

Norman Rockwell



1894-1978 | AMERICAN

On Top of the World

M.S. Rau
FINE ART • ANTIQUES • JEWELS

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Oil on canvas | 1928
Signed "Norman Rockwell" (lower right)

Canvas: 32 1/2" high x 24 1/2" wide | 82.6 cm x 62.2 cm

Frame: 41 1/4" high x 33 1/4" wide x 3" deep
104.8 cm x 84.5 cm x 7.6 cm



“

Rockwell painted
the American
dream—better than
anyone.

– Steven Spielberg

”



Norman Rockwell captured the heart and soul of America like no other artist. His most famous works are those that graced popular magazine covers, defining the visual identity of the nation for generations. Please see photos of one such masterpiece, a stunning oil entitled *On Top of the World*, created for the cover of *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1928.

On Top of the World shines with the universal wonder of young love. Two bright-eyed figures sit amidst the clouds on top of a globe, bringing the age-old saying to life. The composition is quintessential Rockwell—tender, witty and heartwarming. The extraordinarily vibrant colors and precise details reveal Rockwell's technical mastery and unmatched ability to bring a stirring narrative to life in a single frame.

When *Ladies' Home Journal* published this Rockwell cover in 1928, it reached over two million American households and had an advertising volume second only to the *Saturday Evening Post*. Rockwell created only two covers for this popular women's magazine—this one in 1928, and another in 1932—making *On Top of the World* an exceptional rarity in his extensive body of work.

This Rockwell masterpiece also once belonged to the distinguished collection of Harry Abrams, the legendary American publisher and art collector. While in his collection, the painting was prominently featured in the 1972-73 major exhibition of Rockwell's work, *Norman Rockwell: A Sixty Year Retrospective*, which traveled to nine museums nationwide. Importantly, *On Top of the World* will also be included in the upcoming exhibition, *American Stories: From Revolution to Rockwell*, at the Norman Rockwell Museum in 2026.

Throughout his prolific career, Norman Rockwell was not just a celebrated illustrator but a national institution. His talent for finding meaning in everyday moments earned him immense acclaim, from five presidential portrait commissions to high-profile collectors including Steven Spielberg and George Lucas—all culminating in the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1977, the highest honor for an American citizen. In 2013, Rockwell's *Saying Grace* broke the record for an American painting at auction, selling for over \$46 million, and his coveted oils have continued to bring millions. He is represented in prestigious museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the National Portrait Gallery, and there is an entire museum dedicated to Rockwell in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.



