



THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ILLUSTRATION

You can see works by Norman Rockwell and Tom Wolfe starting May 28 at the National Museum of American Illustration in Newport.

ART

Popular Rockwell show returning to Newport

NEWPORT — How popular is Norman Rockwell?

So popular that the National Museum of American Illustration is doling out a second helping of "Norman Rockwell: American Imagist," a 2009 exhibit that featured more than 50 paintings, drawings and other works by America's best-loved illustrator. The show, which recently returned from a record-setting run in London, opens May 28 at the museum's Bellevue Avenue headquarters.

"It's been so popular that we had to bring it back," said museum co-founder Judy Goffman Cutler. "The show has been traveling for the past year — most recently to the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London. So we're looking at this as a kind of encore performance in Newport."

Cutler said the show shattered attendance records at the Dulwich, which opened in 1811 and is considered England's oldest public art gallery. "Day after day, people were lined up around the block," she said. "The curators at the Dulwich said they'd never seen anything like it."

The illustration museum, which owns works by Maxfield Parrish, N.C. Wyeth and other illustrators as well as Rockwell, contributed the bulk of the show's artworks. Other pieces are on loan from private collections. Among the highlights: Rockwell's first-ever magazine cover (a simple fishing scene created for a forerunner of Field and Stream); "Bridge Game — The Bid," a dizzying overhead



Tom Wolfe's "The Seven Graces of New York: The Cabdriver," 1980, ink on paper, part of the show at the National Museum of American Illustration.

view of card players that's among Rockwell's most intricate creations; and several paintings from Rockwell's later years, when he took up causes such as civil rights and school desegregation.

"Basically, there's something from every stage of his career," Cutler said.

In addition to the Rockwell show, the museum is hosting a small exhibit of drawings by Tom Wolfe. Though best known as an author, Wolfe, whose books include "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test" and "Bonfire of the Vanities," is also a talented

cartoonist and caricaturist.

"It's a side of Tom that most people don't get to see," said Cutler.

"Norman Rockwell: American Imagist" and "Tom Wolfe: In Our Time" open Saturday, May 28 at the National Museum of American Illustration, 492 Bellevue Ave., Newport. Museum hours (as of May 28): Sat. 10-4 and Sun. 11-4 for general admission and for a 3 p.m. guided tour on Friday; all other times are by reservation only. Admission: \$18 adults, \$16 seniors, \$12 students with ID and \$8 ages 5-12. Contact: (401) 851-8949, ext. 18 or www.americanillustration.org.

— BILL VAN SICLEN