






Norman Rockwell

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Overview

Norman Percevel Rockwell (February 3, 1894 – November 8, 1978) was a 20th-century American painter and illustrator. His works enjoy a broad popular appeal in the United States for their reflection of American culture. Rockwell is most famous for the cover illustrations of everyday life scenarios he created for The Saturday Evening Post magazine for more than four decades. Among the best-known of Rockwell's works are the Willie Gillis series, Rosie the Riveter (although his Rosie was reproduced less than others of the day), Saying Grace (1951), The Problem We All Live With, and the Four Freedoms series.






Discussion

-  Ask a question about **Norman Rockwell**
-  Start a new discussion about **Norman Rockwell**
-  Answer questions from other users
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Unanswered Questions

-  [Rockwell did a cover for Saturday Evening Post dated 1 Mar 1924. It is a Lady and Needlework. I am doing this cover in cross stitch but cannot make ...](#)
-  [Did he have any other hobbies that didn't include art? I have an art project and i have to "give him a present" but it cant have anything to do with ...](#)

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“ Without thinking too much about it in specific terms, I was showing the America I knew and observed to others who might not have noticed. My fundamental purpose is to interpret the typical American. I am a story teller. ”

“ I paint life as I would like it to be. ”

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Norman Percevel Rockwell (February 3, 1894 – November 8, 1978) was a 20th-century American painter and illustrator. His works enjoy a broad popular appeal in the United States for their reflection of [American culture](#). Rockwell is most famous for the cover illustrations of everyday life scenarios he created for [The Saturday Evening Post](#) magazine for more than four decades. Among the best-known of Rockwell's works are the [Willie Gillis](#) series, [Rosie the Riveter](#) (although his *Rosie* was reproduced less than others of the day), [Saying Grace](#) (1951), [The Problem We All Live With](#), and the [Four Freedoms](#) series. He is also noted for his work for the [Boy Scouts of America](#) (BSA); producing covers for their publication [Boys' Life](#), calendars, and other illustrations.

Early life

Norman Rockwell was born on February 3, 1894, in New York City to Jarvis Waring Rockwell and Anne Mary "Nancy" (née Hill) Rockwell. His earliest American ancestor was John Rockwell (1588–1662), from [Somerset](#), England, who immigrated to America probably in 1635 aboard the ship Hopewell and became one of the first settlers of [Windsor, Connecticut](#). He had one brother, Jarvis Waring Rockwell, Jr., older by a year and half. Jarvis Waring, Sr., was the manager of the New York office of a Philadelphia textile firm, George Wood, Sons & Company, where he spent his entire career.

Norman transferred from high school to the Chase Art School at the age of 14. He then went on to the [National Academy of Design](#) and finally to the [Art Students League](#). There, he was taught by [Thomas Fogarty](#), [George Bridgman](#), and [Frank Vincent DuMond](#); his early works were produced for [St. Nicholas Magazine](#), the [Boy Scouts of America](#) (BSA) publication [Boys' Life](#) and other juvenile publications. [Joseph Csatsari](#) carried on his legacy and style for the BSA.

As a student, Rockwell was given smaller, less important jobs. His first major breakthrough came in 1912 at age eighteen with his first book illustration for Carl Harry Claudy's *Tell Me Why: Stories about Mother Nature*.

In 1913, the nineteen-year old Rockwell became the art editor for [Boys' Life](#), published by the [Boy Scouts of America](#), a post he held for three years (1913–1916). As part of that position, he painted several covers, beginning with his first published magazine cover, *Scout at Ship's Wheel*, appearing on the [Boys' Life](#) September 1913 edition.

World War I

During the First World War, he tried to enlist into the U.S. Navy but was refused



entry because, at 6 feet (1.83 m) tall and 140 pounds (64 kg), he was eight pounds underweight. To compensate, he spent one night gorging himself on bananas, liquids and doughnuts, and weighed enough to enlist the next day. However, he was given the role of a military artist and did not see any action during his tour of duty.