PROVENANCE

Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York

Private collection, acquired circa 1990s

Private collection, by descent

LITERATURE

Ladies' Home Journal, April 1928, cover illustration

C. Finch, *Norman Rockwell's America*, New York, 1975, p. 89, fig. 99, illustrated

C. Finch, *Norman Rockwell: 332 Magazine Covers*, New York, 1979, p. 35, illustrated (as *Top of the World*)

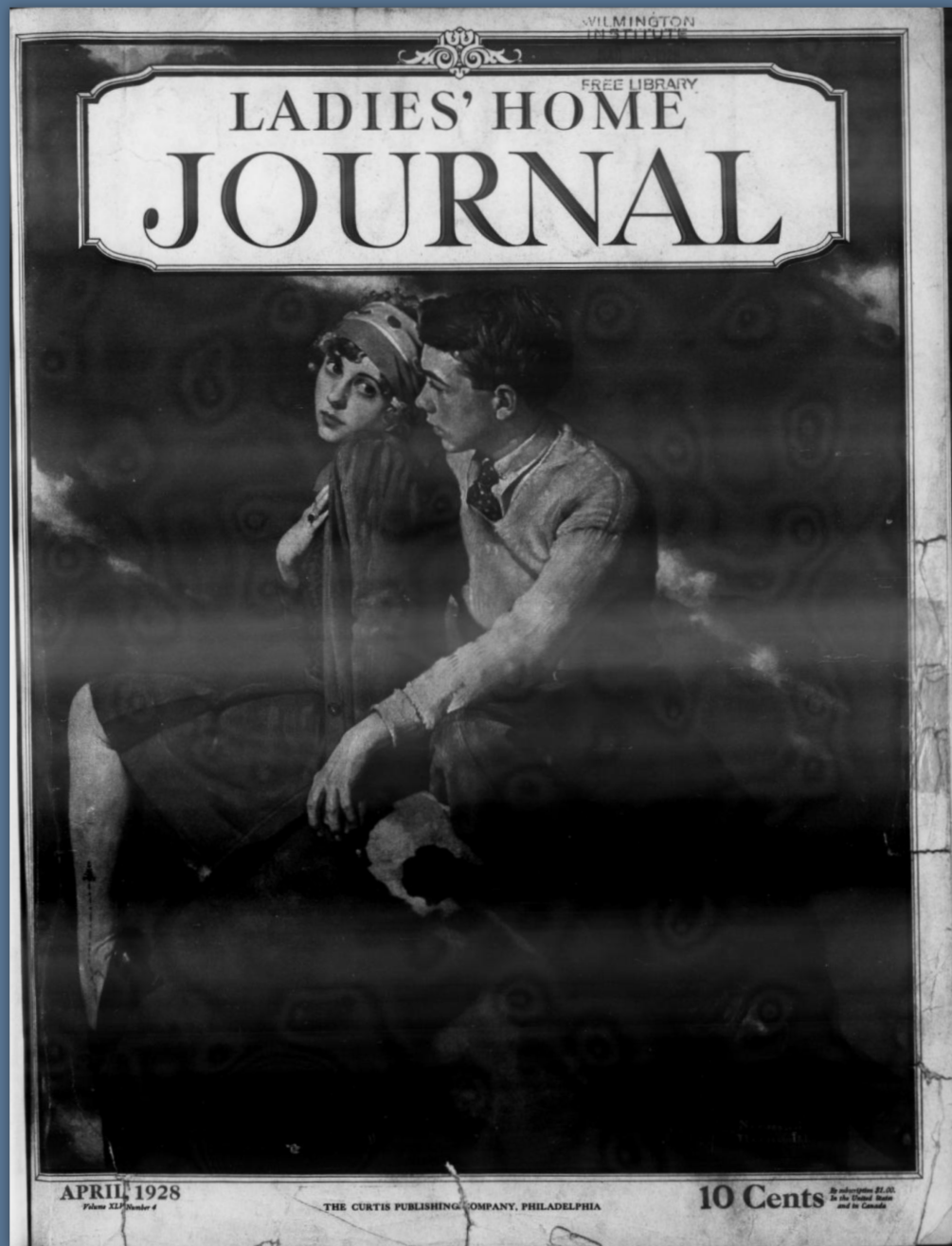
L.N. Moffatt, *Norman Rockwell: A Definitive Catalogue*, vol. I, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, 1986, p. 34, no. C87, illustrated (as *On Top of the World (Young Couple Seated on Globe)*)

EXHIBITED

Norman Rockwell: A Sixty Year Retrospective, February 11, 1972-April 15, 1973, p. 63, illustrated; this exhibition traveled to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Fort Lauderdale Museum of the Arts; Brooklyn, New York, Brooklyn Museum; Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art; San Antonio, Texas, Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute; San Francisco, California, M.H. De Young Memorial Museum; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Oklahoma Art Center; Indianapolis, Indiana, Indianapolis Museum of Art; Omaha, Nebraska, Joslyn Museum of Art; Seattle, Washington, Seattle Art Museum

