



When the time comes in your family, there is one man you should see and rely upon, the man in your community allowed to sell the most respected name in monuments, the world over... **Sealmark® Rock of Ages®**

ROCK OF AGES® BARRE, VERMONT



In Canada, Iberville, Quebec

Norman Rockwell and Corporate Sentimentality

I have a whole stack of old magazine covers in a cardboard box. Among them are an awful lot of *Saturday Evening Post* covers. All those schmaltzy fantasy images of an American small-town world that never actually existed. I looked at these covers and winced. This Norman Rockwell stuff always sends a shiver down my spine. Then I realized that, of the dozens of covers in that stack, not a *single* one of them was a Norman Rockwell illustration. In fact, there were about a half-dozen different names and they all looked identical to Rockwell. That's a lot of copycats.

Perhaps not really “copycats.” Norman Rockwell (1874–1978) didn't invent American realism, not by a long shot. American illustrative ideas about pictorial realism date back to the earliest days of this country's attempt at defining an art style of its own. How that realism is actually technically portrayed has changed with time, but it's always been there, plugging away. Rockwell may be one of those really famous celebrity names associated with the style, but he's not the originator, nor the only, nor even the best of the lot (the Wyeths can probably take the “best of” crown).

The one thing that Rockwell DID seem to bring to the table was a cynicism that ran so deep that he commercialized the style into a racket—and got rich doing it. That may sound harsh, but it's the way I see him. His heavy-handed mythic style of nostalgic sentimentalism is so smarmy that it even tugs at MY heartstrings—and THAT'S hard to do. He was really good at playing his audience in the most insidiously direct fashion. The worst part is that Norman Rockwell was a great salesman. He took a common and uninspired “craft” and turned it into a hype-driven commercial machine that gave his name a brand cachet. You wanted “Norman Rockwell” just because he was “Norman Rockwell.” The fact that his pictures were pretty and tugged a tear from your eye and a smile from your lips was pure gravy. He MADE you want to have one. This hustle made him a superstar.



Norman Rockwell—America's most beloved artist. He is a founder and member of the Guiding Faculty of the Famous Artists School.

'We're looking for people who like to draw'

says Norman Rockwell

Today hundreds of men and women who never thought they could be artists are working at easels and drawing boards, making pictures and getting well paid for it. They all can thank a group of famous artists who have devoted much of their time and talent to helping others find success in art.

Some of the people the Famous Artists have helped

Carl Kock was an 18-year-old apprentice in a Chicago art studio when he enrolled. Today he prepares ads for such companies as General Motors and Firestone—has won five gold medals.

Howard Sanden of Minneapolis took the Course while still in high school. He is now a successful artist—recently he and his wife traveled through Europe and the Middle East on important art assignments.

Paul Sullivan enrolled at 14. His Famous Artists training helped him work his way through college.

Kathleen Gironda of Indiana, Pennsylvania, was an 18-year-old salesgirl in a department store. She still works for a department store, but now it's as an advertising artist and fashion illustrator.

With Famous Artists training James Ryan, formerly a clerk, has become an illustrator at Hughes Aircraft—and turns out a steady stream of well-paying free-lance artwork in his spare time.

Oregon housewife Helen Tryk lives 150 miles from the nearest big city. But she does fashion illustration, has her own studio, runs an art work shop, does portraits.

A plan to help others

It started over 18 years ago when a group of America's most successful artists—men like Albert Dorne, Norman Rockwell, Jon Whitcomb, Al Parker and Stevan Dohanos—met in New York City. They knew that all over America there were people who liked to draw who could be turned into good artists. Albert Dorne asked, "Why can't we give these people the

Founding Faculty of the Famous Artists School

Norman Rockwell	Fred Ludakens
Jon Whitcomb	Ben Stahl
Al Parker	Robert Fawcett
Stevan Dohanos	Austin Briggs
George Giusti	Harold Von Schmidt
Peter Helck	Albert Dorne

training they need—including all the trade secrets and know-how we've learned over the years?"

He suggested a new kind of art school—a home study art school—that would give talented people the best professional art training, no matter where they live.

