

# 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)*)

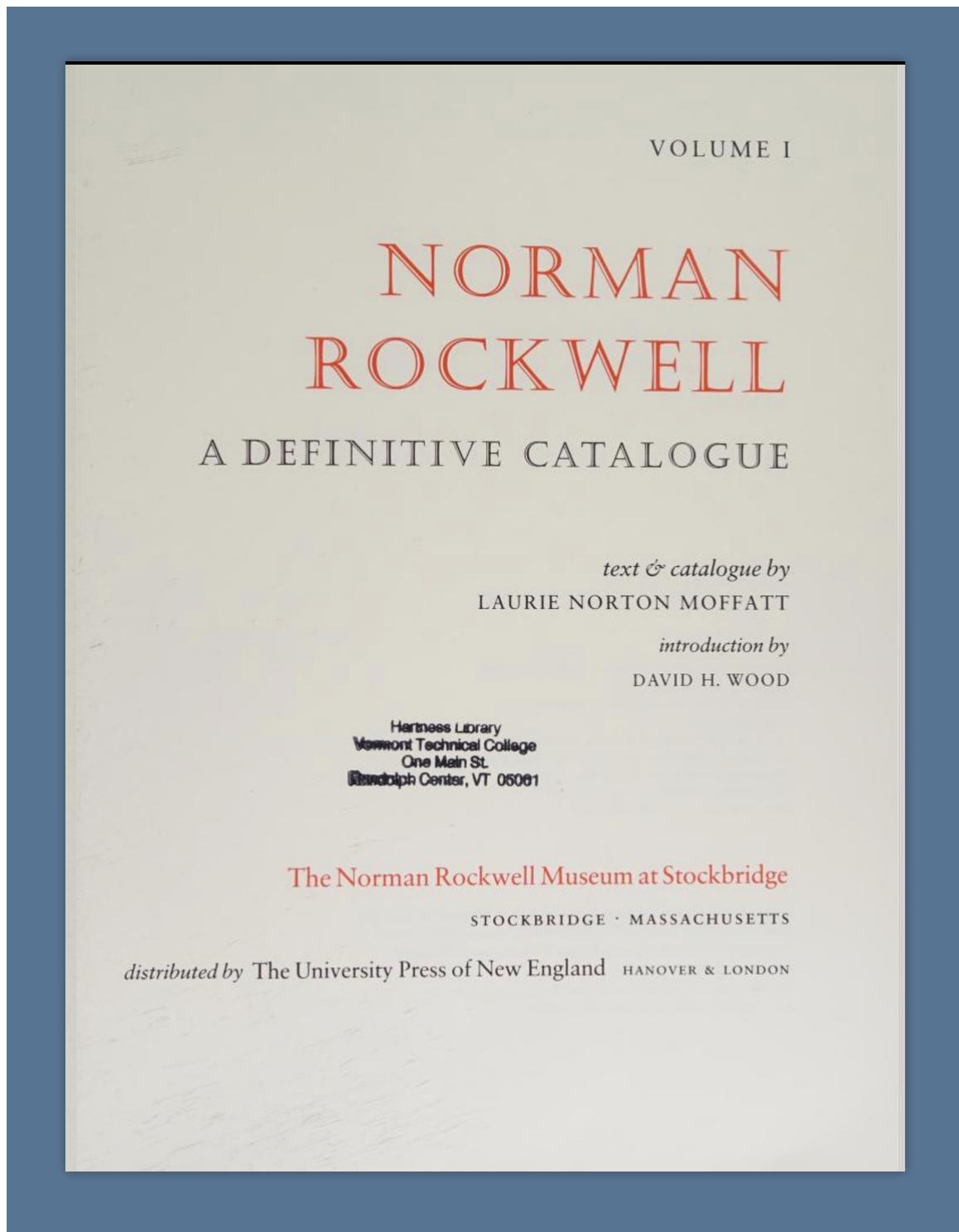
## EXHIBITED

*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



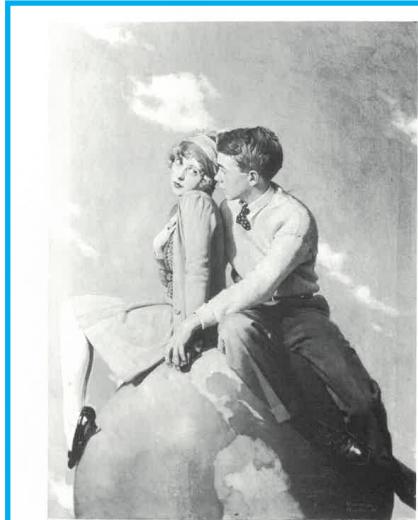
*On Top of the World* on the cover of *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1928



