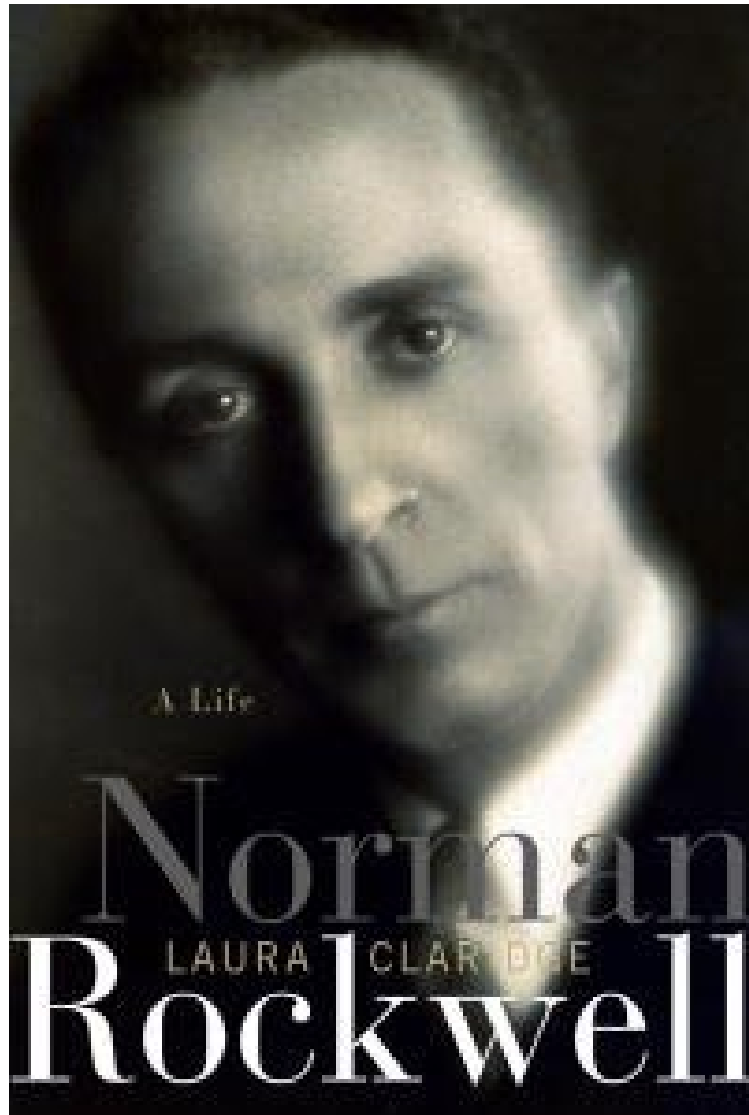


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Norman Rockwell

Laura Claridge

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Laura Claridge : Norman Rockwell before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Norman Rockwell:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. the book doesn't read easily - sentences don't throw them selves at you By j l bau Mrs. Claridge is no Truman Capote ; the book doesn't read easily - sentences don't throw them selves at you . Be sure to have a dictionary beside you when reading . Reading , and reading and re-reading this bio is necessary to fully understand Mrs. Claridges' take on this complex man . Much information on N.R. ; fascinating man and a superlative artist/illustrator .8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Disappointment By Caius Petronus I found this book very difficult to read for the following reasons. First, the text is in serious need of a good editor and

could be cut by 20 to 30%. Second, the prose is difficult to read not because it contains profound thoughts, but that the sentences seem to be "tangled" and eccentrically constructed. Third there is too much psycho nonsense. Even professional psychiatrists tend to tread very carefully when discussing subjects that they have never met - Anthony Storrs on Sir Winston Churchill or the late John Mack on T. E. Lawrence. Psycho babble about Norman Rockwell doesn't teach us anything and only makes the author seem foolish. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Study of a Man and His Times By Carole Sue Taylor Psychological as well as artistic portrait of Norman Rockwell that places his work in the context of his times. Not light reading. The author synthesizes a multitude of sources from art critics to family members and Rockwell's own biography to present a comprehensive study of his life and work. The result is an analysis both of the man and of the cultural ideals he rendered in visual form.

