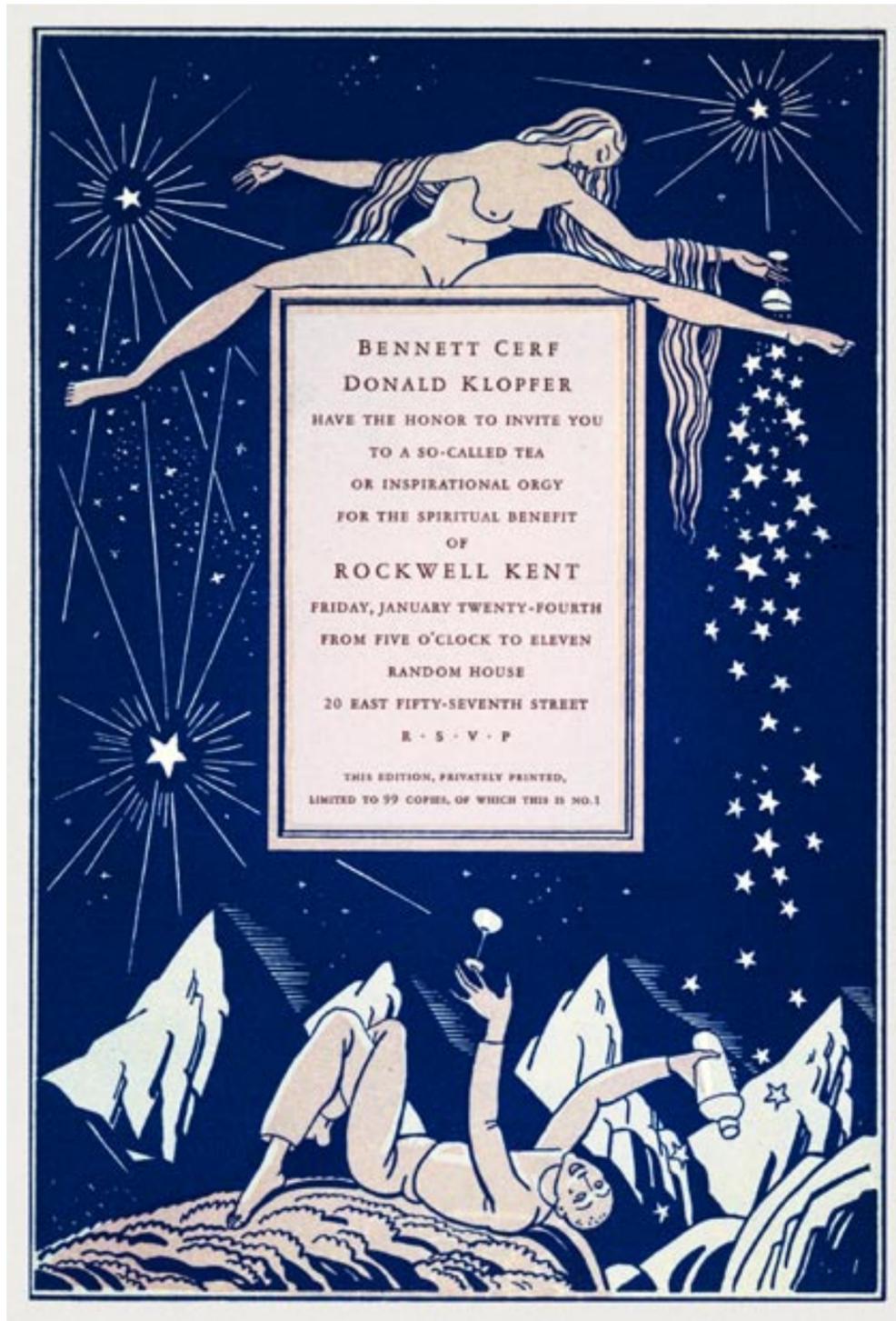


THE PRINTS OF ROCKWELL KENT



50. Invitation to a Tea

Dan Burne Jones

THE PRINTS OF ROCKWELL KENT

A Catalogue Raisonné

Revised by Robert Rightmire



Alan Wofsy Fine Arts
San Francisco * 2002

DAN BURNE JONES, a professional collector, writer, and artist, was appointed Bibliographer to Rockwell Kent by Mr. Kent before his death. [1974]

