



The National Museum of American Illustration
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'ROCKWELL'S AMERICA' NAMED LONDON'S BEST ART EXHIBITION FOR 2011

LONDON, ENGLAND- *The American Spectator* magazine's December/January 2012 issue named the National Museum of American Illustration's *Norman Rockwell's America* - at London's oldest art museum, Dulwich Picture Gallery for their Bicentennial Celebration last year- to be **London's best art exhibition of 2011**. The exhibition drew record-setting attendance numbers as the first ever showing of Rockwell's original artworks in the UK, and is now on display at the NMAI in Newport, Rhode Island under the title *Norman Rockwell: American Imagist*.

Rockwell has been considered America's best-known illustrator for much of the 20th century. Noted English journalist and historian Paul Johnson, writing in *The American Spectator*, expounds upon the merits of his artworks by proclaiming the exhibition London's best. He states Rockwell's work "*does not need any explaining, [or] justifying,*" rather it is "*the most sustained and successful exercise in social realism in the whole history of art, remarkable alike for superb craftsmanship, unflinching honesty, and invariable consistency.*" Johnson identifies the plainspoken-ness of Rockwell's work as the source of his popularity with the public during his career, and consequently his unpopularity with many critics from the fine-arts establishment. "*Of course the art critics hated him... He left them with no function to perform. He spoke directly to the public.*"

The exhibition showcases Rockwell's accomplished technique while asserting his position as a great American artist. Rockwell was a storyteller, painting scenes that were folksy, often humorous and topical, but compelling in their message and sophisticated in his unique style. These iconic images continue to resonate with new audiences in the 21st century. Rockwell's portrayal of "*an America which was democratic, freedom-loving, egalitarian, enterprising, and dynamic... sure of itself and its aim*" and that "*believed in its destiny*" holds great appeal to modern audiences. "*He is as popular now as ever.*"

The exhibition is presently viewable at its home setting in Newport, during the NMAI's winter hours, Fridays 2pm to 5pm with a guided tour at 3pm, and for group and VIP tours by advance reservation. Additionally, as part of Newport's Winter Festival, the exhibition is viewable on February 17, 18, 19, and 24, from 11am to 5pm. The next venue hosting the exhibition will be the Birmingham Museum of Art in Alabama, beginning September 16, 2012.

For more information and images, contact the NMAI at 401.851.8949 ext. 18, email art@americanillustration.org, or visit our website at www.americanillustration.org.

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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 the greatest collection of illustration art.