Norman Rockwell's tremendously successful, prolific career as a painter and illustrator has rendered him a twentieth-century American icon. However, the very popularity and accessibility of his idealized, nostalgic depictions of middleclass life have caused him to be considered not a serious artist but a "mere illustrator" - a disparagement only reinforced by the hundreds of memorable covers he drew for *The Sunday Evening Post*. Symptomatic of critics' neglect is the fact that Rockwell has never before been the subject of a serious critical biography. Based on private family archives and interviews and published to coincide with a major two-year travelling retrospective of his work, this book reveals for the first time the driven workaholic who had three complicated marriages and was a distant father - so different from the loving, all-American-dad image widely held to this day. Critically acclaimed author Laura Claridge also breaks new ground with her reappraisal of Rockwell's art, arguing that despite his popular sentimental style, his artistry was masterful, complex, and far more manipulative than people realize.

.com Boy Scout campouts, backyard barbecues, Christmas trees, cheerful barbers: no artist quite converted slice-of-life realism into idealized portraits of the American dream as ably as Norman Rockwell (1894-1978), whose distinguished career art historian Laura Claridge captures just as ably in this welcome biography. Rockwell, Claridge writes, had ambitions to be considered a great artist, but he abandoned them early on in the struggle to make a living through his abilities as an illustrator. He need not have worried about money quite as much as he did, Claridge suggests, for over his long career he produced more than 4,000 paintings and earned millions of dollars; still, as we learn, Rockwell was a complicated man, beset by all sorts of worries and more expressive on canvas than he ever was in the ordinary situations of life. His patriotic style evolved through his long engagement with the *Saturday Evening Post*, whose editor, George Horace Lorimer, used "as an instrument of Americanization," a means of establishing a national identity and ideals of "an American community made safe by a shared vision of right and wrong." In this and much else, Rockwell excelled, achieving early and lasting success though never earning much respect from critics and other arbiters of taste - even though, Claridge notes, Rockwell had all the requisite irony, and certainly all the necessary skills. For the last few years, a new generation of critics has been reconsidering Rockwell's career and viewing his work more favorably. Claridge's gracefully written biography will give them still more reason to see him in a positive light. It will also afford those who already cherish his art new insight into an American master. --Gregory McNamee From Publishers Weekly Claridge (*Romantic Potency: The Paradox of Desire*) is a former English professor at Annapolis now writing books on "British romanticism, Modernism, gender, and psychoanalytic theory," according to the publisher's bio. This unusual mix is ill-suited to approaching America's most beloved *Saturday Evening Post* cover illustrator. From the start, an oblique, brusque writing style fails to spell things out: "Norman Rockwell was not sadistic. He was, however, expert at creating desire, both in his public and in his private life." Chapters like "Urban Tensions, Pastoral Relief" are rife with two-ton sentences, like "Major life changes seemed consistently in Rockwell's purview during this period, including the professional leadership he took for granted," or "In 1935, Rockwell was offered a prestigious commission that reminded him of the historical antecedents that had motivated his love of illustration." Readers are given much detail about each of Rockwell's homes, without any sense of why this information might be useful or revealing. And readers learn that, in 1978, not only did Rockwell die, but "Margaret Mead, Hubert Humphrey, Golda Meir, and Charlie McCarthy" also bit the dust. With an undiscerning and unhelpful bibliography, this book nevertheless scorns reputable art critics like John Canaday, who is compared to "an arrogant graduate student." Yet the author unaccountably praises Rockwell's typically heavy-handed portrait of tolerance that shows "a Jewish man being shaved by a New England Protestant barber, while a black man and a Roman Catholic priest waited their turn." Rockwell's millions of fans and other readers are better off with previous illustrated coffee-table tomes, while those who need convincing will not be won over by minutiae about the artist's senility and other lackluster details in this misbegotten project. 16 pages bw and color photos. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal Author of a book on art deco painter Tamara De Lempicka, Claridge goes in the opposite direction to offer what is billed as the first complete biography of Norman Rockwell who proves not to be a cheery slice of Americana. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.