



Images Supplied

Photojournalist Kevin Rivoli paired 68 contemporary scenes with works by Norman Rockwell for "In Search of Norman Rockwell's America," which became an exhibit and a book. The exhibit is at the Midwest Museum of American Art through Nov. 1. Above, Rivoli's photo paired with Rockwell's "Beguiling Buttercup."

Rockwell's America lives

Photojournalist's works capture spirit of artist in MMAA exhibit.

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The paintings of Norman Rockwell are too idyllic, some say. The moments in American life that he depicted probably never happened.

Photojournalist Kevin Rivoli begs to differ.

An exhibit pairing Rivoli's work with that of America's illustrator opened Friday at the Midwest Museum of American

IF YOU GO

What: "In Search of Norman Rockwell's America"

Where: Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart

When: Through Nov. 1

Admission: \$4 for adults, \$3 for senior citizens, \$2 for college students, \$7 for a family and \$1 for children age 5 through 12th grade

Other: Free Family Sundays are not in effect during the exhibit.

Information: 293-6660

Art in Elkhart, and proves what those of us who are visually oriented have always known: Such

moments take place every day across this diverse country.

Most significant about the exhibit, "In Search of Norman Rockwell's America" is that Associated Press photographer Rivoli didn't originally embark on a deliberate attempt to imitate Rockwell. In fact, the photographer said, he wasn't even aware of the particular criticism until the early 1990s, when he and his wife Michele visited the Rockwell Museum in Massachusetts.

"I was always influenced by him, but it was that trip that galvanized me," said Rivoli, who had collected images that were meaningful to him throughout his career — usually slices of life.



Kevin Rivoli visited Elkhart on Friday for the opening of his exhibit, "In Search of Norman Rockwell's America." The exhibit pairs the photographer's work with similar scenes created by legendary Americana painter Norman Rockwell, proving that Rockwell captured typical moments in American life.

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Truth Photo By Jodi Magallanes

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After the trip, he and Michele dug into Rivoli's archives, quickly finding a photo that struck them for its similarity to the mood, subject and composition of Rockwell's work.

"Let's see if there's more than one," Rivoli recalled them both deciding.

Rockwell painted a girl evaluating a handyman's varnish job. Rivoli captured a girl the same age making Dad's day as he struggles to assemble a gas grill. Rockwell's future high school graduate on his big brother's big day is paired with a cap and gown jump in the lake after the big day. And the lemonade stand, Thanksgiving dinner and baseball scenes that both artists captured are obviously similar but just as genuine.

A total of 68 of the contemporary scenes that Rivoli photographed were paired with Rockwell works. The idea was a book, but the pairings quickly became an exhibit. Elkhart is the second stop on the exhibit's tour and the only one in Indiana.

"(Norman Rockwell) chose to portray, for the most part, a world that was safe, simple, accessible, and joyful. ... Kevin's photographs and Norman's works remind us that there are also a multitude of moments we can feel good about and celebrate, moments that we often overlook," wrote Norman Rockwell's grandson, John, in the book by the same name that was produced as a result of the collaboration. Accomplished with the full support of the Rockwell children, grandchildren and foundation, the exhibit and book lend renewed authenticity to the famous painter's sense of the joy and wonder in his fellow man.

The book is on sale at the exhibition and includes a quote from MMAA Director Jane Burns regarding her longtime appreciation of Rockwell's work, along with statements from Regis Philbin, NBC news anchor Brian Williams and former President Jimmy Carter.

More than \$8 million in Rockwell originals are contained in

the exhibit, which will remain at the MMAA until Nov. 1.

The MMAA is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for senior citizens, \$2 for college

students, \$7 for a family and \$1 for children age 5 through 12th grade. During this American heritage exhibition, Free Family Sundays will not be in effect. For more information contact the museum at 293-6660.