

Background information

Norman Rockwell Museum :

<http://www.nrm.org/exhibits/current/four-freedoms.html>

Rockwell's idyllic Thanksgiving is one of four pictures he painted in 1943 to illustrate America's Four Freedoms, to spur his countrymen on in the second world war. They were published in the Saturday Evening Post and the canvases went on a national tour, during which they were seen by over a million people and were credited with selling \$132m worth of war bonds. Rockwell's Four Freedoms have lived in the national imagination ever since. Freedom from Want - the Thanksgiving scene - is the most famous, perhaps because Rockwell rightly anticipated that the future of America would be one of galloping prosperity. The others are Freedom of Speech, in which a blue-collar guy gets up to speak at a town meeting and is heard with respect; Freedom to Worship, depicting people of different faiths praying together; and Freedom from Fear, with a couple tucking their children up in bed, the man holding a paper with news of bombing raids in Europe, knowing that here in America no air raid siren will split the night. Rockwell later said he didn't feel quite happy with Freedom from Fear - it was, he said, "based on a rather smug idea" that Americans were safe from external attack.

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/ARTrockwell.htm>

During the height of World War II, Norman Rockwell painted four of the most powerful and enduring images in American history. Like many artists and writers, he supported the war effort by creating work inspired by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's January 1941 State of the Union address outlining his four basic human liberties: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

http://www.corcoran.org/exhibitions/Rockwell_index.htm

Norman Rockwell said, "I showed the America I knew and observed to others who might not have noticed."

Here is a brief timeline of Norman Rockwell's life and career:

Born in New York City, 1894.

In 1910 enrolled in the Art Students' League.

Art director of Boys' Life Magazine.

At 21 he moved to New Rochelle, N. Y.

At age 22 he published his first Saturday Evening Post cover.

Married Irene O'Conner. They divorced in 1929.

In 1930 he married Mary Barstow, a schoolteacher. They had three sons: Jarvis, Thomas and Peter.

In 1939 the family moved to Arlington, Vermont.

In 1943 Rockwell painted his famous Four Freedoms, one of which, Freedom From Want, is pictured above.

Also in 1943 Rockwell's Arlington studio burned to the ground.

In 1953 the Rockwell family moved to Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

In 1959 his wife, Mary, died.

In 1961 Rockwell remarries one more time, to Molly Punderson.

In the 1960s Rockwell went to work for Look Magazine.

In the 1960s Rockwell's work began reflecting his deep concern for civil rights.

In 1977 Norman Rockwell received the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In 1978 Rockwell died peacefully, at his home. he was 84.

<http://phoenix.about.com/cs/enter/a/rockwell01.htm>