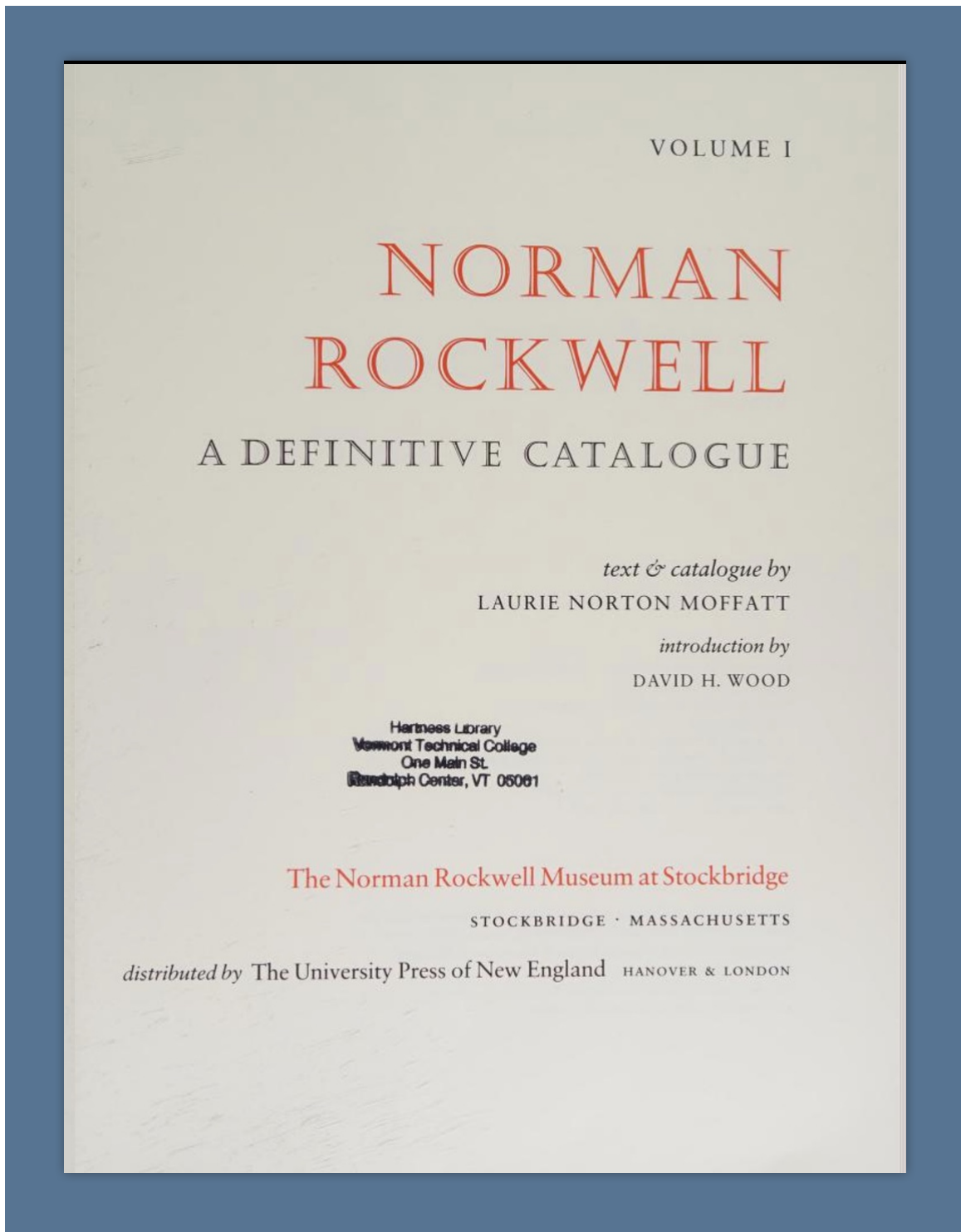
This painting is scheduled to be included in the exhibition, *American Stories: From Revolution to Rockwell*, at the Norman Rockwell Museum from June 2026 through October 2026





On Top of the World on the cover of *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1928



