

Woodson Art Museum

Pre-Visit Education Materials

In Search of Norman Rockwell's America



Introduction to the Exhibition

Did Norman Rockwell paint an idealized version of America or was he painting what he really saw? With camera in hand, award-winning photojournalist Kevin Rivoli went in search of real “Rockwell moments.” Thirty-five of his slice-of-life images will hang side-by-side thirty-five similarly evocative original Rockwell paintings, drawings, and prints. Find Norman Rockwell’s America this winter in the heart of Wisconsin.

Introduction to Norman Rockwell

Rockwell was born in New York City on February 3, 1894. When he was nine years old, his family moved to the small town of Mamaroneck, New York. He was a skinny boy and not very athletic; he chose drawing as his hobby. At age eighteen, Rockwell became art editor of *Boys’ Life*, the official magazine of the Boy Scouts of America. When Rockwell was twenty-two years old, one of his paintings appeared on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*. This was quite an accomplishment since the magazine showcased the works of the finest illustrators of the time. Remarkably, during a forty-seven year period, 321 of Rockwell’s paintings were used on *Post* covers, making him one of the most famous painters of the twentieth century.

Unlike other artists of his day, Rockwell created artworks that were enjoyed by everyday people, and accordingly, many of his artworks featured everyday people as subjects.

Introduction to Kevin Rivoli

New York State-based Kevin Rivoli first entered the world of photography in 1987 when, after trying several careers (he went to college to become a Physical Education teacher), he decided to pursue photojournalism. In 1988 he landed his first full-time job at *The Citizen* in Auburn, NY (Auburn has about 27,000 residents so it is smaller than Wausau).

Now, Kevin is a full-time freelancer (meaning he works on commission and also sells images to larger entities). His client list includes the *Associated Press (AP)*, *New York Times*, and *USA Today*.

A devout Norman Rockwell fan, Rivoli always felt connected to Rockwell's work and credits the American icon with inspiring his passion for celebrating the ordinary and embracing the simple, everyday moments that happen all around us.

It is this inspiration that led to Rivoli developing *In Search of Norman Rockwell's America*.

Classroom Resources

Books and Magazines

Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artists: Norman Rockwell

Mike Venezia, 2000

Willie Was Different

Norman Rockwell, 1994

Norman Rockwell: Storyteller with a Brush

By Beverly Gherman, 2000

Deck the Halls

Norman Rockwell, 2008

Cobblestone Magazine Volume 10

Number 12, Dec 1989

Videos

Norman Rockwell: An American Portrait

V.I.E.W. Video

2004 Art Series

Websites

How Stuff Works Video Center

Six Streaming Videos on Rockwell

<http://videos.howstuffworks.com/hsw/18284-norman-rockwell-meet-norman-rockwell-video.htm>

Norman Rockwell Museum

<http://www.nrm.org/>

Classroom Engagement Activities

Create a *Saturday Evening Post* Cover

Kindergarten – 12th Grade

Objective

Place students in the role of the illustrator by designing their own *Post* cover.

Introduction

Show examples of *Post* covers by Norman Rockwell (easily searchable on the Internet). Ask students to describe what they see.

NOTE: Rockwell felt that the idea or concept behind a cover must be readily evident. For the cover to have the desired impact, the viewer should be able to understand what he or she is looking at in about thirty seconds.

STEPS

- Brainstorm cover ideas with classroom – what everyday activities could make for interesting covers? Focus on the idea of nostalgia.
- Pass out copies of the enclosed *POST* cover “blank” and illustration supplies (pencils, colored pencils, markers, etc.).
- Draw! Use full color.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

2009

5 cts. *THE COPY*

Then and Now: Similarities between Rockwell and Rivoli

3rd – 12th Grade

Objective

Students to write a “similarities paragraph” on one set of artworks from *In Search of Norman Rockwell’s America*.

Introduction

Even though “the times change,” some life events stay the same. Kevin Rivoli looked to highlight “Rockwell moments” today. Show example Rockwell/Rivoli pairs from the exhibition (URLs listed below). Ask students to describe what they see.

Ask students to suggest other life moments that haven’t changed.

Possible responses:

- When a baby comes home from the hospital.
- Someone’s wedding day.
- A child’s first day of school.
- Leaving for college.
- First deer hunt.

Ask each student to select a Rockwell/Rivoli pair and write a paragraph describing the similarities between the images.

When students complete their paragraphs, ask them to present their observations to the class.

URLs

Homecoming

<http://www.lywam.org/exhibitions/imagepop.cfm?image=ACF88.jpg>

The Officer and Child

<http://www.lywam.org/exhibitions/imagepop.cfm?image=ACF89.jpg>

The Prom

<http://www.lywam.org/exhibitions/imagepop.cfm?image=ACF8A.jpg>

Thanksgiving

<http://www.lywam.org/exhibitions/imagepop.cfm?image=ACF8B.jpg>

Take It Further

Ask students to write a paragraph highlighting the differences between a Rockwell/Rivoli pair of images.

When I Was Your Age: An Oral History Project

2nd – 12th Grade

Objective

Students interview adults in their family; during these interviews students uncover family stories.

Introduction

Many of Rockwell's and Rivoli's artworks highlight experiences of the American family. Do you have family memories you'd like to share?

Ask students to select an older family member they'd like to interview. This person could be a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, older sibling, or a close family friend.

Once students have selected a family member, instruct students to take home the "interview form" and fill it out with their family member. Encourage students to complete the interview in person. Students then present their interviews via a summary to the class.

Take It Further

Invite family members into the classroom to talk to students about their childhoods. Students can come up with additional questions for invited family members.

Invite family members into the classroom and record the interviews using freeware, such as Audacity. Pair up with a technology teacher to convert the interviews into podcasts. Make podcasts available on the school's website.

When I Was Your Age: An Oral History Project Interview Form

Interviewer's (Student's) Name and Age

Interviewee's Name, Age, and Relation to Interviewer (Student)

Where did you grow up?

How many siblings did you have?

Who was president when you were my age?

What was your favorite T.V. show?

Did you eat hot lunch or bring a lunch to school?

If you brought a lunch to school, what did your lunch box look like?

What types of clothes did you wear to school; how were they different from today's?

Did you participate in any after-school activities?

What kinds of music did you listen to?

Did our family have any traditions that are different from the one's we have today?

What were your grandparents like?

Did you get an allowance? If so, how much?

What did you do on summer vacation?

How much did a movie ticket cost when you were my age?

Do you think kids today are different than they were when you were my age? If so, how were they different?

What did you hope and dream of when you were my age?
