

THE
ROCKWELL KENT
COLLECTION

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BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART
1972



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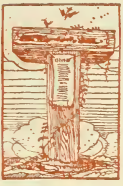
Acknowledgments



HIS little catalogue is dedicated to Sally Kent in gratitude for her abiding interest and considerable help in the formation of this collection. With the aid of Mrs. Kent, and the support of a generous donor, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art was able to obtain a representative collection of the work of the late Rockwell Kent, consisting of six paintings and eighty-two drawings and watercolors. This collection, in addition to the John Sloan collection and the Winslow Homer collection already established here, will provide both the general public and researchers the opportunity to see and study in great detail certain important aspects of American art in the early twentieth century. ¶ Our appreciation is also extended to Mr. Richard Larcada of the Larcada Galleries, New York City, for his help during all phases of selection and acquisition.

R.V.W.

Introduction



THE paintings, drawings and watercolors in this collection provide a varied cross section of Rockwell Kent's activities as painter, draftsman and illustrator. They range over a wide variety of style and technique, from finished paintings and watercolors to sketches and notations intended for use in the studio. As such, they provide an insight, otherwise unavailable, into the artist's creative processes and methods. Although the eighty or so pieces in the collection represent only a tiny fraction of Rockwell Kent's production during his lively and prolific lifetime, they serve to show the diverse directions taken by his career. ¶ In terms of chronology, the paintings date from 1907 to about 1940. At least two of them show the attentions of the artist over a long period of time. *Sun, Manana, Monhegan* (cat. 1), first painted in 1907, was cut down and overpainted in certain areas—particularly the foreground—perhaps as late as the nineteen sixties. The additions are obvious, but since they were indubitably made by the artist, we have restrained the impulse to “improve” the painting by removing them. In its present state, the painting remains as a valuable document of the youthful Rockwell Kent as edited by the elder Rockwell Kent. The small panel *Landscape, Ireland* (cat. 4) was painted around 1927 and also gives evidence of being touched up. The foreground colors appear to have been heightened and a small figure has been inserted to give scale to the landscape. ¶ While the paintings just described were studio pieces, two magnificent oil sketches, dating from the second decade of the century, were of great personal significance to the artist. *Conception Bay, Newfoundland* (cat. 2) was painted during a stay in that province in 1915. It exhibits the broad, fluid brushstroke and vibrant colors that characterize many of his early works. In it one can see the lingering influence of William Merritt Chase and, particularly, Robert

Henri. *Resurrection Bay, Alaska* (cat. 3) is less of an extemporaneous sketch, although painted only a few years later in 1919. The composition is more precise and the style tighter, emphasizing the structural quality of the landscape. Since the original inscription dating it to 1919 has been overpainted, it must be assumed that the painting was later reworked. Nevertheless, the panel retains the clarity and directness of Nature freshly observed. Both sketches are mounted in frames and mats made by the artist. ¶ *Greenland People, Dogs and Mountains* (cat. 5) is an example of the artist's mature style. There is a hiatus during the nineteen twenties, in which few paintings were done, due to Kent's busy schedule as illustrator, designer and commercial artist. Two visits to Greenland in the early nineteen thirties gave the artist time and opportunity to begin painting again, and there followed a whole series of canvases in which the icy quiet and grandeur of the Arctic landscape and the activities of the Eskimo are depicted. The artist often painted the same scene under different conditions of season and light, and at least one other version of this landscape exists, although without the boat and figures in the foreground. Another favorite area for later paintings was the artist's home in the Adirondacks, seen in *Asgaard-Cloud Shadows* (cat. 6). In both compositions, forms are simplified and worked into an overall structure, subdued and severe in conception. In the *Asgaard* painting, even clouds are transformed into sculptural volumes. ¶ The relationship of the watercolors included in the collection to Kent's activities as an artist deserves some clarification. Some were obviously considered finished works, such as *Lobster Cove* (cat. 45), titled, signed, dated, and probably exhibited by the artist. Other watercolors, *Greenland Landscape* (cat. 61), *Greenland Meadow and Mountain* (cat. 60) and *Man in a Doorway* (cat. 50) for example, are neither signed, dated nor titled by the artist. From all appearances the two landscapes were intended as color sketches for possible incorporation into a future painting. *Man in the Doorway* seems simply a study (although the possibility that the theme was used as the basis for an illustration should not be discounted). In these works, the artist's considerable skill as a watercolorist is revealed.



