

Images available upon request.

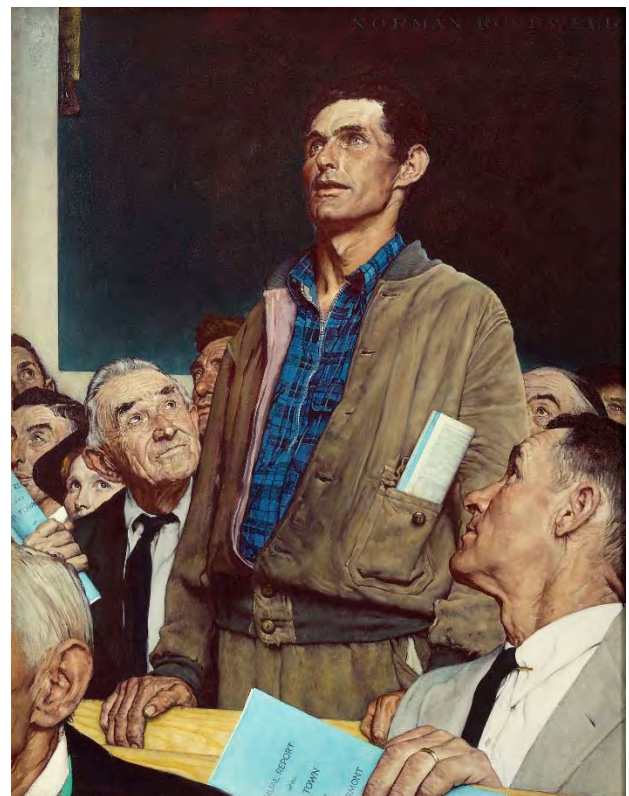
Denver Art Museum to Present the Power of Art in Norman Rockwell: Imagining Freedom

***Traveling exhibition features depictions of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms along with artists
responding to similar themes today***

DENVER—June 23, 2020—The Denver Art Museum (DAM) will soon open *Norman Rockwell: Imagining Freedom*, an exhibition focused on the artist's 1940s depictions of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms and contemporary responses to similar themes. Popularized by Rockwell's interpretation following President Roosevelt's 1941 speech, the freedoms include the Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want and Freedom from Fear. Organized and curated by the Norman Rockwell Museum and curated locally by Timothy J. Stranding, Gates Family Foundation Curator at the Denver Art Museum, the exhibition will be on view publicly from June 26, 2020 to Sept. 7, 2020, in the Anschutz and Martin & McCormick special exhibition galleries.

"The presentation of *Norman Rockwell: Imagining Freedom* is the most comprehensive traveling exhibition to date of creative interpretations of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Four Freedoms," said Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the DAM. "We look forward to presenting works that will challenge our visitors to consider the concepts of the common good, civic engagement and civil discourse through artworks of the past and present."

In the 1940s, Roosevelt's administration turned to the arts to help Americans understand the necessity of



defending and protecting the Four Freedoms, which were not immediately embraced, but later came to be known as enduring ideals. Artists, writers, actors, designers and musicians were encouraged to take on the challenge of advancing the Four Freedoms and creating a compelling narrative as the U.S. prepared to enter World War II,

moving away from its policy of neutrality. Rockwell, a renowned illustrator, was among those who took on the challenge of visually communicating the notions of freedom in support of the war efforts. The results were depictions of everyday community and domestic life. These works received much praise by many Americans after they ran in *The Saturday Evening Post* and were subsequently embraced by the U.S. government to represent the nation's Four Freedoms to promote war bond efforts.

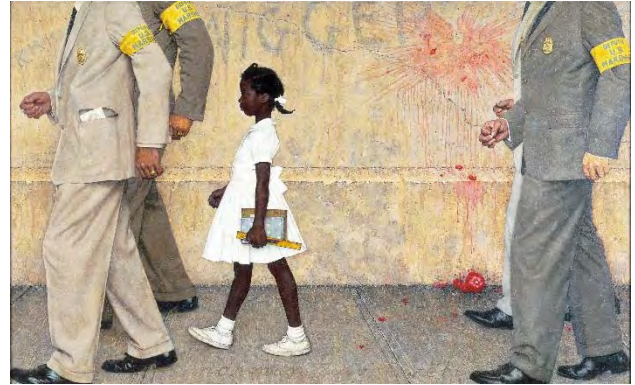
“Recent scholars have recognized that Norman Rockwell was much more than an illustrator,” said Standing. “His ability to create powerful imagery and appeal to mass audiences about notions of civil discourse helped a country come together and rally for the greater public good. This incredibly difficult task of bringing people together makes his work relevant today, and ensures his inclusion in the canon of important American artists.”