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

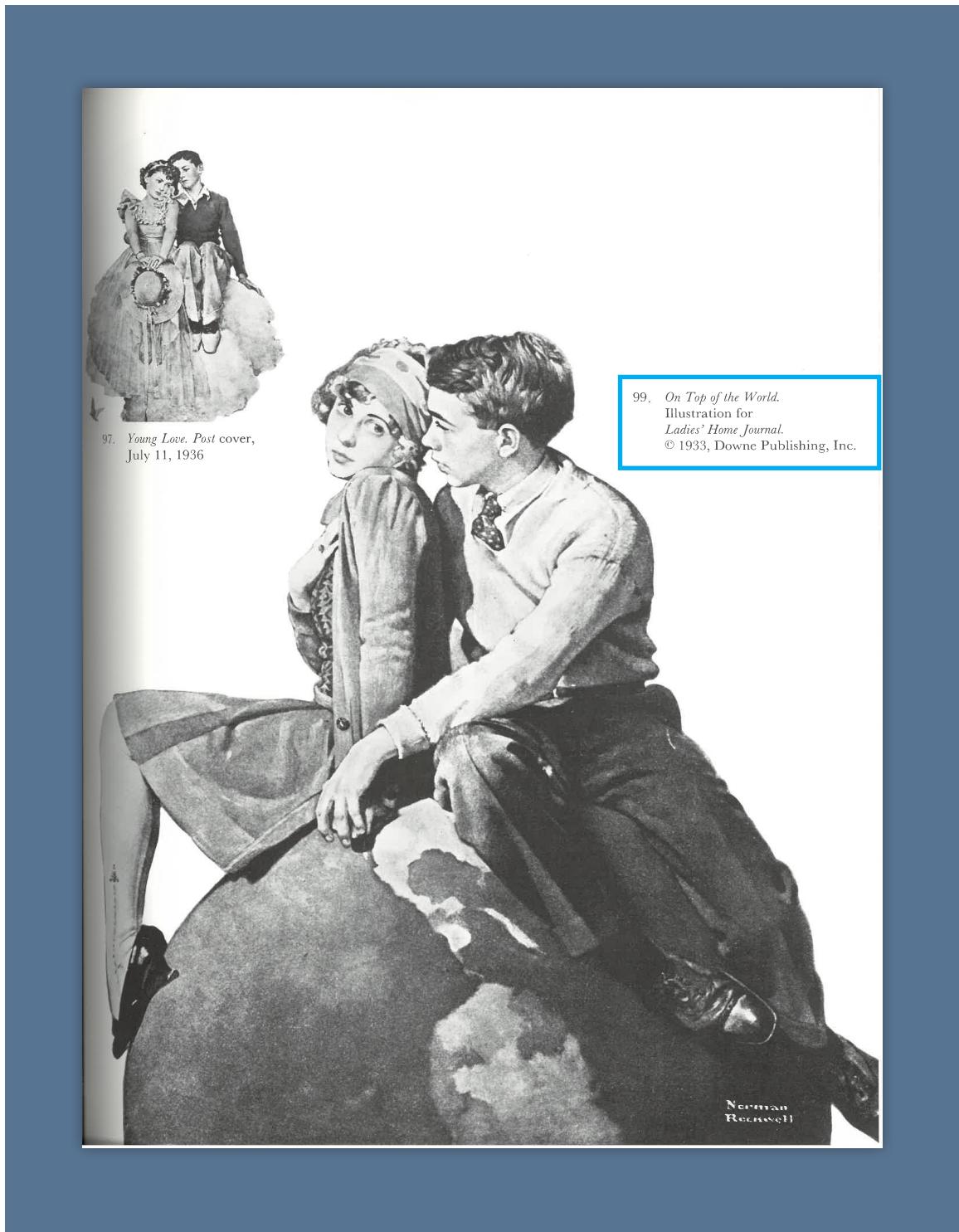


C. Finch, *Norman Rockwell's America*, New York, 1975, p. 89, fig. 99, illustrated



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

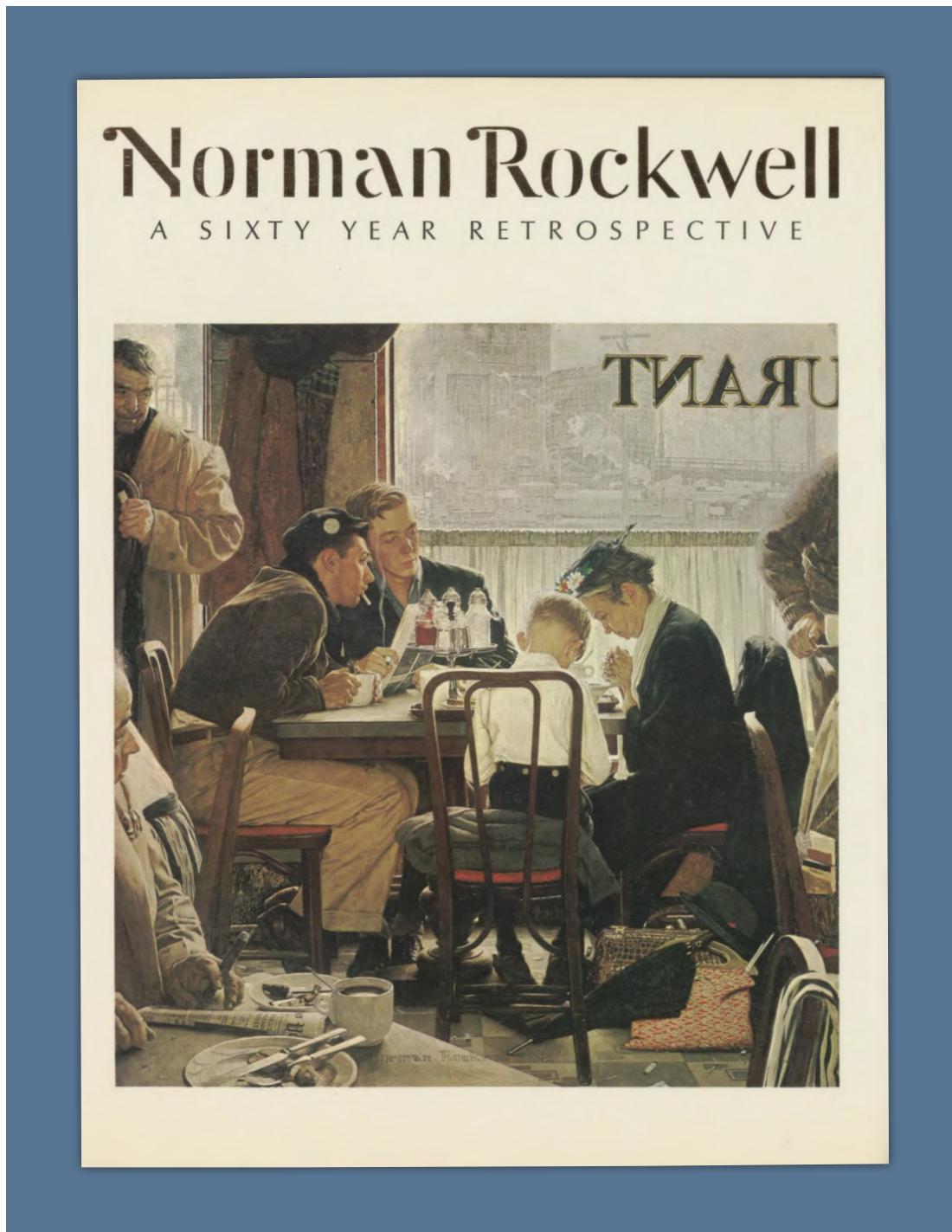




C. Finch, *Norman Rockwell's America*, New York, 1975, p. 89, fig. 99, illustrated



EXHIBITED



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



# Norman Rockwell

## *A Sixty Year Retrospective*

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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





63

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



# AUCTION COMPARABLES

	<p><b>Norman Rockwell</b>  <b>Saying grace</b>          oil on canvas          Height 109.2 x Width 104.1 cm.          Height 42.992 x Width 40.984 in.          1951</p>	<b>04 December 2013</b> about 12 years ago	Sotheby's New York American Art – [Lot 00010]	est. 15,000,000 - 20,000,000 USD	<b>46,085,000</b> USD 	 ↑ 130% est
	<p><b>Norman Rockwell</b>  <b>TWO PLUMBERS</b>          oil on canvas          Height 99.7 x Width 94 cm.          Height 39.252 x Width 37.008 in.          1951</p>	<b>23 May 2017</b> over 8 years ago	Sotheby's New York American Art – [Lot 00042]	est. 5,000,000 - 7,000,000 USD	<b>14,975,000</b> USD 	 ↑ 114% est
	<p><b>Norman Rockwell</b>  <b>After the prom</b>          oil on canvas          Height 79.1 x Width 74 cm.          Height 31.142 x Width 29.134 in.          1957</p>	<b>21 May 2014</b> over 11 years ago	Sotheby's New York American Art – [Lot 00017]	est. 8,000,000 - 12,000,000 USD	<b>9,125,000</b> USD 	