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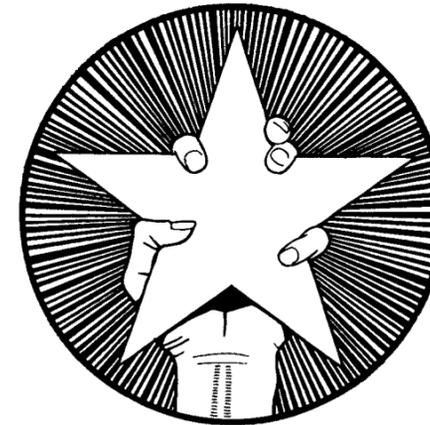
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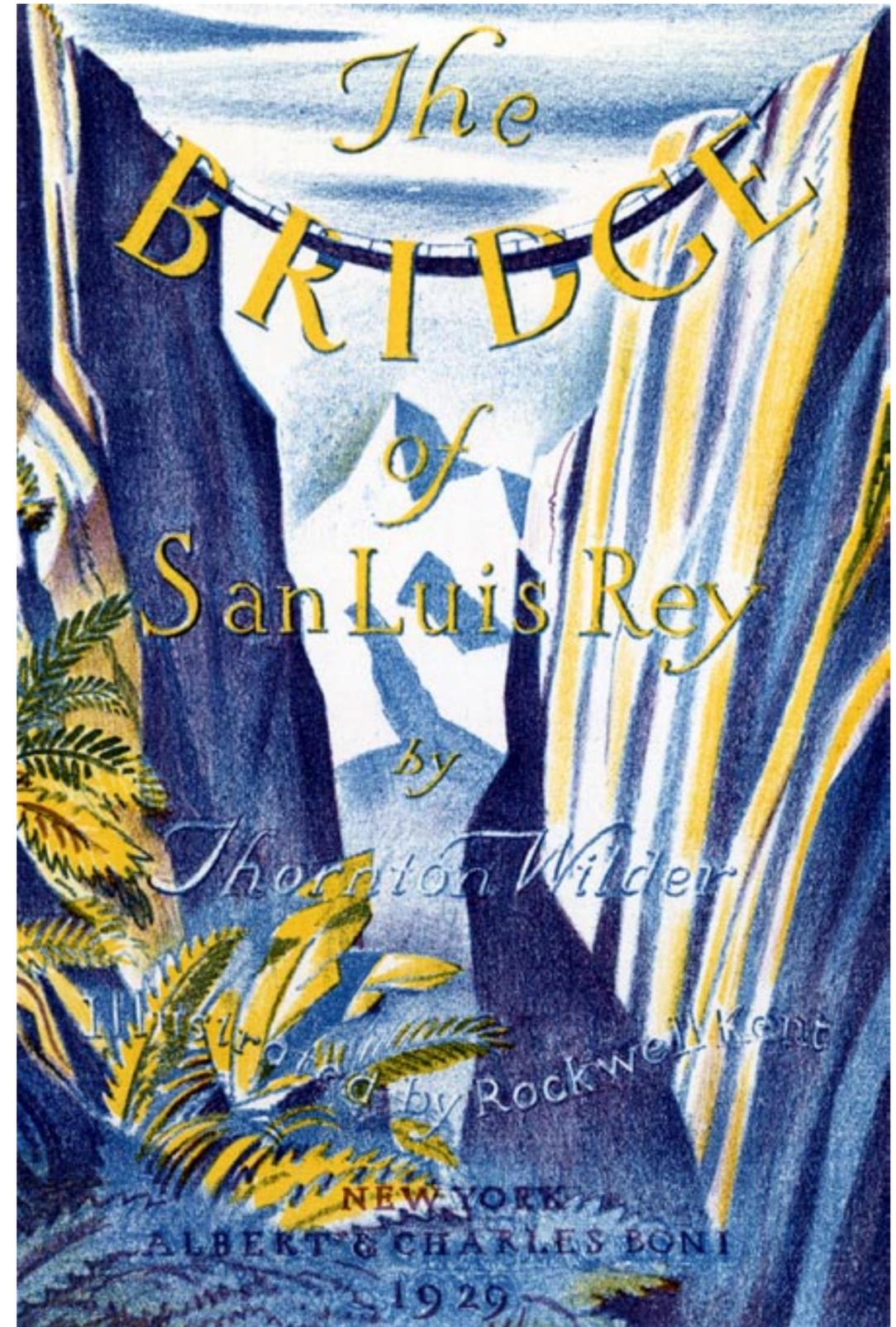


This book is dedicated with affection and appreciation to two of the most diligent and persistent workers in the field of love, and of art: my wife, Jacquie Jones, and our beloved friend, Sally Kent.

The revised edition of this book is dedicated to George and Gladys Spector for their multifaceted endeavors on behalf of Rockwell Kent's legacy.