Rockwell's family moved to New Rochelle, New York when Norman was 21 years old and shared a studio with the cartoonist Clyde Forsythe, who worked for *The Saturday Evening Post*. With Forsythe's help, he submitted his first successful cover painting to the *Post* in

1916, *Mother's Day Off* (published on May 20). He followed that success with *Circus Barker and Strongman* (published on June 3), *Gramps at the Plate* (August 5), *Redhead Loves Hatty Perkins* (September 16), *People in a Theatre Balcony* (October 14) and *Man Playing Santa* (December 9). Rockwell was published eight times total on the *Post* cover within the first twelve months. Norman Rockwell published a total of 322 original covers for *The Saturday Evening Post* over 47 years. His *Sharp Harmony* appeared on the cover of the issue dated September 26, 1936; depicts a barber and three clients, enjoying an a cappella song. The image was adopted by SPEBSQSA in its promotion of the art.



Rockwell's success on the cover of the *Post* led to covers for other magazines of the day, most notably *The Literary Digest*, *The Country Gentleman*, *Leslie's Weekly*, *Judge*, *Peoples Popular Monthly* and *Life Magazine*.

Personal life

Rockwell married his first wife, Irene O'Connor, in 1916. Irene was Rockwell's model in *Mother Tucking Children into Bed*, published on the cover of *The Literary Digest* on January 19, 1921. However, the couple were divorced in 1930. Depressed, he moved briefly to Alhambra, California as a guest of his old friend Clyde Forsythe. There he painted some of his best-known paintings including "The Doctor and the Doll". While there he met and married schoolteacher Mary Barstow. The couple returned to New York shortly after their marriage. They had three children: Jarvis Waring, Thomas Rhodes and Peter Barstow. The family lived at 24 Lord Kitchener Road in the Bonnie Crest neighborhood of New Rochelle, New York. Rockwell and his wife were not very religious, although they were members of St. John's Wilmot Church, an Episcopal church near their home, and had their sons baptized there as well. Rockwell moved to Arlington, Vermont, in 1939 where his work began to reflect small-town life.

In 1953, the Rockwell family moved to Stockbridge, Massachusetts, so that his wife could be treated at the Austen Riggs Center, a psychiatric hospital at 25 Main Street, down Main Street from where Rockwell set up his studio. Rockwell himself received psychiatric treatment from the renowned analyst Erik Erikson, who was on staff at Riggs. Erikson is said to have told the artist that he painted his happiness, but did not live it. In 1959, Mary Barstow Rockwell died unexpectedly of a heart attack. In 1961, Rockwell married Molly Punderson, a retired teacher.

World War II

In 1943, during the Second World War, Rockwell painted the *Four Freedoms* series, which was completed in seven months and resulted in his losing 15 pounds. The series was inspired by a speech by Franklin D. Roosevelt, in which he described four principles for universal rights: Freedom from Want, Freedom of Speech, Freedom to Worship, and Freedom from Fear. The paintings were published in 1943 by *The Saturday Evening Post*. The United States Department of the Treasury later promoted war bonds by exhibiting the originals in 16 cities. Rockwell himself considered "Freedom of Speech" to be the best of the four. That same year a fire in his studio destroyed numerous original paintings, costumes, and props.

Shortly after the war, Rockwell was contacted by writer Elliott Caplin, brother of cartoonist Al Capp, with the suggestion that the three of them should make a daily comic strip together, with Caplin and his brother writing and Rockwell drawing. King Features Syndicate is reported to have promised a \$1,000/week deal, knowing that a Capp-Rockwell collaboration would gain strong public interest. However, the project was ultimately aborted as it turned out that Rockwell, known for his perfectionism as an artist, could not deliver material as

fast as required of him for a daily comic strip.