In addition to focusing on critical themes that made Rockwell stand out from his contemporaries, *Norman Rockwell: Imagining Freedom* also will present how the artist and his contemporary illustrators became important storytellers who advanced civic ideas through their creative advertising and imagery—all garnered to promote and support war efforts. Widely circulated publications, such as *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Good Housekeeping* and *McCall's Magazine*, were essential to influencing the cultural beliefs and desires of the millions of individuals these publications reached each week. Illustrations and paintings by Rockwell's contemporaries, such as Alfred Charles Parker, J.C. Leyendecker, J. Howard Miller and Mead Schaeffer, will add to the exhibition narrative, as well as demonstrate how they helped propel the Four Freedoms nationally and globally.

The exhibition also will showcase Rockwell's war-era artworks that reinforced the positive approach of bringing Americans together for the common good. Some of the artworks in the exhibition will explore imagery of recruiting women into the workforce, as well as portrayals of unified industrial efforts, despite the segregation and racial barriers present in the 1940s. This inclusive and unified imagery was used to comfort and remind Americans what they were fighting for during the war.

“Rockwell was empathetic to the core,” said Standing. “He sought to use his art in the service of social causes in support of our nation's fight against the tyranny of fascist

regimes during WWII. But he also used the power of his art to address social issues in the United States throughout the 1960s.”



Post-war artworks from the 1960s that address social issues will fill an exhibition gallery following works centered on the Four Freedoms, featuring stories and imagery of civil rights, human rights and equality for all. One of the most powerful artworks that will be on view is Rockwell's 1961 *Golden Rule*, which presents the idea of equality regardless of background. The artwork features people of different religions, races and ethnicities with the inscription “Do Unto Others as You Would Have Them Do Unto You.”

One of Rockwell's most iconic images of the Civil Rights Movement, *The Problem We All Live With*, also will be on display. The compelling 1963 artwork, which hung in the White House during former President Barack Obama's administration, was inspired by 6-year-old Ruby Bridges walking to an all-white public school in New Orleans, escorted by four federal marshals. The topic of racial injustice and lack of racial tolerance continues in Rockwell's work through two of his *Murder in Mississippi* works, which memorialize young civil rights activists Andrew Goodman, James Early Chaney and Michael Schwerner—killed by a gang of Klansmen.

The exhibition will conclude with a section responding to themes such as freedom and American identity through a contemporary lens of artworks and social commentary. The 2015 painting, *Freedom from What? (I Can't Breathe)* from by artist Maurice “Pops” Peterson will likely prompt discourse due to its relevance today. Peterson's take on Rockwell's *Freedom from Fear*, responds with the idea that not all American families enjoy the privilege of safety and depicts a newspaper headline with the words of Eric Garner, a Black man killed during an interaction with New

York Police in 2014, “I Can’t Breathe.” Additional contemporary artworks and a digital prompt will encourage visitors to reflect on how we can be a part of change for a better future by offering the opportunity to share their own thoughts and ideas with #Four Freedoms Today as the hashtag to participate in the conversation. The hashtag stream will be projected onto the wall inside the exhibition.

Norman Rockwell: Imagining Freedom is included in general admission and is free for youth 18 and under. Upon the museum’s reopening, an online ticket reservation will be required for all visitors, including all youth. For the latest on new visitation, safety and cleaning procedures, please visit denverartmuseum.org.

Exhibition Organizers and Sponsors

Norman Rockwell: Imagining Freedom is organized by The Norman Rockwell Museum. Leadership support for the exhibition is provided by Jay Alix, The Alix Foundation and the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation. National Presenting Sponsor is The Travelers Companies, Inc. Major support provided by Anonymous, Michael Bakwin, Helen Bing, Elephant Rock Foundation, Ford Foundation, Heritage Auctions, Annie and Ned Lamont, National Endowment for the Arts, Lawrence and Marilyn Matteson, and Ted Slavin.

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Media sponsorship has been provided by Curtis Licensing, a division of *The Saturday Evening Post*, and by the Norman Rockwell Family Agency.

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About the Denver Art Museum

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro residents support the [Scientific and Cultural Facilities District](#) (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, call 720-865-5000 or visit denverartmuseum.org.

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Image credit lines

Image 1: Norman Rockwell (1894-1978), *Freedom of Speech*, 1943. Oil on canvas; 45-3/4 x 35-1/2 in. Illustration for *The Saturday Evening Post*, February 20, 1943. Collection of Norman Rockwell Museum. ©SEPS: Curtis Licensing, Indianapolis, IN. All rights reserved. www.curtislicensing.com

Image 2: Norman Rockwell (1894-1978), *The Problem We All Live With*, 1963. Oil on canvas; 36 x 58 in. Illustration for *Look*, January 14, 1964. Collection of Norman Rockwell Museum.