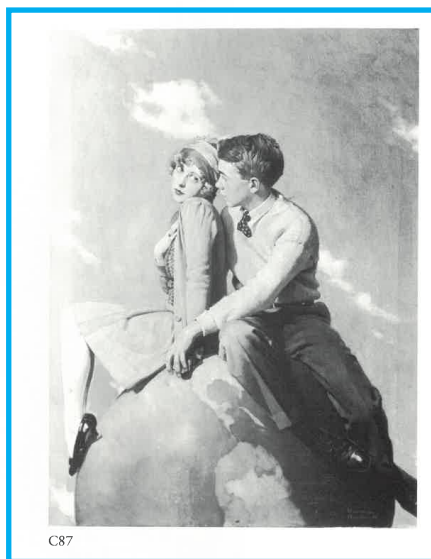


L. N. Moffatt, *Norman Rockwell: A Definitive Catalogue*, vol. I, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, 1986, p. 34, no. C87, illustrated



LADIES' HOME JOURNAL

Two Rockwell covers were published by *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1928 and 1932. Although many of his illustrations were used for feature stories appearing inside the magazine, most of his cover work was reserved for the *Saturday Evening Post* during these years.



C87

C87 On Top of the World (Young Couple Seated on Globe)

Oil on canvas
32 x 24 inches (81 x 61 cm)
Signed lower right: Norman / Rockwell
1928 (*Ladies' Home Journal*: April 1928, cover)
Private Collection
Reproduced: *America*, illus. 99; *Retrospective*, p. 63
Photo courtesy of Harry N. Abrams Inc.

C88 Two Women Walking

Oil on canvas
27 x 20 inches (68.5 x 51 cm)
Signed lower left: Norman / Rockwell
1932 (*Ladies' Home Journal*: April 1932, cover)
Collection of the Curtis Publishing Company
Reproduced: *Buechner*, illus. 275



C88

CHRISTOPHER FINCH

Norman Rockwell's America



C. Finch, *Norman Rockwell's America*, New York, 1975, p. 89, fig. 99, illustrated



To my mother and father

TITLE PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS:

1. *Doctor and Doll*. Original oil painting for *Post* cover, March 9, 1929. Collection John E. Newman, San Antonio
2. *After the Prom* (detail). Original oil painting for *Post* cover, May 27, 1957. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Rockwell

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C. Finch, *Norman Rockwell's America*, New York, 1975, p. 89, fig. 99, illustrated





97. *Young Love*. Post cover,
July 11, 1936

99. *On Top of the World*.
Illustration for
Ladies' Home Journal.
© 1933, Downe Publishing, Inc.

C. Finch, *Norman Rockwell's America*, New York, 1975, p. 89, fig. 99, illustrated



Norman Rockwell

A SIXTY YEAR RETROSPECTIVE



Norman Rockwell: A Sixty Year Retrospective, February 11, 1972-April 15, 1973,
p. 63, illustrated



Norman Rockwell

A Sixty Year Retrospective

CATALOGUE OF AN EXHIBITION ORGANIZED BY
Bernard Danenberg Galleries, New York

WITH TEXT BY
Thomas S. Buechner

Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York

Norman Rockwell: A Sixty Year Retrospective, February 11, 1972-April 15, 1973,
p. 63, illustrated





On Top of the World.
Original oil painting for Ladies' Home Journal, 1933.
Collection Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York

Playing Checkers. 1935. Original oil painting.
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Gustave Seaberg



Norman Rockwell: A Sixty Year Retrospective, February 11, 1972-April 15, 1973,
p. 63, illustrated





Norman Rockwell

Saying grace

oil on canvas

Height 109.2 x Width 104.1 cm.

Height 42.992 x Width 40.984 in.

1951

04 December 2013 *about 12 years ago*

Sotheby's New York

American Art – [Lot 00010]

est. 15,000,000 - 20,000,000 USD

46,085,000 USD ©



Norman Rockwell

TWO PLUMBERS

oil on canvas

Height 99.7 x Width 94 cm.

Height 39.252 x Width 37.008 in.

1951

23 May 2017 *over 8 years ago*

Sotheby's New York

American Art – [Lot 00042]

est. 5,000,000 - 7,000,000 USD

14,975,000 USD ©



Norman Rockwell

After the prom

oil on canvas

Height 79.1 x Width 74 cm.

