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Edward Moran 1886

Crystal Anniversary

National Museum of American Illustration celebrates 15 years with gala and catalog of Norman Rockwell and His Contemporaries exhibition



July 30, 6 p.m.

National Museum of American Illustration

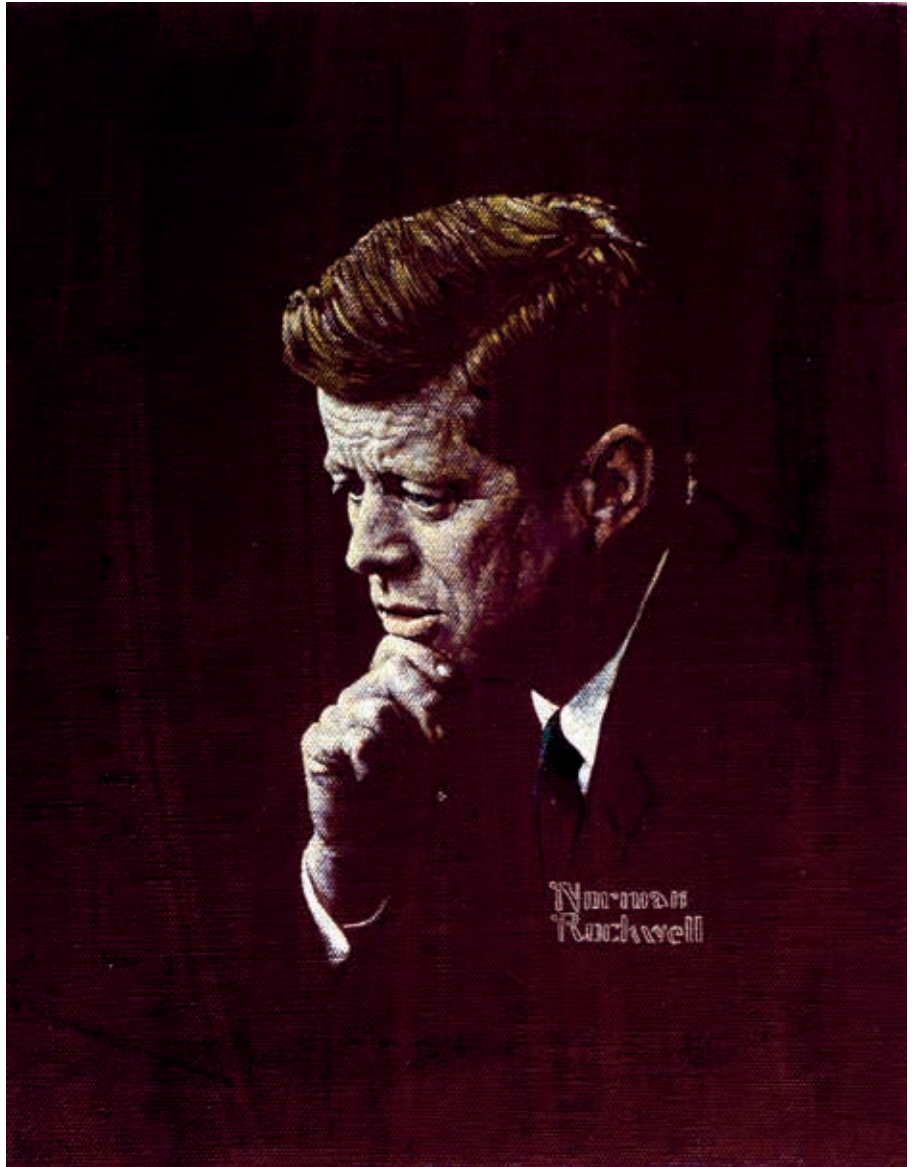
Vernon Court
492 Bellevue Avenue
Newport, RI 02840
t: (401) 851-8949
www.americanillustration.org

To commemorate the 15th anniversary of the National Museum of American Illustration (NMAI), the museum will host a gala and live auction July 30 in connection with its current exhibition *Norman Rockwell and His Contemporaries*, running through October 12.

