

Norman Rockwell's JFK Portrait To Lead Auction At NMAI Gala

NEWPORT, R.I. — In a novel fundraising auction, Norman Rockwell's portrait of John F. Kennedy will be auctioned at the National Museum of American Illustration's 15th anniversary gala this summer at the museum. The Kennedy portrait was featured on the April 6, 1963, cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*, Rockwell's most memorable and most valued commission.

Alongside this important portrait, the auction will feature art 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 heartfelt 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."

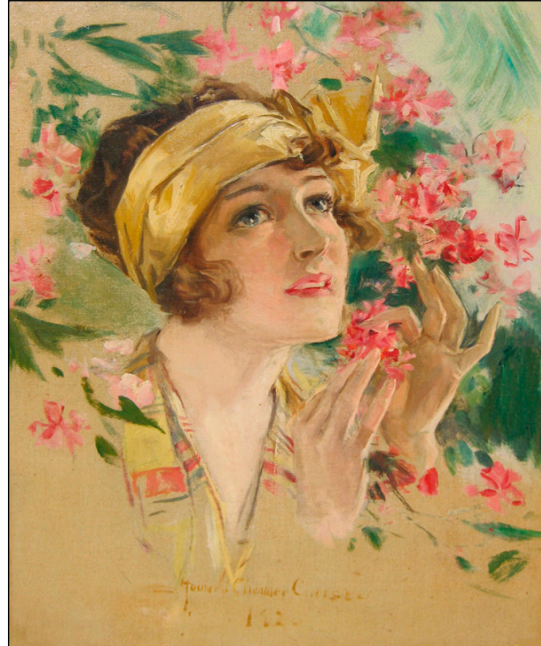
The second of two Kennedy portraits, and actually the last portrait of President Kennedy completed by Rockwell for the *Saturday Evening Post*, this depiction reflects a strong, intelligent, experienced leader fight-



Maxfield Parrish (1870–1966), "Twilight Had Fallen Before the Stranger Rose," 1901, oil on panel, 11⁵/₈ by 7¹/₄ inches, "Phoebus on Halzaphron" by Arthur Quiller-Couch, *Scribner's Ma*

ing 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 ably relays the heaviness of the President's decisions to the viewer (\$4/6 million).

Another notable item in the sale is Maxfield Parrish's illustration for *Phoebus on Halzaphron*, a short story by Arthur Quiller-Couch in the August 1901 issue of *Scribner's Maga-*



Howard Chandler Christy (1873–1952), Portrait of Dorothy Knapp, circa 1924, oil on canvas, 24 by 18 inches, signed lower center (\$15/25,000).

zine. A tale of a spellbound island off the coast of England, Parrish's illustrations 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 Twentieth

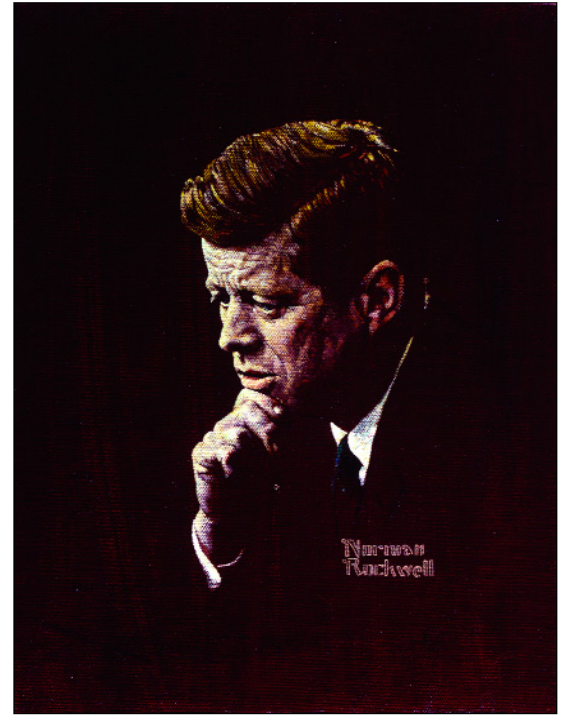
Century (\$300/500,000).

Renowned for his fine depictions of women, Howard Chandler Christy's portrait of Dorothy Knapp (\$15/25,000) will also cross the block. 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 1920s. Executed during Knapp's short engagement to Christy's nephew

"Chick," this portrait manifests an adoration and affection for the subject.

Bidding will open online two weeks prior to the 15th anniversary gala on July 30 and will conclude in a live auction at the event July 30. Proceeds will benefit the museum.

The museum is in Vernon Court at 492 Bellevue Avenue. For additional information, www.americanillustration.org or 401-851-8949.



Norman Rockwell (1894–1978), Portrait of John F. Kennedy, 1963, oil on canvas, 22 by 18 inches, signed lower right, *Saturday Evening Post*, April 6, 1963 cover (\$4/6,000,000). All images ©2015 National Museum of American Illustration, Newport, R.I. Photos courtesy Archives of American Illustrators Gallery, New York City.