	<p><b>Norman Rockwell</b>  <b>Gary Cooper as the Texan</b>          oil on canvas          Height 88.9 x Width 68.6 cm.          Height 35 x Width 27.008 in.          1930</p>	<b>28 November 2007</b> about 18 years ago	Sotheby's New York American Paintings, Drawings & Sculpture – [Lot 00036]	est. 1,500,000 - 2,500,000 USD	<b>5,921,000</b> USD 	 ↑ 137% est
	<p><b>Norman Rockwell</b>  <b>The bookworm (man with nose in book)</b>          oil on canvas          Height 81.3 x Width 66 cm.          Height 32.008 x Width 25.984 in.          1926</p>	<b>20 May 2015</b> over 10 years ago	Sotheby's New York American Art – [Lot 00040]	est. 1,500,000 - 2,500,000 USD	<b>3,834,000</b> USD 	 ↑ 53% est



# AUCTION COMPARABLES



**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

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

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

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



## Norman Rockwell | *Brass Merchant*

1934

**Medium:** Oil on canvas

**Dimensions:** 34 x 28 inches | 81.3 x 71.1 cm



Norman Rockwell Museum  
Stockbridge, MA, United States

## Norman Rockwell | *Marriage License*

1955

**Medium:** Oil on canvas



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



Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art  
Bentonville, AR, United States



## Norman Rockwell | *Expressman*

1924

**Medium:** Oil on canvas

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



THE  
MET

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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