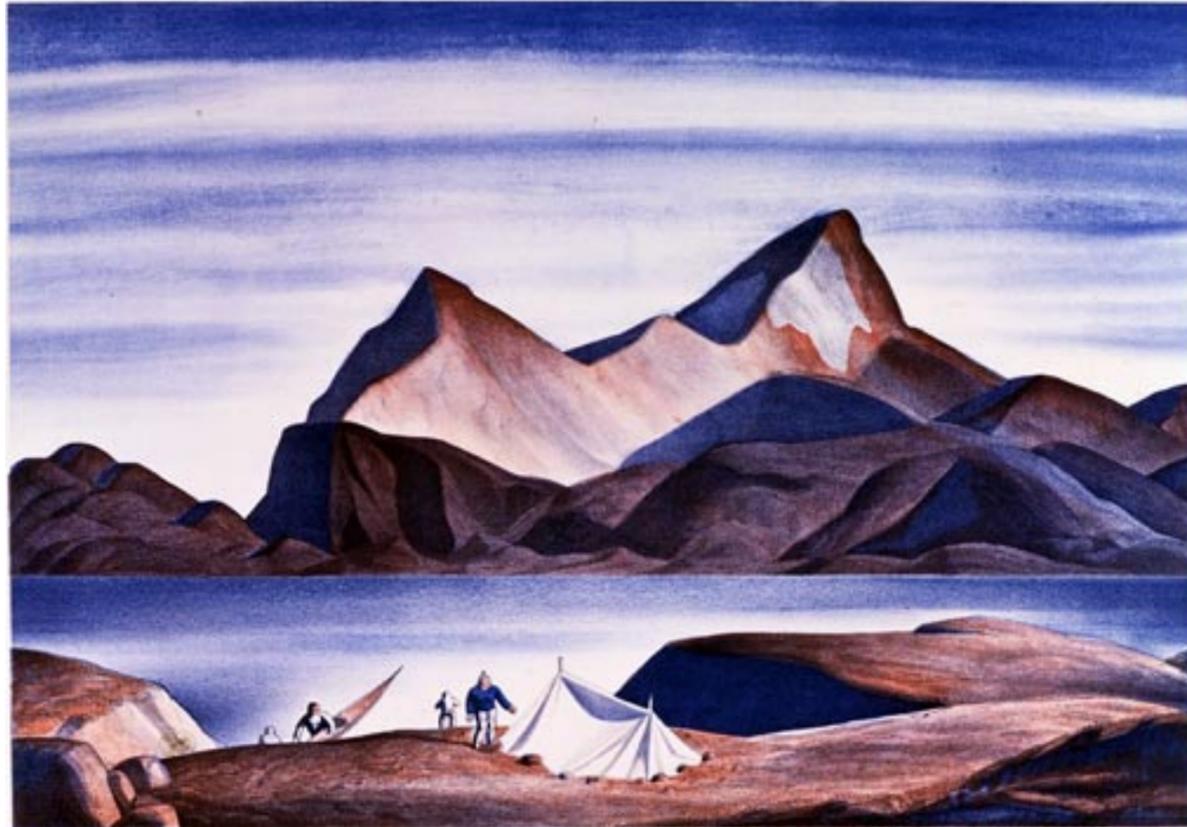
18. Wayside Madonna



40. The Bridge of San Luis Rey: Title Page

Contents

| | |
|--|--------|
| Foreword by Carl Zigrosser | xii |
| Introduction to the Revised Edition | xvii |
| Introduction | xxi |
| Acknowledgments | xxxiii |
| | |
| Catalogue Raisonné | 1 |
| | |
| Appendices | |
| I. Posthumous Prints | 309 |
| II. Print Index | 325 |
| III. Twenty-two Small Wood Engravings and Woodcuts | 331 |
| IV. Print Patterns and Designs for Cloth | 345 |
| V. Twenty-eight Drawings by Kent Cut in Wood by J. J. Lankes | 371 |
| VI. List of Prints Done in Color | 382 |
| VII. List of Variant Print Titles | 383 |
| VIII. Chronology of Prints | 385 |
| | |
| Bibliography | 389 |
| Epilogue: Farewell, Great Friend (A Poem by Dan Burne Jones) | 410 |
| Index | 411 |



65. Sermilik Fjord



107. Charlotte

Foreword

The tradition in which Rockwell Kent worked was not that of the modern Postimpressionist or International style but rather an older and possibly English style. Hogarth, Blake, Constable, the Pre-Raphaelites, Du Maurier and the British illustrators were his artistic antecedents. This bent was confirmed by the instruction he received from his teachers. He was trained as an architect. Toward the end of his courses at Columbia, he felt a strong inclination toward painting, and with the encouragement of Professor Ware he took up the study of art under William M. Chase at the Shinnecock Hills School, and later at the Independent School under Robert Henri and Kenneth Hayes Miller, and finally as an apprentice to Abbott Thayer at Dublin, New Hampshire. He thus had an unusually long and thorough training in the craft. The many extant early figure studies show with what perseverance he worked to perfect his draftsmanship and ability to portray the human form in any pose or manner. Likewise his architectural studies enabled him to draw objects accurately and convincingly. He was well regarded as an architectural renderer.

His later experience as a carpenter and builder and his familiarity with tools served him well when he came to take up the graphic processes. He was a beautiful craftsman. His wood blocks were marvels of beautiful cutting, every line deliberate and under perfect control. The tones and lines in lithography were solidly built up, subtle, full of color. He usually made preliminary studies, old-master style, for composition or details before starting on a print. Nothing was vague or accidental about him, nothing at loose ends. His expression was clear and deliberate. Misty tonalities were not to his taste, nor suggestiveness, the dramas of the unconscious. His was a highly objectified art, clean, athletic, sometimes almost austere and cold. He either recorded adventures concretely, or dealt in ideas or feelings about ideas. He may be said to have been an intellectual artist in the sense that Bruegel or Hogarth or Dürer were intellectual in contradistinction to artists of the emotional-creative type such as Grünewald, Rembrandt, or Orosco. His studio was a model of an

efficient workshop, neat, orderly, everything in its place. His handwriting, the fruit of his architectural training, was beautiful and precise.

