



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 29, 2015

Contact: Sara Bliss
Tel: (212) 744-5190
Email: sbliss@americanillustration.org
Website: www.americanillustration.org

NORMAN ROCKWELL'S PORTRAIT OF JOHN F. KENNEDY TO BE AUCTIONED AT NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ILLUSTRATION'S GALA EVENT

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND – In an unprecedented fundraising auction, Norman Rockwell's *Portrait of John F. Kennedy* will be auctioned at the National Museum of American Illustration's 15th Anniversary Gala, on July 30th, 2015, at the Museum's home, Vernon Court, in Newport, RI. The Kennedy portrait was featured on the April 6, 1963 cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*, Norman Rockwell's most memorable and most valued commission. Alongside this monumentally important portrait, the Auction will feature art works by Maxfield Parrish, J.C. Leyendecker, Howard Chandler Christy, Ludwig Bemelmans, and other notable artist-illustrators from the Golden Age of American Illustration.

Judy Goffman Cutler, NMAI's Co-Founder and Director, reflects on Kennedy's particular importance to Newport: "*John F. Kennedy married Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy in 1953 just one mile from the NMAI, and summered here during his presidency at Hammersmith Farm, or the 'Summer White House.' It seems appropriate for this heart-felt portrait of America's Camelot to be sold for the benefit of the NMAI, the first National Museum to display and honor American Illustration, the most American of American Art.*"

The second of two Kennedy portraits, and actually the last portrait of President Kennedy completed by Rockwell for the *Saturday Evening Post*, this depiction reflects a strong, intelligent, experienced leader fighting for American ideals in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis. By using a three-quarter-portrait pose with his head resting on his hand against a dark background, Rockwell beautifully relays the heaviness of the President's decisions to the viewer. The highlight of the sale, bidding will begin at \$600,000, with an estimate of its value ranging from \$4 to \$6 million.

Another notable item is Maxfield Parrish's illustration for *Phoebus on Halzaphron*, a short story by Arthur Quiller-Couch appearing in the August, 1901 issue of *Scribner's Magazine*. A fantastic tale of a spellbound island off the coast of England, Parrish's illustrations perfectly capture the mystical aspects of this story. In this particular image, billowing clouds rise up from the ocean showing a glimpse of a full moon illuminating the scene, from a distant island to the men on the beach in the foreground. This and other examples of Parrish's manipulation of light caused him to be considered one of the greatest illustrators of the 20th Century. Bidding for this painting will begin at \$75,000, with an estimate of \$300,000 to \$500,000 as its value.

Renown for his splendid depictions of women, Howard Chandler Christy's *Portrait of Dorothy Knapp* will also be sold at auction with its value estimated at \$15,000 to \$25,000 with the opening bid at \$6,500. A well known beauty pageant contestant and Ziegfield Follies regular, Dorothy Knapp was known as "The American Venus" and named "*the most beautiful girl in the World*" in the 1920's. Executed during Knapp's short engagement to Christy's nephew 'Chick,' this portrait manifests an exceptional adoration and affection for Christy's unique subject.

Bidding on items at the Petite Auction will open online two weeks prior to the 15th Anniversary Gala (July 30th 2015), and will conclude in a Live Auction at the event on July 30th. Proceeds will benefit the NMAI and its mission to educate the global public through exhibitions of artworks by the greatest of the Golden Age American Illustrators.

NMAI is a nonprofit, independent, educational, and aesthetic organization located at Vernon Court on Newport's historic Bellevue Avenue. It is the first National Museum devoted exclusively to illustration art, artworks created to be reproduced in books, periodicals, art prints, posters, and advertisements.

###