DRAWINGS make up the bulk of the collection, and they too display a variety of techniques, finishes and intended uses. The Tierra del Fuego drawings form a series (cats. 28-42), done on the spot as geographical and scenographic records. They are carefully notated and dated, and some were eventually exhibited. These drawings later formed the basis for illustrations Kent executed for the book describing his adventures in the Strait of Magellan, *Voyaging*, published first in 1924 and recently reprinted. It is of interest to compare a drawing done on the spot, such as *Northward from Three Hummock Island* (cat. 37) with a drawing from which the actual cut for the illustration was made, *From Stanley Cove* (cat. 44). A number of the Tierra del Fuego drawings are closely related to the paintings that resulted from this trip. ☞ Many other drawings in the collection are final versions for the production of illustrations. Kent's wit and sense of humor are nowhere better in evidence than in such drawings as *Baseball* (cat. 25), *The Party Wire* (cat. 24) and the initial letters for "Tom Thumtack" (cat. 18). Incidentally, they also demonstrate the meticulous way in which drawings were prepared by the artist for reproduction. Occasionally, the exigencies of commercial illustration being what they were, Kent reused and modified earlier drawings and illustrations. This can be noted in the "Tom Thumtack" illustration, *The Wreckers* (cat. 19), which incorporates a reproduction of a drawing done earlier with newly drawn clouds and lettering. In the *Hitler Caricature* (cat. 69) the original drawing apparently was traced, cut out and then laid down on a larger sheet in order to amplify the background. ☞ Other drawings are studies for paintings or prints. The sensitive *Portrait of T.M. Cleland* (cat. 51), a highly finished likeness in its own right, was the basis for a lithograph included in a book published about Cleland in 1929. Cleland, by the way, designed the typography for the limited edition of *Voyaging*. A wash drawing entitled *Study for "Revisitation"* by the artist may be a study for a painting or a print that was never executed or that appeared under another title. A large number of early drawings were sketches and studies done simply for their own

sake. Among the earliest are the *Studio in Tarrytown* (cat. 7) and *Hudson River Scene Near Tarrytown* (cat. 8), which date from the artist's student days. Already evident is Kent's fondness for working with ink and brush, a technique which he mastered to an extraordinary degree. Later drawings like *Woman Washing Clothes in a Tub* (cat. 68) or *Men in a Whaleboat* (cat. 52) show the amazing variety of texture and line that the artist achieved with loaded and dry brushes. Not so apparent is the fact that these drawings were meant to be integrated into a printed page. The handsomely calculated relationship of picture and text can best be judged by looking at the books for which they were intended, *This Is My Own* and *Moby Dick* respectively. ¶ The artist's growing maturity and skill can be traced in the drawings. From Monhegan and possibly New Hampshire come *Two Men, Child and Horse* (cat. 9), *Crowd of Men, Monhegan* (cat. 10) and *Woman Sitting in a Meadow* (cat. 12). The rather enigmatic nature of these drawings is dispelled by the pleasant domestic mood of *Kathleen Peeling Potatoes* (cat. 11). Other drawings include two rare figure studies (cats. 46 and 47) and, later, studies of Greenland Eskimos (cats. 53 and 55). These sensitive sketches show us the private Kent, intent on recording his immediate perceptions, much as his journals attempted to set down in words his thoughts and impressions of the moment. ¶ For those who know the work of Rockwell Kent only through a single painting or print, this collection should reveal new and unexpected facets of the artist. Those familiar with the artist and his work will—hopefully—have their expectations reaffirmed. Although divergent in character, reflecting changes in attitude and technique during decades of prolific activity, all the works bear the impress of Rockwell Kent's temperament and attest to his gifts as an artist and illustrator of the first rank.

RICHARD V. WEST

CATALOGUE

Notes on the Catalogue



THE works listed in the catalogue are arranged in rough chronological order, divided into two sections, one for paintings and the other for drawings and watercolors. Works which can be firmly dated are so listed immediately after the title. Other works, the dates of which can be determined on stylistic grounds or external evidence, have the presumable date enclosed in brackets. It is omitted entirely on works for which at present no source has been found to establish a date. These works have been included in the chronological listing, however, by those works with which they seem most closely related in subject matter or style. Whenever it can be determined with certainty, the subject or intended use of a work has been noted.

Catalogue

Dimensions are given in inches. Height precedes width.

PAINTINGS

1. *Sun, Manana, Monhegan* 1907-ca. 1960
oil on canvas, 20 x 24
indistinctly signed lower right
1971.73
Cut down along top edge; reworked with additions along lower edge by the artist in the 1960s.
2. *Conception Bay, Newfoundland* 1915
oil on panel, 12 x 16
signed lower right
1971.74
3. *Resurrection Bay, Alaska (Blue and Gold)* 1919
oil on panel, 12 x 16
signed twice lower right
1971.75
Possibly reworked at a later date.
4. *Landscape, Ireland* [ca. 1927]
oil on panel, 15 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 19 $\frac{3}{4}$
signed lower right
1971.76
Foreground reworked and figure added at later date.