Man was the hero of most of his pictures. He stood almost alone in American art in his use of symbolism. What other artist has produced such wood engravings as “Over the Ultimate,” “Twilight of Man,” “Masthead,” or “Starlight”? They were symbolic representations of certain intuitions about the destiny of man and the meaning of existence. “Masthead,” for example, seems to depict Man in his struggle to capture ultimate reality, to penetrate into the mystery of the dark night of the universe, and to discover the reason for his own existence. Man, the print seems to tell us, in all this mental struggle has climbed as far as he possibly can, he has come to the very end of his resources. He has discovered that he cannot fly at will into the universal, but is bound down to earth by the limitation of his senses. It is a tragic but at the same time a heroic conception, akin in mood to Bertrand Russell’s “A Free Man’s Worship.” Consider also the mood of wonder in “Man at Mast” or “Starlight,” of terror in “The End” or “Nightmare,” or the dynamic vitality and exultation of “Pinnacle.” Such are the overtones that his prints evoke.

One might say that Kent’s print oeuvre—apart from book illustrations, bookplates, and advertising designs—falls into three separate phases. The first is an intense mystical period born of lonely spells in Newfoundland and Alaska and exemplified by such wood engravings as “Over the Ultimate” (1926), “Twilight of Man” (1926), and “The End” (1927). The second and most productive is more or less documentary in scope, illustrating daily life in the Adirondacks or Greenland, of which “Pinnacle” (1928), “Northern Night” (self portrait, 1930), “Young Greenland Woman” (1933), and “Mala” (1933) are characteristic. And finally the socially conscious period, producing such examples as “Workers of the World, Unite!” (1937), “Eternal Vigilance Is the Price of Liberty” (1945), “It Is Later Than You Think” (1945), and “Heavy, Heavy Hangs over Thy Head” (1946). In all three phases he has

made a contribution to American graphic art.

Pleasure and excitement regarding nature and human nature, in a word, delight, was the springboard of his creative approach, except perhaps in his later radical prints, where it became militant social consciousness. He was an intelligent and articulate commentator on art. One of the best of his insights into the nature of creation will bear repetition even though Dan Burne Jones has quoted it in his introduction: “man can but recreate in human measure that portion of the infinite which he perceives. Every man’s entire experience in life is the aesthetic experience of personal contact; and by the degree of man’s immediate sensitivity to such contacts rests his inherent right to be an artist. It is that sensitivity urged to expression by the creative impulse, of which it is perhaps the parent, which determines the artist, and which remains with him as the only guide and rule in the work he does.”

The fact that Rockwell Kent never worked in the tradition of the Postimpressionists did have considerable effect on critical and public response to his work. In the 1920s he was a rising young printmaker; in the 1930s he reached his greatest popularity. In 1936 the magazine *Prints* conducted an elaborate survey on the practitioners of graphic art in the United States. In this survey Kent came out far ahead of all the others as the most widely known and successful printmaker in the country. Not that popularity is necessarily a criterion of excellence. Few artists have experienced such fluctuations in the public estimate of their work as has Kent, from extravagant praise to fanatic denunciation, usually based on nonaesthetic considerations or on a misunderstanding of the real import of his prints and paintings. In any case, when so-called modern art became better known and accepted in the 1940s, Kent’s popularity suffered a commensurate decline. This fall from grace was compounded when he began to espouse unpopular leftish causes, and his work was denounced for political reasons. Only now do we have enough perspective to be able to look at his work with a receptive and unprejudiced eye. He is an important American printmaker.

I am glad that Dan Burne Jones has finished the work which I once began. He is an excellent cataloguer, a patient and persevering perfectionist. It is good this catalogue raisonné of the prints of Rockwell Kent be placed on record for all time.

