

CHRISTIE'S

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AN AMERICAN LEGACY

NORMAN ROCKWELL'S *THE ROOKIE (RED SOX LOCKER ROOM)*
TO BE INCLUDED IN CHRISTIE'S MAY SALE OF AMERICAN ART



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Norman Rockwell (1894-1978), *The Rookie (Red Sox Locker Room)*

oil on canvas; 41 x 39 in.; Painted in 1957.

Estimate: \$20,000,000-30,000,000

New York – Christie's is pleased to announce that Norman Rockwell's iconic painting *The Rookie (Red Sox Locker Room)* will be included in the May 22nd sale of *American Art*. The work, which has never been offered at auction, was painted in 1957 for the March 2nd cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* and has remained in the same private collection for nearly thirty years. It has been publicly exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston twice—once in 2005 and again in 2008—following World Series victories by the Red Sox. Estimated at \$20-30 million, *The Rookie (Red Sox Locker Room)* marks the highest estimate ever for Norman Rockwell at auction.

Norman Rockwell's covers for *The Saturday Evening Post* during the 1950s reflected the direction of editor Ben Hibbs, who strove to make the magazine more current to increase circulation. Nothing could be a more popular subject to an American audience than baseball and no player other than Ted Williams, "The Greatest Hitter Who Ever Lived" was commanding more attention at the time, on the eve of his retirement from baseball. Rockwell conceived this cover at least 9 months in advance of its publication date on March 2nd, 1957, just in time for the start of spring training for the Red Sox. Over the summer of 1956, he convinced team management to send four players from the starting lineup up to Rockwell's hometown, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, deep in Red Sox country. Pitcher Frank Sullivan, right fielder Jackie Jensen, catcher Sammy White all posed for the painting. Williams was either unable or unwilling to make the trip and Rockwell captured his likeness from his trading card, and other photographs. Rockwell traveled to Sarasota to take pictures of the Red Sox spring training stadium and locker room. The palm trees which sway in the window indicate the location. *The Rookie (Red Sox Locker Room)* depicts an intimate scene during spring training; an awkward newcomer is juxtaposed with the confident stances of the seasoned players, making the rookie's anxiety all the more apparent and endearing.

Elizabeth Beaman, Senior Specialist of American Art at Christie's, said, *"During his lifetime, Norman Rockwell was witness to such important artistic movements as Impressionism, Cubism, Surrealism, and Abstract Expressionism. In choosing a path of illustration, however, he became as ubiquitous to the American public as the images he created. With over 800 magazine covers to his name, Rockwell earned the reputation of America's preeminent illustrator and helped forge a sense of national identity through his art. The renewed demand for these uniquely American works of art is evidenced by their increasingly strong prices in recent seasons and this particular painting, capturing America's favorite pastime, will surely have wide ranging appeal among collectors."*

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About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2013 that totaled £4.5 billion/ \$7.1 billion, making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers around 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £760.5 million (\$1.19 billion) in 2013, an increase of 20% on the previous year.

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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