During the late 1940s, Norman Rockwell spent the winter months as artist-in-residence at [Otis College of Art and Design](#). Students occasionally were models for his Saturday Evening Post covers. In 1949, Rockwell donated an original Post cover, "April Fool," to be raffled off in a library fund raiser.

In 1959, his wife Mary died unexpectedly, and Rockwell took time off from his work to grieve. It was during this break that he and his son Thomas produced his autobiography, *My Adventures as an Illustrator*, which was published in 1960. The *Post* printed excerpts from this book in eight consecutive issues, the first containing Rockwell's famous *Triple Self-Portrait*.

Later career

Rockwell married his third wife, retired [Milton Academy](#) English teacher, Molly Punderson, in 1961.

His last painting for the *Post* was published in 1963, marking the end of a publishing relationship that had included 322 cover paintings. He spent the next 10 years painting for [Look magazine](#), where his work depicted his interests in civil rights, poverty and space exploration.

In 1968 Rockwell was commissioned to do an album cover portrait of [Mike Bloomfield](#) and [Al Kooper](#) for their record, *The Live Adventures of Mike Bloomfield and Al Kooper*. During his long career, he was commissioned to paint the portraits for Presidents [Eisenhower](#), [Kennedy](#), [Johnson](#), and [Nixon](#), as well as those of foreign figures, including [Gamal Abdel Nasser](#) and [Jawaharlal Nehru](#). One of his last works was a portrait of [Judy Garland](#) in 1969.



A custodianship of his original paintings and drawings was established with Rockwell's help near his home in [Stockbridge, Massachusetts](#), and the [Norman Rockwell Museum](#) is still open today year round. Norman Rockwell Museum is the authoritative source for all things Norman Rockwell. The Museum's collection is the world's largest, including more than 700 original Rockwell paintings, drawings, and studies. The Rockwell Center for American Visual Studies at the Norman Rockwell Museum is a national research institute dedicated to American illustration art.

When he was concerned with his health he placed his studio and the contents with the Norman Rockwell Museum, which was formerly known as the Stockbridge Historical society and even more formerly known as the Old Corner house, in a trust.

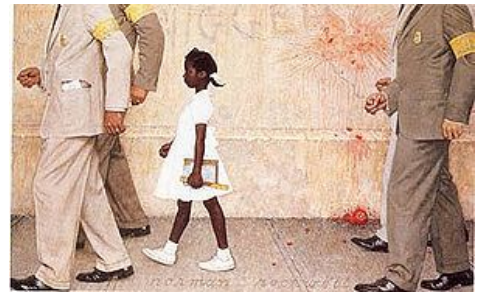
For "vivid and affectionate portraits of our country," Rockwell received the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#), the United States of America's highest civilian honor, in 1977.

Rockwell died November 8, 1978 of [emphysema](#) at age 84 in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. First Lady [Rosalynn Carter](#) attended his funeral.

Body of work

Norman Rockwell was a prolific artist, producing over 4,000 original works in his lifetime. Most of his works are either in public collections, or have been destroyed in fire or other misfortunes. Rockwell was also commissioned to illustrate over 40 books including [Tom Sawyer](#) and [Huckleberry Finn](#). His annual contributions for the Boy Scouts' calendars between 1925 and 1976 (Rockwell was a 1939 recipient of the [Silver Buffalo Award](#), the highest adult award given by the [Boy Scouts of America](#)), were only slightly overshadowed by his most popular of calendar works: the "Four Seasons" illustrations for [Brown & Bigelow](#) that were published for 17 years beginning in 1947 and reproduced in various styles and sizes since 1964. Illustrations for booklets, catalogs, posters (particularly movie promotions), sheet music, stamps, playing cards, and murals (including "Yankee Doodle Dandy" and "God Bless the Hills", which was completed in 1936 for the Nassau Inn in [Princeton, New Jersey](#)) rounded out Rockwell's *œuvre* as an illustrator.