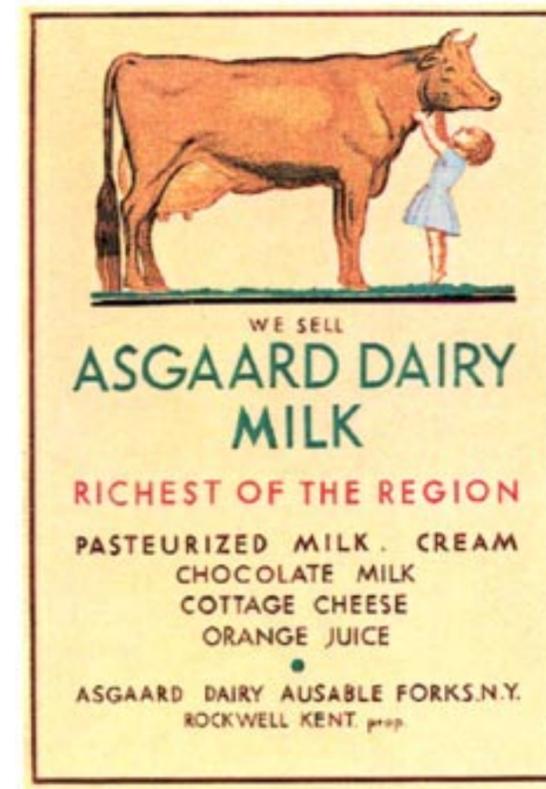
Carl Zigrosser



121. S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.



130. Happy Birthday to Me!



156. Asgaard Dairy Milk

Introduction to the Revised Edition

When *The Prints of Rockwell Kent* by Dan Burne Jones [DBJ] was published in 1975, it was greeted with considerable praise. Fridolf Johnson, an authority on the graphic arts in America, used phrases like “superbly printed,” “typographically handsome” and an “extremely important book” to herald this long awaited catalogue raisonné.ⁱ As if to add credence to Johnson’s accolades, the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) selected it as one of the fifty outstanding books of the year.ⁱⁱ This book, almost instantly, became one of the essential references for Rockwell Kent. At the time, little else existed to aid researchers and collectors. Some forty-two years earlier, Rockwell Kent had authored another AIGA winner, *Rockwellkentiana*, which catalogued the artist’s prints from 1919 to 1933.ⁱⁱⁱ By the early 1950s it had become hopelessly outdated; Kent had created over fifty prints that postdated the book. Though Zigrosser had planned on compiling an updated annotated checklist of Kent’s prints, by 1971 he realized that the desire to finish writing his memoirs and his age (he was 80), would probably prevent him from completing the research.^{iv} He encouraged DBJ to do it.^v The task was daunting because the artist’s master print file was incomplete and the files of George Miller, who printed most of Kent’s lithographs, had been destroyed.^{vi} With some very valuable assistance from Zigrosser, DBJ succeeded in parlaying his friendship with the artist, the help of the artist’s widow, Sally Kent (later Sally Kent Gorton), and his own knowledge of printmaking into a reference that has faithfully served the art community for a quarter of a century.

The years between the end of the 1930s and the publication of *The Prints of Rockwell Kent* in 1975 are notable for the absence of serious appraisals of Kent’s art; the exceptions are few.^{vii} That is not to imply that the artist had slipped from public view, quite the contrary. Kent’s endorsements of what were deemed “leftist causes” shifted the spotlight from his art to his politics. His exploits as an activist unfortunately held center stage, while his art seemed to be waiting in the wings. Kent’s many autobiographical writings, published between 1940 and 1968, failed

to stimulate reconsideration of his artistry; instead they seemed to add fuel to the political debate.^{viii} During the 1950s and 1960s, few New York City galleries would exhibit Kent’s work. His art fell from public view. When Kent died on March 13, 1971, his front-page obituary in *The New York Times* chronicled his travels and detailed his strong personal opinions and many political battles. It devoted little space to his artistic achievements.^{ix}

Since Kent’s death, the appreciation of his artistry has experienced a renaissance. The publication of *The Prints of Rockwell Kent* was but one of a series of events that fostered this interest.

Exhibitions at the Hyde Collection, Larcada Gallery, and Hammer Galleries all drew favorable responses from the public and the critics.^x In 1974, Sally Kent Gorton gave several paintings, numerous works on paper, various books, and hundreds of pieces of ephemera to the State University of New York at Plattsburgh. In turn, the University created the Rockwell Kent Gallery to house and exhibit the collection. In the same year, George and Gladys Spector started publishing *The Kent Collector* to help compile information about the artist and his manifold works and to disseminate that information to a growing audience of interested scholars and researchers.^{xi} While individually each of these steps might not seem significant, in the aggregate, they kept Kent’s work in the public eye.

In 1980, David Traxel expanded his Ph.D. dissertation, “Rockwell Kent: The Early Years (1882-1920)” into a short but valuable biography, *An American Saga, The Life and Times of Rockwell Kent*.^{xii} A more definitive, full-length study has yet to be written. This biography was followed two years later by Fridolf Johnson’s impressive *Rockwell Kent, An Anthology of His Works*. This lavishly illustrated and skillfully written book, though it lacks a detailed index, is still an outstanding reference on Kent’s life and art. In 1984, Richard V. West mounted *An Enkindled Eye, The Paintings of Rockwell Kent*; it was the most comprehensive exhibition of Kent’s paintings in the United States to date. This traveling exhibit included eighty-seven paintings

that spanned Kent's career from 1903 to the mid-1960s. Since "An Enkindled Eye" there have been more than a dozen smaller exhibits focusing on various aspects of Kent's artistry. Topics such as prints, drawings, decorative arts, designer dinnerware, book arts, and Kent's work in Newfoundland and Greenland, all helped to detail his diversified artistic achievements. The turn of the 21st century has witnessed an even greater focus on Kent's artwork. Three exhibits (and a four-day symposium^{xiii}), loosely coordinated, examined Kent's commercial art, years in the Adirondacks, and his travels to "Distant Shores."^{xiv} While these exhibits attracted thousands of people, an even greater audience awaits the completion of Frederick Lewis' film on Kent. The documentary's combination of a truly compelling story, rarely seen footage, and outstanding examples of art from public and private collectors in the United States and Russia should significantly heighten the public's understanding of Rockwell Kent.

The publication of this revised edition of *The Prints of Rockwell Kent* adds momentum to this ever-increasing interest. It aims to serve the needs of both researchers and collectors alike. Many turn to a catalogue raisonné like this for basic information such as identifying a print, determining dimensions, or finding out the size of an edition. In this respect, DBJ's information has been fine-tuned. Errors found in the original book have been corrected. For those who consult this reference to guide them in their research, new information is presented including previously unpublished sketches. They allow the viewer to watch the artist at work. For those who want to examine prints for comparisons or for authentication, the significantly revised collection list will be an asset. In addition, the bibliography has been updated; the sources cited under Selected Works identify the important scholarly or popular articles, books, and exhibitions that have appeared during the last twenty-five years.

