
This hands-on workshop explores the fine art of portrait photography with gifted Berkshire photographer **Julie McCarthy**. \$15, \$10 members.

**Picture This: Writing with Photographs**  
*Saturday, March 6, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.*

This engaging writing experience with author/educator **Vivian Dorsel** explores the use of photographs as inspirational visual memoir that can spark the writing process. \$15, \$10 members.

**Painting What Doesn't Exist:  
An Afternoon with James Gurney**  
*Saturday, March 13, 1 - 4 p.m.*

Award-winning fantasy artist and creator of *Dinotopia*, **James Gurney**, explores ways to incorporate detail and imagination into stunningly realistic fantasy settings. At 1 p.m., the artist will discuss the step-by-step techniques that have won him worldwide critical acclaim, followed by hands-on art making and a book signing of *Imaginative Realism: How to Paint What Doesn't Exist*. Free with Museum admission, kids and teens free.

## 2010 exhibitions



*After the Prom* (detail), Norman Rockwell. ©1957 SEPS. Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN. Photo by Bill Scovill. Licensed by Norman Rockwell Licensing, Niles, IL.

COVER PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS: *Tattoo Artist*, Norman Rockwell. ©1944 SEPS. Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN. *The Runaway*, Norman Rockwell. ©1958 SEPS. Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN.

### Norman Rockwell: Behind the Camera through May 24

This highly acclaimed exhibition explores a little known aspect of Norman Rockwell's creative process—his personally orchestrated photographic references, which helped bring his ideas to life. Rarely seen artworks from significant national collections are also on view.

### To Rockwell, With Love: Fan Mail and *The Saturday Evening Post*

January 16 through May 16

Step back in time to explore Rockwell's imagery for *The Saturday Evening Post*, and the outpouring of reader reaction it prompted through the artist's forty-seven year tenure with the magazine, from Bing Crosby to an inspired 5 year old!

### 24th Annual Berkshire County High School Art Show

February 6 through March 7

Marvel at the amazing talent of Berkshire County high school art students in this annual juried exhibition of inspired and diverse original works.

### Norman Rockwell: The Making of an American Icon

February 13 through June 20

Connect with Norman Rockwell through this intimate in-depth exhibition featuring original artworks spanning the breadth of his career, and personal mementos and family photographs from the Norman Rockwell Archives.

### A Day in the Life: Norman Rockwell's Stockbridge Studio

opening May 1

Enter Rockwell's world through this precise "moment in time" recreation of Rockwell's Stockbridge studio—as it looked in October 1960, when the artist was painting *Golden Rule* for the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*.

### The Art of Norman Rockwell: High- lights from the Permanent Collection

always on view

The largest and most significant public collection of original works by this celebrated twentieth century illustrator.

NEW!

Winter/Spring Hours  
January - April: weekdays 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
weekends and holidays 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Closed Tuesdays

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