

# Maxfield Parrish's Masterpiece 'Daybreak' At National Museum Of American Illustration

NEWPORT, R.I. — Maxfield Parrish's record-setting masterpiece "Daybreak" is on loan to the National Museum of American Illustration (NMAI) through August 25. The announcement of the viewing came on the heels of the May 25 auction at Christie's where "Daybreak" set a new record for a work by Parrish of \$7.6 million dollars. Now privately owned, the loan of "Daybreak" to the NMAI presents the only opportunity available to the public to view this masterpiece before it enters a closed collection.

To celebrate this milestone exhibit, the NMAI is offering special weekends of general admissions in addition to its daily guided tours available by reservation Mondays through Fridays.

"The recent results of American illustrators at auctions this spring has confirmed their importance in American

art," said the museum's director and co-founder, Judy Goffman Cutler. "Works by Maxfield Parrish and Norman Rockwell set new records at auction, indicating the current level of respect and appreciation of these artists, and this genre, today.

"Although the loan of 'Daybreak' was arranged with little advance notice, we are thrilled beyond belief to offer to the public the only opportunity to view this work," she continued. "Daybreak' has been privately held since 1922 and only rarely exhibited to the public in the last 80 years. In conjunction with 'Daybreak,' we have arranged the loan of other significant works by Parrish — 'My Duty Towards My Neighbor/ My Duty Towards God,' 'Dream Garden' and 'Presentation Piece for the Florentine Fete A Call To Joy." Like 'Daybreak,' 'My Duty Towards My Neighbor/

My Duty Towards God' is also entering a private collection after being exhibited at the NMAI."

In 1922, Parrish produced "Daybreak," which he referred to as "the great painting." Distributed as an art print through the House of Art, "Daybreak" became the most successful art print of the last century and secured Parrish's position as the most popular illustrator after World War I. In composition it resembles a stage set, which is appropriate, since Parrish loved the theater and had designed a number of sets for masques in Cornish, N.H., as well as for a New York performance of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. It was laid out according to dynamic symmetry using photographs of Kitty Owen, his daughter Jean and Susan Lewin as models, posed amid a backdrop of architectural elements, columns, urns and

fantastical landscape.

The print was the sensation of the decade and was displayed in one of every four American homes. It is said to be the most reproduced art image in history, surpassing "The Last Supper" and Andy Warhol's soup cans.

To celebrate the loan, two special weekends of general admissions for self-guided tours are being offered — July 22 and 23, and August 19 and

20, open each day 10 am to 3 pm. Additionally, the museum is open for guided tours by advance reservation, Mondays through Fridays, through November 3.

The National Museum of American Illustration is on Bellevue Avenue at Vernon Court, a Beaux-Arts adaptation of an Eighteenth Century French chateau. For information, 401-851-8949 or [www.americanillustration.org](http://www.americanillustration.org).



Maxfield Parrish (1870–1966), "Daybreak," 1922, oil on board. ©2006 National Museum of American Illustration. Photo courtesy of the Archives of American Illustrators Gallery, NYC. Licensed by ASaP Worldwide, Newport, R.I.