5. *Greenland People, Dogs and Mountains* [ca. 1935]

oil on canvas on panel, 28 x 48
indistinctly signed lower right

1971.77

The figure standing in the boat may be a self-portrait. Another version, *Mirrored Mountain, South Greenland*, lacking foreground figures and boat is in the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad.

6. *Asgaard-Cloud Shadows* [ca. 1939]

oil on canvas, 28 x 38
signed lower right

1971.78

"Asgaard" was the artist's home from the late 1920s until his death.

WATERCOLORS AND DRAWINGS

7. *Studio in Tarrytown* [ca. 1903]

brush and ink on paper, 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$

1971.79.9

8. *Hudson River Scene Near Tarrytown* [ca. 1903]

pen and ink on paper, 5 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{16}$
estate stamp lower right

1972.37

9. *Two Men, Child and Horse*

pen and wash on paper, 2 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{8}$

1971.79.10

10. *Crowd of Men, Monhegan* [ca. 1907]

brush and ink on paper, 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 9

1971.79.11

11. *Kathleen Peeling Potatoes* [ca. 1910]
pencil on paper, $11\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$
signed lower left
1971.79.12
Inscribed: Kathleen I.
12. *Woman Sitting in a Meadow* [ca. 1910]
pencil and crayon on paper, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$
1971.79.13
13. *Out of the Harbor, St. John's, N.F.* 1910
brush and ink on postcard, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$
signed and dated lower right
1971.79.14
Inscribed: Out of the Harbor St. John's N.F., November 5th 1910 | Don't
give any of | these cards away | please Kathleen.—Rockwell.
14. *White Horse Hill, St. John's, N.F.* 1910
brush and ink on postcard, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$
signed and dated lower right
1971.79.15
Inscribed: The high hill on the estate's called White Horse Hill. | The place
itself Jersey Room. These old fishery est's. | were called "Rooms".
15. *Veiled Woman in a Landscape* 1912
pen and ink on paper, $3 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$
signed and dated lower left and right
1971.79.18
16. *Railroad Porter with Trunks*
brush and ink on card, $6\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$
1971.79.49
Inscribed on reverse: Labor.

17. *Tom Thumtack, A.I.A.* [ca. 1914]
ink and watercolor on card, 7 x 4 $\frac{3}{8}$
1971.79.40
Illustration for *Architec-Tonics: The Tales of Tom Thumtack Architect*, published in 1914, a spoof on architectural practices and procedures. The text was by Frederick Squires, and Kent himself had studied architecture at Columbia.
18. *Nineteen Initial Letters* [ca. 1914]
ink on paper, ca. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$
1971.79.41/1-18 and 1971.79.46
These cleverly animated illuminated letters were used in "Tom Thumtack" and other more ephemeral publications.
19. "*The Wreckers*" by Tom Thumtack [ca. 1914]
ink and collage, 4 x 4
1971.79.42
This illustration incorporates a reproduction of an ink brush drawing of a Monhegan headland used as an art school announcement in 1909, combined with newly drawn lettering and background.
20. *Finis*
ink on scratchboard, touched with white, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{8}$
1971.79.43
Based on drawings done first on Monhegan.
21. *Newfoundland Home* [ca. 1915]
pen and ink on paper, 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
signed lower right
1971.79.39
The tragicomic events surrounding Kent's second visit to Newfoundland and this house are described in his autobiography, *It's Me, O Lord* (1955) and reflected in the painting *House of Dread*. This illustration is reproduced in the autobiography but was drawn and presumably first used at an earlier date.

22. *Landscape with Hills and Sheep, Newfoundland* [ca. 1915]
pen and ink on paper, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$
signed lower left
1971.79.16

23. *Landscape with Hills and Sheep, Newfoundland* [ca. 1915]
pen and ink on paper, $4\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$
signed lower right
1971.79.17

This drawing and cat. 22 are versions of the same composition.

24. *The Party Wire* [ca. 1920]
pen and ink on paper, $14\frac{1}{4} \times 11$
signed in center: Hogarth, Jr.
1971.79.44

Under a pseudonym, Kent provided many witty illustrations to *Judge, Vanity Fair*, the *New York Tribune* and many other publications during the late teens and early twenties. Highly stylized drawings like this one and cats. 25–27 established the artist as one of the best-known illustrators of the era. This drawing accompanied a verse by George S. Chappell and was reproduced in a *Basket of Poses* (1924), p. 54.