The famous artists agreed. Taking time from their busy careers, they created a remarkable series of art lessons covering every aspect of drawing and painting. They illustrated their lessons with over 5,000 "here's-how" illustrations. The lessons start from scratch and cover every skill a top artist needs. Finally, they developed a wonderful way to give each student personal correction and advice all through his training.

The famous artists with the School are not surprised at the success of their students. The opportunities open to successful artists today are enormous. The School continually gets calls from all over the country asking for practical well-trained students—not geniuses—who can step into full-time or part-time art jobs. And practical, thorough training is what the School offers.

Famous Artists Talent Test

To find others with art talent worth developing, the Famous Artists created a 12-page Talent Test. Thousands paid to take this test, but now the School offers and grades it free. Men and women who do well on the test—or offer other sufficient evidence of art talent—may enroll in the School. But there's no obligation. Simply mail the coupon below.

Famous Artists School
Studio 5655
Westport, Conn. 06880

I would like to find out whether I have art talent worth developing. Please send me, without obligation, your Famous Artists Talent Test and information about your courses.

Mr. _____
 Mrs. _____
 Miss _____ ← Circle one and please print

Street _____
 City _____
 State _____
 Age _____ Zip _____

Accredited by the Accrediting Commission
 National Home Study Council

Rockwell didn't limit his efforts to just *Saturday Evening Post* cover illustrations. He sold his originals for top dollar even during his lifetime — as if he was a real "fine art" gallery artist, even though he played no real role AT ALL in the 20th-century dialog of fine art. He faked it. He also continued to take on big-money clientele and do advertising work for them throughout his entire life. Even as late as 1964 he was selling his services to chemical companies, the nuclear industry, insurance companies and anybody who would give him enough cash. In return he'd give "the people" what they wanted (a.k.a., what the client wanted to sell to the rubes).

You also have to remember that Norman Rockwell knew exactly what he was doing. He used to TEACH it to his students. Yup, he trained a lot of American illustrators during the middle part of the last century. That's because he was part of the founding faculty of the infamous Famous Artists School. Keep in mind that for the bulk of the existence of this visual language we now refer to as "graphic design," it was a low craft that was taught through the back pages of magazines through correspondence courses. The idea of teaching this stuff in institutions of higher education didn't really occur until the late 1960s, when the phrase "graphic design" gained general acceptance along with academic classroom structure. In the old days all the old masters were self-taught through mail order. Norman Rockwell taught the most famous of them all. The Famous Artists School even advertised on the back of comic books (Rockwell himself was depicted at his easel) calling for you to join up and send him money.

This schmaltzy advert selling the bereaved a tombstone for their loved one utilizes a sad little schoolgirl placing flowers on a grave. Is she praying? Is that a Bible with her schoolbooks? It is so cynical and insulting and contrived and downright SNEAKY that it's sort of stunning to look at. Rock of Ages is a huge tombstone company and you can see their deeply inscribed logo in many headstones—an inscription twice as deep as the name of the deceased on the stone! Guaranteed to outlive the erosion of the client's identity by twice as long! Just what I want—a corporate logo on my gravestone.

Norman Rockwell goes onto my list of cynical money-grubbing hacks who did their best to swindle us out of our money in exchange for sappy emotional fulfillment. What makes his work a tad worse is that he not only did it for himself and his own pocketbook, like LeRoy Neiman, Walter and Margaret Keane, Patrick Nagel, Dale Chihuly, and Peter Max, or—and I cringe to even mention—"The Painter of Light," Thomas Kinkade. No, Rockwell knowingly did it to benefit the corporate monetary exploitation of all of us—he not only helped, he APPROVED.

Norman Rockwell, distinguished member of the After-Shave Club, as sketched by fellow-member Constantin Alajalov.

NORMAN ROCKWELL

Invites you to join

ONE OF THE WORLD'S FOREMOST CLUBS



It's a friendly gesture Norman Rockwell makes in asking you to join him in the Aqua Velva After-Shave Club. Aqua Velva rescues the harshest shave. It tingles your skin to a healthier glow... its most agreeable scent is a pleasure to have around. It's good before and after electric shaving, too. Pick up a bottle of Aqua Velva at any drugstore.

A FEW OF THE MEMBERS

Paul Lukas Brig. Gen. John J. Bradley, U.S.A. Ret'd
Ely Culbertson Albert Spalding Ted Husing