In 1969, as a tribute to Rockwell's 75th year birthday, officials of Brown & Bigelow and the Boy Scouts of America asked Rockwell to pose in *Beyond the Easel*, the calendar illustration that year.



Rockwell's work was dismissed by serious art critics in his lifetime. Many of his works appear overly sweet in modern critics' eyes, especially the *Saturday Evening Post* covers, which tend toward idealistic or sentimentalized portrayals of American life—this has led to the often-deprecatory adjective "Rockwellesque." Consequently, Rockwell is not considered a "serious painter" by some contemporary artists, who often regard his work as bourgeois and kitsch. Writer Vladimir Nabokov sneered that Rockwell's brilliant technique was put to "banal" use, and wrote in his book *Pnin*: "That Dalí is really Norman Rockwell's twin brother kidnapped by Gypsies in babyhood". He is called an "illustrator" instead of an artist by some critics, a designation he did not mind, as it was what he called himself.



However, in his later years, Rockwell began receiving more attention as a painter when he chose more serious subjects such as the series on racism for *Look* magazine. One example of this more serious work is *The Problem We All Live With*, which dealt with the issue of school racial integration. The painting depicts a young African American girl, Ruby Bridges, flanked by white federal marshals, walking to school past a wall defaced by racist graffiti.

In 1999, *The New Yorker* art critic Peter Schjeldahl said of Rockwell in *ArtNews*:
"Rockwell is terrific. It's become too tedious to pretend he isn't."

Rockwell's work was exhibited at the *Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum* in 2001. Rockwell's *Breaking Home Ties* sold for \$15.4 million at a 2006 Sotheby's auction. A twelve-city U.S. tour of Rockwell's works took place in 2008.

Influence

- In the film *Empire of the Sun*, a young boy (played by Christian Bale), is put to bed by his loving parents in a scene also inspired by a Rockwell painting—a reproduction of which is later kept by the young boy during his captivity in a prison camp. (Freedom from Fear, 1943).
- The 1994 film *Forrest Gump* includes a shot in a school that re-creates Rockwell's "Girl with Black Eye" with young Forrest in place of the girl. Much of the film drew heavy visual inspiration from Rockwell's art.
- Film director George Lucas owns Rockwell's original of *The Peach Crop*, and his colleague Steven Spielberg owns a sketch of Rockwell's *Triple Self-Portrait*. Each of the artworks hangs in the respective filmmakers' workspaces. Rockwell is a major character in an episode of Lucas's *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, "Passion for Life."
- In 2005, Target Co. sold *Marshall Field's* to *Federated Department Stores* and the Federated discovered a reproduction of Rockwell's *The Clock Mender*, which depicted the great clocks of the *Marshall Field and Company Building* on display. Rockwell had donated the painting depicted on the cover of the November 3, 1945 *Saturday Evening Post* to the store in 1948.
- On Norman Rockwell's birthday, February 3, 2010, Google featured Rockwell's iconic image of young love "Boy and Girl Gazing at the Moon" which is also known as "Puppy Love" on its home page. The response was so great that day that the Norman Rockwell museum's servers went down under the onslaught.
- "Dreamland," a track from Canadian alternative rock band *Our Lady Peace's* 2009 album *Burn Burn*, was inspired by Rockwell's paintings.

List of major works

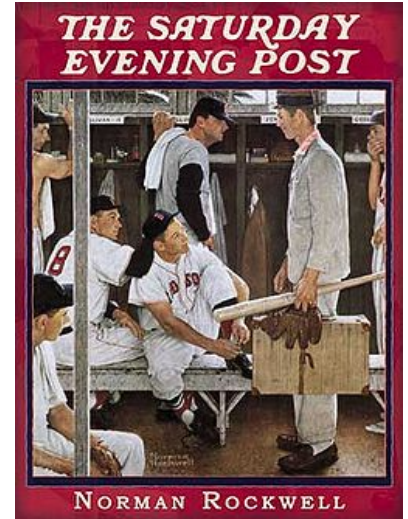
- *Scout at Ship's Wheel* (first published magazine cover illustration, *Boys' Life*, September 1913)
- *Santa and Scouts in Snow* (1913)