Much has been written about the graphic arts of Rockwell Kent. Is there anything new that should now be added? To answer this question, read Carl

Zigrosser's original foreword for this book. Keep in mind that Zigrosser's insights into Kent's art evolved from a relationship that spanned more than half a century and stemmed from a vast knowledge of the graphic arts. While contemporary critics may nibble at the exterior of Kent's work, it was Zigrosser who seemed to reach its core. In 1938, he described Kent's art as "highly objectified... clean, athletic, some- times almost austere and cold.... It is romantic, symbolic or documentary in character. His prints are distinguished for their balance and draughtsmanship, their precision of execution, their controlled clarity of form and tonal values, and their largeness of conception."^{xv} Zigrosser's critique remains timeless.

Finally, one question merits consideration: Will Rockwell Kent fall off the pages of art history? From this vantage point, the answer must be no. The political events that seemed to erase Kent's art from the public's consciousness are no longer pertinent. Luckily, the passage of time has led to a more rational evaluation of Kent's support for social and political causes. His works of art, once considered passé by some, have gained favor for their distinct qualities, their artistic merit, and their value as documents that help define the history of his times. Together these factors have given a new relevancy to the art of Rockwell Kent.

Robert Rightmire

ⁱ Fridolf Johnson, "The Prints of Rockwell Kent." *American Artist*, Dec. 1975, p. 66.

ⁱⁱ American Institute of Graphic Arts, *Fifty Books of the Year 1975, Exhibition Year 1976*. New York, N.Y.

ⁱⁱⁱ Rockwell Kent, *Rockwellkentiana, Few Words and Many Pictures*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1933.

^{iv} Zigrosser had previously catalogued the prints of such notable artists as Childe Hassam, John Sloan, Edward Hopper, Benton Spruance, and John Marin.

^v Carl Zigrosser to Dan Burne Jones, April 12, 1971. Archives of American Art, *Dan Burne Jones Letters*, reel 1784, frame 491.

^{vi} Dan Burne Jones letter to Sally Kent, June 4, 1971. Archives of American Art, reel 1784, frame 500.

^{vii} Kent's traveling exhibit *Know and Defend America* (1942), was well received. A 1956 exhibit, *The Right to Travel*, helped draw

support for Kent's legal battle over the State Department's refusal to grant him a passport. *Rockwell Kent, The Early Years*, Bowdoin College, 1969 (curator, Richard V. West), was Kent's first major solo US exhibition in 13 years and the last during his lifetime. In 1957-58 and 1960, there were two large exhibitions of Kent's work in the USSR.

^{viii} In particular: *This is My Own, It's Me O Lord, Of Men and Mountains*, and *After Long Years*; all are listed in the bibliography of works by Rockwell Kent at the end of this book.

^{ix} "Rockwell Kent, Artist, Is Dead; Championed Left-Wing Causes," *The New York Times*, March 14, 1971, pp. 1 & 74.

^x *Rockwell Kent, A Retrospective Exhibit of the Artist's Paintings and Graphic Work*, Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, N.Y., 1974; *Exhibition of Forty Drawings*, 1974 and *Rockwell Kent*, 1975, at Larcada Gallery, New York; *Rockwell Kent's World, A Retrospective*, Hammer Galleries, New York, 1977.

^{xi} *The Kent Collector* has been published by SUNY at Plattsburgh since 1987.

^{xii} David Traxel, *An American Saga, The Life and Times of Rockwell Kent*. New York: Harper & Row, 1980.

^{xiii} *Rockwell Kent Rediscovered*, Symposium 2000, with presentations at SUNY, Plattsburgh; The Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake, N.Y.; and The Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, Mass.

^{xiv} *Commercialism and Idealism: Rockwell Kent—Bringing Art To Advertising*, Rockwell Kent Gallery, Plattsburgh Art Museum, SUNY, 1999-2000; *The View From Asgaard*, The Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake, N.Y., 1999-2000; and *Distant Shores: The Odyssey of Rockwell Kent*, The Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, Mass., 2000-2001.

^{xv} Carl Zigrosser, "Rockwell Kent," *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 2, April, 1938, pp. 151 & 153.

Introduction

Rockwell Kent was a striking personality, a romantic realist, and a positive force in American art. He was a man of mature will and strong beliefs; he was virile, athletic, adventuresome, prolific, of boundless energy, a rugged individualist, and a dedicated and meticulous creative artist who devoted long hours to his craft. He thought of himself as a workingman whose trade happened to be the expression of a unique view of life through art. He knew what he believed about life and politics and was in the forefront of battle fighting for those beliefs when they were least popular. Perhaps this is why he has so often been referred to as the stormy petrel of American art.

