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# Exhibitions: Rockwell's Americana art on show in London

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LONDON (Reuters Life!) - Works by illustrator Norman Rockwell famous for his images of idealized small-town America have found a sympathetic temporary home in a gallery nestled among the pretty houses and shops of a leafy London suburb.

Dulwich Picture Gallery is hosting Britain's first exhibition of works by one of America's best-loved artists, including all 323 covers for the Saturday Evening Post magazine he created between 1916 and 1963 and 40 original paintings.

"This one man defined America for many of its citizens," gallery director Ian Dejardin says in an online video introduction. "It wasn't perhaps real life but it was America as he saw it."

Rockwell's magazine covers and advertisements were printed from his realistic, meticulously crafted and detailed oil paintings, some of which are on display in the gallery.

His Americans are a fireman with a weathered face, a young soldier, a girl talking tenderly to her grandmother, two men trying to catch the eye of a glamorous woman, an ice-skating couple and a man fishing in pouring rain.

There is also a striking painting of four people playing bridge seen straight on from above and the "Triple Self-Portrait" which depicts Rockwell painting himself.

But Rockwell was not only about traditional values in a happy, ruddy-faced America.

The works on show in London, loaned from the National Museum of American Illustration and private collectors, also reflect the fact that he lived through some of the country's greatest political, social and cultural changes.

In 1943, at the height of World War Two, Rockwell painted the Four Freedoms paintings showing his view of the freedom of speech and worship and the freedom from want and fear. They toured the United States and, through the sale of war bonds, raised more than \$130 million for the war effort.

Rockwell's magazine covers include portraits of John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon and India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.

Another well-known contemporary familiar with Rockwell's brush was filmmaker Orson Welles: Rockwell painted the poster for Welles's 1942 film "The Magnificent Ambersons."

Rockwell's illustrations were so popular that whenever they appeared on the front of Saturday Evening Post, the magazine's circulation increased.



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