The gala features cocktails, dining, dancing and celebrity appearances, while the auction includes work by Rockwell, Maxfield Parrish, and Howard Chandler Christy, among others.

An auction highlight is a portrait of former President John F. Kennedy by Rockwell. The illustration was completed for the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* and was done during the Cuban missile crisis. By using a three-quarter portrait pose with Kennedy's chin resting on his hand and a dark background, the artist was able to express the heaviness of the president's decisions to the viewer.

"We lived through it. It was a big deal for us. It is a particularly emotional piece," says Judy Goffman Cutler, director and co-founder of the NMAI. "It is a milestone Rockwell, a milestone portrait and a milestone historical event, and that is what illustration is all about."



Norman Rockwell (1894-1978), *Portrait of John F. Kennedy*, *The Saturday Evening Post* cover, April 6, 1963. Oil on canvas, 22 x 18 in., signed lower right. Estimate: \$4/6 million

The portrait was the second and last portrait Rockwell did of Kennedy, and is estimated to fetch between \$4 million and \$6 million.

Another highlight is an illustration by Parrish titled *Twilight Had Fallen Before the Stranger Rose*. The illustration was for

Phoebus on Halzaphron, a short story by Arthur Quiller-Couch that appeared in the August 1901 issue of *Scribner's Magazine*. *Twilight Had Fallen Before the Stranger Rose* is estimated to sell between \$300,000 and \$500,000.

"[*Twilight Had Fallen Before the Stranger*



The National Museum of American Illustration calls Vernon Court in Newport, Rhode Island, home and is celebrating 15 years. Photo by Steven Brooke.



Maxfield Parrish (1870-1966), *Twilight Had Fallen Before the Stranger Rose, Phoebus on Halzaphron* by Arthur Quiller-Couch, *Scribner's Magazine*, August 1901. Oil on panel, 11⁵/₈ x 7¹/₄ in. Estimate: \$300/500,000. Images © 2015 National Museum of American Illustration, Newport, RI. Photos courtesy Archives of American Illustrators Gallery, New York, NY.

Rose is] everything you want in a Parrish," Judy says. "You've got his beautiful lighting. You have the two figures, and you have the light and the blue coming through the sky... It is everything he is known for."

The auction will also have works from artists such as Ludwig Bemelmans, John Falter, Harrison Fisher, J.C. Leyendecker, Norman Price, Howard Pyle, Mead Schaeffer, Claude Smith, Robert Tallon, and Mary Jane Begin.

Bidding for items at the auction opens online two weeks prior to the 15th Anniversary Gala and concludes at the live auction. Proceeds benefit the NMAI.

Rockwell, one of the most recognized and popular artists of the 20th century, depicted American life in a way in which people worldwide can connect. The museum sends exhibitions of his work worldwide, and Laurence S. Cutler, chairman and co-founder of the NMAI, says because of the artist's acclaim, the museum chose an exhibit focusing on Rockwell and his contributions to illustration to celebrate its 15th anniversary.

"Every place we go with illustration exhibitions, they are the hottest thing they've ever had," he says of traveling exhibitions. "Everybody understands what they are looking at. They don't need to speak the art language."

The museum also offers a 350-page catalog with art by 100 illustrators from the 20th century to coincide with the exhibition. Artists included in the exhibition and catalog besides Rockwell are John Clymer, Stevan Dohanos, Falter, George Hughes, and Schaeffer.

"The public at large is not totally aware of the fact that the illustrators, who only recently have become more acclaimed, more understood and more popular, were all trained as fine artists," Laurence says. "They studied in Europe... and Paris. They went into illustration in order to earn a living. But they were really derided, because they got paid for their work."

Judy says the NMAI plans to send the exhibition around the world when it finishes at the museum. ■