Kent seems to have had complete confidence in himself and his abilities. His style, which remained largely unchanged, was remarkably distinctive and appears to have been little influenced by what others were doing, despite his having had such noted teachers as William M. Chase, Robert Henri, and Abbott H. Thayer. His style identified his work as effectively as did his signature. It was recognizable in the stark composition, the strong gesture and movement of his lines, the characteristic play of light and dark, and the highlighting of the dramatic elements that told the story or expressed the artist's usually strong feeling about some public event. James N. Rosenberg, a well-known art critic of the time, noted Kent's strong personal style and involvement:

Separate from all the rest of the painters, quite alone, stands Rockwell Kent. Here is a really large vision, a stripping of things to the bone of the essential. The work of a man who is alive and sensitive, as every painter must be, to the methods of others, but who, nonetheless, is simply and only and nothing but Rockwell Kent. This insistence on the inviolability of self is, I believe, the final measure of enduring value in all art. Without it, the rest is nothing.¹

The artist and teacher Robert Henri was impressed by Kent's idealistic intensity:

The very things that he portrays on his canvas are the things he sees written in the great organization of life; and his painting is a proclamation of

the rights of man, of the dignity of man, of the dignity of creation. It is his belief in God. It is what art should mean.²

John Sloan, the painter, etcher, and friend wrote the following in an early entry in his journal:

Went over to Ninth Avenue to pay butcher and grocer bills, and to pick up supplies for this evening. Then to Clausen Galleries where Rockwell Kent... has an exhibition. These pictures are of immense Rocks and Sea in fair weather and in winter. Splendid big thoughts. Some like prayers to God. I enjoyed them to the utmost and accept them as great. I'd like to buy some of them.³

Though directed mainly to his painting these evaluations apply also, and perhaps in an even greater degree, to his prints. What impressed admirers perhaps as much as Kent's strong individuality was his versatility. The late Donald Brace, former classmate at Columbia and later publisher of some of Kent's books, said of his association with the artist:

I first met Rockwell Kent more than thirty-five years ago when we were undergraduates at Columbia. Since then I have known men of outstanding accomplishments in various fields, but none who has combined in himself outstanding accomplishments in so many. He is satisfied with nothing but the best, does nothing in halves, and is truly and superbly an all-around man.⁴

Carl Zigrosser, critic and Rockwell's friend, who compiled the first catalog of Kent's prints in *Rockwellkentiana* (1933), and who is now curator emeritus of prints for the Philadelphia Museum of Art, made the following appraisal of Kent as artist, printmaker, and man:

With the rich experience of thirty years of friendship, I hail Rockwell Kent! He has been many things: Painter, writer, printmaker, illustrator, editor, lobsterman, sailor, farmer, dairyman, fighter against injustice, lecturer, speaker, leader of men. This sounds almost like the catalog from "Ballad for Americans." Behind all the, activities is the core of an heroic personality—virile, generous, magnetic, courageous—a real man.⁵

Louis Untermeyer, the poet and anthologist, extolled the multifaceted career of his great friend:

Rockwell Kent is probably the most versatile man alive. Now that I have written this and have remembered Kent's activities, the sentence seems like an understatement. He is so multiple a person as to be multifarious; sometimes (in spite of the physical evidence) I suspect he is not a person at all, but an Organization—possibly The Rockwell Kent Joint and Associated Enterprises, Inc. I have known him as a painter, pamphleteer, poet (in private), politician (a poor one), propagandist, lecturer, explorer, architect (he designed my home in the Adirondacks), grave-digger, farmer, illustrator, Great Dane-breeder, type-designer, xylographer ("wood-engraver" to the uninitiated), friend, and general stimulator. In all these capabilities he has been publicized; he has even attained legendary proportions. Upon his death—and perhaps before that dread event—I look for a book entitled "The Myth of Rockwell Kent."⁶

In 1918-19 Kent and his son spent the better part of a year on Fox Island, Alaska, located twelve miles out from Seward in Resurrection Bay. The artist financed the trip by the ingenious means of selling shares of stock in himself as Rockwell Kent Incorporated. [In fact, it was after his return from Alaska that Kent incorporated himself.—RR] Upon his return, exhibits of his drawings and paintings were mounted at Knoedler's Gallery in New York, and these were so successful that the shares were wholly redeemed. Moreover, Kent gathered his letters and notes from the trip and wrote the successful book *Wilderness* (1920), using the drawings from the exhibition as illustrations. It was at this time, also, that the editors of *Arts and Decoration* magazine asked him to write an article about his creative experience in Alaska. The article, "Alaska Drawings," was printed in the June 1919 issue and is an important piece since it expresses the integrity that was so characteristic of Kent as an artist:

Always I have fought and worked and played with a fierce energy and always as a man of flesh and blood and surging spirit.

I crave snow-topped mountains, dreary wastes

and the cruel northern sea with its hard horizons at the edge of the world where infinite space begins. Here skies are clearer and deeper and, for the greater wonders they reveal, a thousand times more eloquent of the eternal mystery than those of softer lands....

Often I think that however much I draw or paint, or however well, I am not an artist as art is generally understood. The abstract is meaningless to me save as a fragment of the whole, which is life itself. It is the ultimate which concerns me, and all physical, all material things are but an expression of it. Because of this stay in the wilderness I have sensed a fresh unfolding of the mystery of life, and this new wisdom must in some degree have found its way into my life and work....

And so this sojourn in the wilderness is in no sense an artist's junket in search of picturesque material for brush or pencil, but the flight to freedom of a man who detests the endless petty quarrels and the bitterness of the crowded world—the pilgrimage of a philosopher in quest of happiness and peace of mind. Here you have a kind of profession of faith.