Height 31.142 x Width 29.134 in.

1957

21 May 2014 *over 11 years ago*

Sotheby's New York

American Art – [Lot 00017]

est. 8,000,000 - 12,000,000 USD

9,125,000 USD ©



Norman Rockwell

Gary Cooper as the Texan

oil on canvas

Height 88.9 x Width 68.6 cm.

Height 35 x Width 27.008 in.

1930

28 November 2007 *about 18 years ago*

Sotheby's New York

American Paintings, Drawings & Sculpture – [Lot 00036]

est. 1,500,000 - 2,500,000 USD

5,921,000 USD ©



Norman Rockwell

The bookworm (man with nose in book)

oil on canvas

Height 81.3 x Width 66 cm.

Height 32.008 x Width 25.984 in.

1926

20 May 2015 *over 10 years ago*

Sotheby's New York

American Art – [Lot 00040]

est. 1,500,000 - 2,500,000 USD

3,834,000 USD ©





Norman Rockwell
Boys and girls first aid week
(Scout bandaging girl's finger)
 oil on canvas
 Height 71.8 x Width 61.6 cm.
 Height 28.268 x Width 24.252 in.
 1926

21 May 2014 over 11 years ago

Sotheby's New York
 American Art – [Lot 00036]

est. 1,000,000 - 1,500,000 USD **2,965,000 USD** ⓘ
 ↑ 98% est



Norman Rockwell
Dreams of Long Ago
 oil on canvas
 Height 81.3 x Width 68.6 cm.
 Height 32.008 x Width 27.008 in.
 1927

16 May 2012 over 13 years ago

Christie's New York
 Important American Paintings, Drawings & Sculpture – [Lot 00077]

est. 2,000,000 - 3,000,000 USD **2,322,500 USD** ⓘ



Norman Rockwell
Starstruck
 oil on canvas
 Height 55.9 x Width 50.8 cm.
 Height 22.008 x Width 20 in.
 1934

23 May 2013 over 12 years ago

Christie's New York
 American Art – [Lot 00071]

est. 800,000 - 1,200,000 USD **2,027,750 USD** ⓘ
 ↑ 69% est



Norman Rockwell
Woman Laden with Antiques
 oil on canvas
 Height 91.8 x Width 73.7 cm.
 Height 36.142 x Width 29.016 in.
 1937

18 November 2024 about 1 year ago

Sotheby's New York
 Modern Evening Auction – [Lot 00127]

est. 2,000,000 - 3,000,000 USD **1,800,000 USD** ⓘ
 ↓ 10% est



Norman Rockwell
LITTLE BOY WRITING LETTER
 oil on canvas
 Height 66.4 x Width 58.7 cm.
 Height 26.142 x Width 23.11 in.
 1920

21 May 2019 over 6 years ago

Sotheby's New York
 American Art – [Lot 00029]

est. 1,000,000 - 1,500,000 USD **1,700,000 USD** ⓘ
 ↑ 13% est



Norman Rockwell | *Brass Merchant*

1934

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 34 x 28 inches | 81.3 x 71.1 cm



NORMAN
ROCKWELL
MUSEUM

Norman Rockwell Museum
Stockbridge, MA, United States



Norman Rockwell | *Marriage License*

1955

Medium: Oil on canvas



NORMAN
ROCKWELL
MUSEUM

Norman Rockwell Museum
Stockbridge, MA, United States



Norman Rockwell | *Sick Puppy*

1923

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 20 x 16 inches | 50.8 x 40.6 cm



Norman Rockwell | *Expressman*

1924

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 29 ⁷/₈ x 24 inches | 75.9 x 61 cm



The Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York, NY, United States



Norman Rockwell | *Thanksgiving*

1943

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 41 x 31 inches | 104.1 x 78.7 cm



SAINT LOUIS
ART MUSEUM

Saint Louis Art Museum
St. Louis, MO, United States





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