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## ROCKWELL AND WYETH'S VISIONS OF NOSTALGIA TAKE OVER THE POLK MUSEUM OF ART

The Polk Museum of Art is thrilled to announce its newest exhibition, “Rockwell/Wyeth: Icons of Americana,” opening on January 27, 2024. Featuring 40 paintings by Norman Rockwell and N.C. Wyeth – along with the complete set of 321 covers of “The Saturday Evening Post” illustrated by Rockwell – this loan-based exhibition showcases the work of two of the most celebrated figures in American art, whose vivid illustrations captured the imaginations of Americans throughout the 20th century and are still admired for their nostalgic qualities to this day. This exhibition, exclusive to Polk Museum of Art audiences and developed in partnership with the National Museum of American Illustration, offers a rare juxtaposition of Rockwell and Wyeth examined side by side as a principal scholarly focus.

Wyeth (1882-1945) and Rockwell (1894-1978), each with a distinctive style, rose to prominence and national acclaim in different eras, but both became household names through the everyday familiarity and accessibility of their work to Americans everywhere. While the nature of the artists’ commercial work was wide-ranging, from advertisements to magazine covers, as the exhibition explores in depth, Wyeth is best known as a prolific book illustrator, who invigorated the pages of Scribner Classics like “Treasure Island” and “Robin Hood.” Likewise, Rockwell is synonymous with “The Saturday Evening Post” and the cover illustrations he produced for it, art that sought simultaneously to sell magazines and to reflect shifting American interests and values across several decades.

“Rockwell and Wyeth remain among the biggest names in the history of American art, and, after years of planning, we are excited to unveil this original, scholarly exhibition to our visitors,” said H. Alexander Rich, executive director and chief curator of the Museum. “So many of our shared visions of a seemingly simpler, not-too-distant American past — however idealized they might be — have been shaped through the prism of Rockwell and Wyeth’s illustrations.”

Despite their revered status today — and in their own day by the public at large — Rockwell and Wyeth were not held in as high regard as other fine artists of the time because of the commercial nature of their work. However, with its deep dive into the careers, varied work, and extraordinary fame of each artist, “Rockwell/Wyeth: Icons of Americana” highlights the undeniable talent and fine artistry of Rockwell and Wyeth in addition to their inextricable place in art history. Taking over the Museum’s first floor galleries and with 40 paintings as its centerpiece, the exhibition pulls back the curtains on Rockwell and Wyeth’s commercial illustration process, revealing that each illustration was initially conceived as a full-size painting before being scaled and mass-produced in print for readers everywhere.

“Rockwell/Wyeth: Icons of Americana” will be on view in the Museum’s Dorothy Jenkins Gallery, Harper Family Gallery, and Perkins Gallery from January 27 to May 26, 2024. The exhibition is curated and organized in partnership with the National Museum of American Illustration, Newport, RI, and the



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American Illustrators Gallery, New York, NY, and is offered through the courtesy of PAN Art Connections, Inc. This exhibition is made possible with support from the Votum Foundation, Dr. Alan and Linda Rich, a gift in memory of Maurice Raymond, Exhibition Partners the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation and CORE Wealth Advisors, the Museum's Affiliate Partner, Florida Southern College, Culture Builds Florida, LKLD Mayor's Council for the Arts, and Visit Central Florida. For more information, visit [PolkMuseumofArt.org/Rockwell](http://PolkMuseumofArt.org/Rockwell). Additional exhibition and educational opportunities can be found at [PolkMuseumofArt.org/Events](http://PolkMuseumofArt.org/Events).

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**About the Polk Museum of Art at Florida Southern College**

The Polk Museum of Art at Florida Southern College is a not-for-profit academic and community museum that seeks to enhance lives through inspirational and engaging art experiences for all. It is the largest and only nationally accredited visual arts organization in Polk County and the only Smithsonian Affiliate art museum in Central Florida. In Summer 2023, the Museum began construction on its \$8 million expansion and renovation project, an initiative that will add more than 14,000 sq. ft. of education and exhibition space to the current Museum building. The addition will include six new galleries and multi-functional classroom and event spaces, with anticipated completion in Fall 2024. The Museum is open Tuesdays–Saturdays 10 am to 4 pm and on Sundays 1 pm to 5 pm. The Museum is closed on Mondays and major holidays. The facility is handicap accessible, and special needs assistance is available. Admission to the Museum is always free, thanks to our Strategic Partners, the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation and CORE Wealth Advisors.

#RockwellWyeth #IconsofAmericana  
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