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Nat'l. Museum of Illustration honors Tom Wolfe, Whoopi Goldberg

WRITTEN BY INDEPENDENT MEDIA SOURCE
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NEWPORT, R.I. - On July 29, the National Museum of American Illustration (NMAI) celebrated its 10th Anniversary in grand Newport Gilded Age style, honoring Whoopi Goldberg, Tom Wolfe and the National Arts Club (NAC) with their inaugural American Civilization Award before 350 guests at Vernon Court.

The evening began with viewing the landmark exhibition, Norman Rockwell and His Mentor: J.C. Leyendecker, a scholarly presentation delving into the amazing influence of Leyendecker on Rockwell's oeuvre.

Laurence Cutler, Chairman and co-founder of the NMAI, commented on the evening by saying: "Judy (Cutler, the museum's director and co-founder) and I are thrilled with the success of the event. There is a rising worldwide enthusiasm for American illustration art. Our gala guests came from China, Australia, Malaysia, Europe, South America and from across the United States to celebrate the museum's mission and accomplishments over the past decade. We are grateful for their unending enthusiasm and support."

Author Tom Wolfe, also an artist, delivered a manifesto on the growing significance of illustration art in American society "...thanks in no small part to the efforts of Judy and Laurence Cutler."

Speaking on the issue of contemporary art, Wolfe said, "I think it's reached the end of the line. The illustrators are becoming the icons of American art... Norman Rockwell is the Picasso of the 21st century." Along with presenting Wolfe's award, the NMAI premiered the first exhibition of his illustrations.

In her acceptance speech, Goldberg expressed her personal interest in and love of illustration art. She said the NMAI has delved into the scholarly aspects of illustration in ways never looked at before. The underlying story of American illustration should be told so that it enters the public consciousness and everybody understands the origins of these images and their continuing significance to our culture.



Author Tom Wolfe delivers manifesto on illustration art. Photo Courtesy the National Museum of American Illustration, ©McWilliamsStudios.com.

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During his acceptance speech for the NAC, club president Aldon James remarked: "[The Cutlers] are now 'a new planet' within an art solar system, and you have your unique gravitational force...You are an inspirational team, and you have the club's support without any restrictions."

Although he was unable to attend, former President Bill Clinton wrote: "By preserving and celebrating a vital part of our nation's artistic heritage, the NMAI has enriched our culture and inspires visitors from across America and around the world."

The gala benefited the endowment fund of the American Civilization Foundation, a non-profit organization which operates and administers the NMAI. Both the Tom Wolfe In Our Time exhibition and the Norman Rockwell and His Mentor: J.C. Leyendecker exhibition will be on display at the NMAI through Labor Day.

About the museum:

The National Museum of American Illustration (NMAI) was founded in 1998 by Judy Goffman Cutler and Laurence S. Cutler to house their art collection from the 'Golden Age of American Illustration.' The NMAI, a private, nonprofit organization, is an independent, educational, and aesthetic organization with the goal to present the best venue for the public to appreciate what is widely accepted as the greatest known collection of illustration art.

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Special thanks to Tom Flynn.

ADDITIONAL IMAGES OF NOTE



Whoopi Goldberg, Judy Cutler and Laurence Cutler view the Norman Rockwell/Leyendecker exhibition in the Tiffany Loggia. Photo Courtesy the National Museum of American Illustration, ©McWilliamsStudios.com.



Guests dined under the gala tent. Photo Courtesy the National Museum of American Illustration,

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Whoopi Goldberg lodges a bid during the Petite Auction. Photo Courtesy the National Museum of American Illustration, ©McWilliamsStudios.com.

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