25. *Baseball*
pen and ink on paper, touched with white, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$
1971.79.45

26. *Playful Cat by a Brook*
pen and ink on paper, $7\frac{7}{8} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$
1971.79.47

27. *Walking Cat*
pen and ink on paper, $4 \times 5\frac{5}{8}$
1971.79.48

28. *Sea and Mountain, Tierra del Fuego* 1922

charcoal pencil on paper, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$

signed upper right

1971.79.22

This and the following drawings, cats. 29–44, are the result of a voyage to South America and the Tierra del Fuego. Most were sketched on the spot. This one is the basis for the illustration “Admiralty Sound II” in *Voyaging Southward to the Strait of Magellan* (1924), p. 93.

29. *Macy Island* 1922

pencil on paper, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$

1971.79.23

Inscribed: Trees on Macy Island | October 18 | Rockwell Kent.

The illustration appeared in *Voyaging*, p. 58.

30. *Sailing Free* 1922

pencil on paper, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$

signed lower right

1971.79.24

Illustration in *Voyaging*, p. 49, with added stars and altered rigging.

31. *Tucker and Dawson Islands* 1922

pen and ink on paper, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$

signed lower right

1971.79.25

Inscribed: Tucker Islands–Dawson Island | View looking E.N.E. October 18.

32. *Corkhill Island* 1922

pencil on paper, $2 \times 6\frac{1}{2}$

signed upper right

1971.79.26

Inscribed: Looking N. by E. Oct. 18 | Bare Island–Corkhill Island.
Voyaging, p. 52.

33. *Haycock Point* 1922
pencil on paper, $2\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$
signed upper right
1971.79.27
Inscribed: Haycock Point looking S.E. | October 18th.
Voyaging, p. 53.
34. *Haycock Head* 1922
pencil on paper, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$
signed upper right
1971.79.28
Inscribed: Haycock—from the North | October 18.
Voyaging, p. 56.
35. *Lago Fognano* 1922
pencil on paper, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$
signed upper left
Inscribed: Lago Fognano | October 20th 1922.
36. *View of Lago Fognano* 1922
watercolor on paper, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$
1971.79.30
Inscribed: Lago Fognano | Oct 22d Rockwell | Kent.
Voyaging, p. 66.
37. *Northward from Three Hummock Island* 1922
pencil on paper, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$
signed upper right
1971.79.31
Inscribed: Admiralty Sound | November 11.
Voyaging, p. 95.

38. *Above Jackson Bay and Wind-Torn Trees* 1922
pencil on paper, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$
signed upper right
1971.79.32
Inscribed: November 11.
Voyaging, pp. 86 and 103.
39. *Off Dawson Island* 1922
pencil on paper, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$
signed lower left
1971.79.33
Voyaging, p. 26, with added figures.
40. *Two Persons Seated by a Hut* 1922
pencil on paper, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$
initialed upper left
1971.79.34
41. *Woman Seated by a Hut* 1922
pencil on paper, $2\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$
initialed upper left
1971.79.35
42. *Seated Woman* 1922
pencil on paper, $2\frac{5}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$
initialed upper right
1971.79.36
43. *The "Kathleen" of New York* [ca. 1923]
brush, pen and ink on paper, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 8$
signed lower right
1971.79.37
Voyaging, p. 35.

44. *From Stanley Cove* [ca. 1923]
brush and ink on paper, 4 x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$
1971.79.38
Voyaging, p. 96.
45. *Lobster Cove (Monhegan)* 1927
watercolor on paper, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$
signed and dated lower left
1971.79.1
46. *Nude in a Dancing Pose*
soft pencil on paper, 19 x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$
1971.79.21
47. *Recumbent Nude Study*
soft pencil on paper, 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 19
1971.79.20
48. "*Ships*" *Bookcover Study*
pen and ink on paper, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{5}{8}$
1971.79.51
This study may have been for an abortive commission, since no such book appears to have been illustrated by the artist.
49. *Man on a Mast*
brush and ink on paper, 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{5}{8}$
1971.79.52
This theme is a recurrent one for the artist, and first appears in a drawing done in Newfoundland (Philadelphia Museum of Art). The shape of this illustration indicates it was intended to fit into a page of text.
50. *Man in a Doorway*
watercolor on paper, 14 x 10
1971.79.2

51. *Portrait of T.M. Cleland* [ca. 1929]
pencil and colored chalk, $18\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{3}{8}$
signed lower right
1971.79.19

Thomas Maitland Cleland (1880–1964), book illustrator and designer, was a friend and colleague of the artist. In 1929 Kent published a lithograph portrait of Cleland in connection with the book, *The Decorative Work of T.M. Cleland*.

