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PRESS RELEASE

Norman Rockwell Paintings from the Miller-Boyett Collection to be Offered at Phillips

An Audience of One and *The Peephole* to be Included in the December Evening Sale of 20th Century & Contemporary Art, After Two Decades in the Legendary TV Producers' Collection



Norman Rockwell
An Audience of One
Estimate: \$2.5-3.5 million



Norman Rockwell
The Peephole
Estimate: \$1-1.5 million

NEW YORK – 15 OCTOBER 2020 – This fall, Phillips will offer two works from the Miller-Boyett Collection in the Evening Sale of 20th Century & Contemporary Art on 7 December. Known for their roles in creating iconic TV shows such as *Happy Days*, *Mork & Mindy*, *Laverne & Shirley*, *Bosom Buddies*, *Family Matters*, and *Full House*, Thomas Miller and Robert Boyett also amassed an impressive collection of American Art during their 40 years of partnership. *An Audience of One*, estimated at \$2.5-3.5 million, and *The Peephole*, estimated at \$1-1.5 million, have both been in the Miller-Boyett Collection since 1999.

Elizabeth Goldberg, Deputy Chairwoman and Senior International Specialist, American Art, said, “Norman Rockwell, Thomas Miller and Robert Boyett are all great storytellers. As Rockwell did with his paintings, Mr. Miller and Mr. Boyett are responsible for helping to define 20th century American life through their numerous hit television shows. All of these artists helped shape the idea of the American experience, while also reflecting the changing

times. It seems only natural that they would have assembled such a remarkable collection of works by Rockwell, whose masterfully cinematic paintings continue to attract collectors around the world.”

Robert Boyett said, “Norman Rockwell has always been a part of my life – as a child, I would go through my grandmother’s collection of Rockwell’s Saturday Evening Post covers and, to this day, I can still recall most of them. I then spent years with Tom collecting his artworks and, today, I live near Rockwell’s home and museum. In each episode of our television shows, we made sure to have characters make some form of human connection. Rockwell did the very same with the subjects and the viewers of his pictures.”

Mr. Miller and Mr. Boyett led storied careers in the entertainment industry, across Broadway, television, and the silver screen. In creating some of the most popular TV shows of the last fifty years, they brought several actors to the fore, making the likes of Tom Hanks and Robin Williams household names. Among their full-length feature successes, the duo produced the 1982 feature *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, starring Dolly Parton and Burt Reynolds. And in recent years, they turned to Broadway, producing the Tony Award-winning *War Horse* and Tony-nominated *Tootsie*. All the while, they fostered a mutual appreciation for American Art, acquiring an exceptional group of works.

An Audience of One was created as a story illustration for the December 1938 issue of *Ladies’ Home Journal* and depicts two children experiencing a range of emotions before meeting Santa Claus. In keeping with his tradition of painting those he knew, the models for this work were likely Rockwell’s own wife, Mary, and sons, Thomas and Peter. *An Audience of One* exemplifies Rockwell’s ability to convey an entire narrative through just a single frame. The composition is unique and evocative of cinema — a “reaction shot,” that chooses not to show the main event itself but rather the responses of others, placing the viewer within the scene.

With baseball serving as a recurring theme in Rockwell’s oeuvre for over 50 years, *The Peephole* depicts a pitcher winding up, as seen from an unconventional yet immediately recognizable point-of-view – through a knothole in a wooden fence, positioning the viewer as an eager fan covertly watching a baseball game. *The Peephole* graced the cover of the August 30, 1958 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* at the apex of the magazine’s success, when its circulation reached almost seven million, and after Rockwell had become a household name. It was created during what is regarded as the pinnacle of Rockwell’s career and in the same decade that he painted a remarkable 41 covers for The Post—some of which are today recognized as his most renowned and iconic covers, such as *The Runaway*, 1958, and *Saying Grace*, 1951.

An Audience of One and *The Peephole* are quintessential works by Rockwell, both capturing a picture-perfect moment in time, yet painted with meticulous detail. Both works show Rockwell’s remarkable skill as a painter—An Audience of One reveals his unique ability to render textures and surfaces in brilliant color, while *The Peephole* displays Rockwell’s love of art history and *trompe l’oile*, where the fence appears as real—if not more real—than the wooden panel it is painted on. Both works play with the idea of looking—not just what is happening in front of us, but what’s beyond what we see as well.

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