- *Boy and Baby Carriage* (1916; first Saturday Evening Post cover)
- *Circus Barker and Strongman* (1916)
- *Gramps at the Plate* (1916)
- *Redhead Loves Hatty Perkins* (1916)
- *People in a Theatre Balcony* (1916)
- *Tain't You* (1917; first Life magazine cover)
- *Cousin Reginald Goes to the Country* (1917; first Country Gentleman cover)
- *Santa and Expense Book* (1920)
- *Mother Tucking Children into Bed* (1921; first wife Irene is the model)

- *No Swimming* (1921)
- *Santa with Elves* (1922)
- *Doctor and Doll* (1929)
- *Deadline* (1938)
- *The Four Freedoms* (1943)
 - *Freedom of Speech* (1943)
 - *Freedom to Worship* (1943)
 - *Freedom from Want* (1943)
 - *Freedom from Fear* (1943)
- *Rosie the Riveter* (1943)

<http://www.rosietheriveter.org/painting.htm>
- *Going and Coming* (1947)
- *Bottom of the Sixth* (or *The Three Umpires*; 1949)
- *Saying Grace* (1951)
- *The Young Lady with the Shiner* (1953)
- *Girl at Mirror* (1954)
- *Breaking Home Ties* (1954)
- *The Marriage License* (1955)
- *The Scoutmaster* (1956)
- *The Runaway* (1958)
- *Triple Self-Portrait* (1960)
- *Golden Rule* (1961)
- *The Problem We All Live With* (1964)
- *Southern Justice (Murder in Mississippi)* (1965)

http://www.artchive.com/artchive/R/rockwell/rockwell_mississippi.jpg.html
- *New Kids in the Neighborhood* (1967)
- *Russian Schoolroom* (1967)
- *The Rookie*
- *Spirit of 76* (1976) (stolen in 1978 but recovered in 2001 by the FBI's Robert King Wittman)



See also

- James K. Van Brunt, a frequent model for Rockwell
- Four Freedoms (Norman Rockwell)
- Norman Rockwell's World... An American Dream, a 1972 short documentary film
- National Museum of American Illustration

External links

- Rockwell Collection at The National Museum of American Illustration
- Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, Massachusetts

- [Norman Rockwell WWII posters, hosted by the University of North Texas Libraries Digital Collections](#)
- [Gallery of classic graphic design featuring the illustrations of Norman Rockwell.](#)
- [Art Directors Club biography, portrait and images of work](#)
- [America, Illustrated " by *The New York Times*](#)
- [Norman Rockwell: Once upon a time there Was the American Dream](#) by Tiziano Thomas Dossena, *Bridge Puglia USA*, April 2011
- Footage of Norman Rockwell sketching a couple
http://www.itnsource.com/shotlist/BHC_RTV/1925/08/18/BGT407101044/

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Norman Rockwell was born on February 3, 1894, in New York City to Jarvis Waring and Ann Mary (Hill) Rockwell. He had one sibling, a brother, Jarvis. Rockwell's family lived in an apartment on the Upper West Side. His father, proud of their English heritage, used to read Charles Dickens to Norman and his brother on Sundays. Rockwell would sit and sketch pictures of the various, colorful characters from books like *Oliver Twist*. Norman Percevel Rockwell (February 3, 1894 – November 8, 1978) was a 20th-century American author, painter and illustrator. His works have a broad popular appeal in the United States for their reflection of American culture. Rockwell is most famous for the cover illustrations of everyday life he created for *The Saturday Evening Post* magazine over nearly five decades. Norman Rockwell. 79K likes. Norman Percevel Rockwell was a 20th century American painter and illustrator. His works enjoy a broad popular appeal in the

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