52. *Men in a Whaleboat* [ca. 1930]
brush and ink on paper, $5 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$
1971.79.53

One of the innumerable drawings done in connection with the illustrations for *Moby Dick*, published in 1930.

53. *Margreta, Portrait Study* [ca. 1931]
pencil on paper, $11 \times 8\frac{3}{4}$
1971.79.62

A similar sketch appears in *Greenland Journal* (1962), p. 20, with the entry dated August 26, 1931.

54. *Eskimos Pulling In a Whale* [ca. 1931]
pencil on paper, $4\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$
1971.79.64

A similar sketch appears in *Greenland Journal*, p. 78, with the entry for October 15, 1931.

55. *Greenland Eskimo Girl* [ca. 1931]
pencil on paper, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{5}{8}$
1971.79.61

A similar sketch appears in *Greenland Journal*, p. 86, with the entry for October 27, 1931.

56. *Artist's House, Igdlorssuit, Greenland* [ca. 1932]
pen and ink on paper, $4\frac{5}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$
1971.79.57
Inscribed: My house—Igdlorssuit.
57. *Greenland Home Interior* [ca. 1932]
pencil and watercolor on paper, 7 x 10
1971.79.3
58. *Two Greenland Figures* [ca. 1932]
watercolor on paper, 7 x 10
1971.79.4
This sketch and the previous one were originally part of the same sheet.
59. *Old Eskimo Woman* [ca. 1932]
pencil on paper, $11\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{7}{8}$
1971.79.63
A similar, much simplified, sketch appears in *Greenland Journal*, p. 78, with entry for March 4, 1932.
60. *Greenland Meadow and Mountain* [ca. 1932]
watercolor on paper, 6 x 9
1971.79.6
61. *Greenland Landscape* [ca. 1932]
watercolor on paper, 9 x 6
1971.79.5
62. *Eskimos Pulling a Boat*
brush and ink on paper, $4 \times 8\frac{1}{2}$
1971.79.58

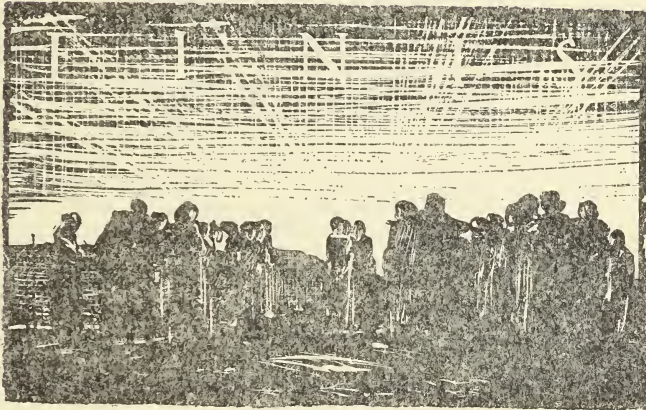
63. *Eskimo in a Kayak*
brush and ink on paper, $2\frac{5}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$
1971.79.59
64. *Greenland Glacier*
pen and ink on paper, $4\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$
1971.79.60
65. *Snow Covered Tree*
pen, brush and ink on paper, 5×6
1971.79.56
66. *Study for "Revisitation"*
brush and ink wash on paper, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{5}{8}$
1971.79.7
67. *Man Looking at the Heavens*
ink, gouache and graphite on paper, $11\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$
1971.79.8
68. *Woman Washing Clothes in a Tub* [ca. 1940]
brush and ink on paper, $5\frac{1}{8} \times 7\frac{3}{16}$
signed lower right
1971.79.54
Illustration for head of Chapter XXVIII of *This Is My Own* (1940).
69. *Hitler Caricature* [ca. 1940]
pen and ink on paper, touched with white, $7\frac{1}{8} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$
1971.79.55
Illustration for *This Is My Own*, p. 355.

70. *100 Years*

brush and ink over pencil on paper, 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 8

1971.79.50

Possibly a study for an illustration in *To Thee! America* (1947) which varies considerably from this drawing.



CAT. 20



This catalogue has been designed and printed by The Anthoensen Press, Portland, Maine, in Linotype Granjon with Centaur display. The initial letters and decorations were drawn by Rockwell Kent and selected from the Collection.

❧ 1,200 copies ❧