A few years after the success of his Alaskan trip, Kent was off again to the wilderness, this time to the extreme southern tip of South America. From this adventure, which he shared with his friend Ole Ytterock, came the book *Voyaging* (1924). In the book Kent describes their travels over the mountains and their voyage to Cape Horn in a small boat. He tells of the deep and lasting impressions the country made on him, and more importantly, he gives his reasons for being an artist and a writer:

Everywhere that I have been I have had enthusiasms and excitements. I have had the excitements of certain little risks I have run, enthusiasm of being where nature was immense, where skies were clear at night, where lands were virginal. I have stood in spots where I have known that I was the first white man who had ever seen that country, that I was the supreme consciousness that came to it. I have liked the thought that maybe there was no existence but in consciousness, and that I was in a sense the creator of that place. And because I have been alone so much and have been moved by what I have seen, I have had to paint

and write about it. And by virtue of that need to paint and write, I am an artist.

In *Rockwellkentianna*, co-authored with Carl Zigrosser, there are reprinted two articles: "Foreword," which was written for a catalog in 1924, and "Of Esthetics," written in 1928. In the latter there appears what is believed to be Kent's artistic credo:

Man can but recreate in human measure that portion of the infinite which he perceives. Every man's entire experience of life is the aesthetic experience of sensual contact; and by the degree of man's immediate sensitivity to such contact rests his inherent right to be an artist. It is that sensitivity, urged to expression by the creative impulse, of which it is perhaps the parent, which determines the artist, and which remains with him as the only guide and rule of beauty in the work he does.

Kent became one of the most noted and popular artists of his time. The resulting monetary rewards enabled him to buy a farm in the Adirondack mountains of northern New York where he designed and built his home and studio. Financial success also allowed him time to write, to travel, to lecture, and to join many organizations dedicated to social and political causes. He was not unaware of the plight of his fellow artists during the Great Depression, and he urged them, in his writing as well as in his lecturing, to adapt their talents to the art of printmaking. In his introduction to the American Institute of Graphic Arts book *Fifty Prints, 1927*, he wrote:

One may say that, as far as art is concerned, all processes are equally difficult or simple. Each yields its proper and different result. And that the artist chooses at all to produce prints rather than drawings is in consideration both of the nature of the result and of the economic necessity of making originals from one design. Printmaking is a democratic art.

Kent makes the point more emphatically in his foreword to the booklet *Printmakers* (1939):

It is now realized, as perhaps never before, that not only does art properly concern itself with the

expression of universal values but that its appeal must be directed to humanity at large. In the new spirit that has come to art, no form of art can be more effective than printmaking. It is the art of multiple originals.

Kent often gave, in his introductions to books and in magazine articles, his own descriptions of the graphic processes used in the making of prints. They were usually short descriptions written for the general reader and for the collector of prints, and they therefore lack the specific details and illustrative matter necessary to instruct the artist in the production of a print. In his introduction to *Fifty Prints, 1927*, mentioned above, Kent gives the following descriptions of the various graphic processes:

Prints may by their processes be divided into three classes of which the following types are best known: the etching, the lithograph and the woodcut.

The etching plate is of metal and the design is etched or eaten into the plate. The plate before printing is completely coated with ink; the ink is then wiped off the surface of the plate but left filling the etched lines. Then the plate is printed, the paper being slightly forced into the ink filled lines to receive the impression. The result is a print in which the design appears in infinitesimal relief. That relief is characteristic of the engraving and the mezzotint.

Lithographs are printed from a stone or porous surfaced plate on which the design has been drawn, or transferred, in a greasy medium which is sympathetic to the ink. The lithograph shows no relief or impression; it is flat.

Woodcuts, or wood block prints, are impressions from blocks the surface of which has been cut away to leave the black lines of the design standing. In wood block prints the design appears as slightly pressed into the paper. Linoleum prints are of the same nature.

In his brief book *How I Make a Woodcut* (1934), illustrated with his own wood engravings, Kent makes a fine distinction between wood engravings and woodcuts:

There are two classes of wood block prints, namely: those for the making of which a side

grain slab of wood, or board, has been used, and those printed from an end grain block. The side grain blocks are cut with a knife or with wood carving tools; the end grain blocks are cut with engraving tools identical with the tools used in engraving on metal. While the method of printing from both kinds of blocks is the same, the considerable technical difference in the cutting of the two types of blocks, yields, properly, so different a result as to warrant the distinguishing terms: woodcuts and wood engravings. The object, however, of the craftsman cutting or engraving either type of block for printing is the same: to remove or lower with his tools that portion of the surface of the block which corresponds to what shall be white lines and leaves the black. How this is done, with what painstaking care, is part of craftsmanship. The technical result that is aimed at is that rare precision and that clean sharp line which cutting with edged tools invites. These qualities combined with the immaculate dead black that printing yields are distinguishing characteristics of good wood block prints.

Good craftsmanship is but a means toward that clear, unbedazzled eloquence which is not art but a part of it. Yet in wood block prints the inescapably definite nature of every step of the technique, from the cutting of the blocks to the printing of them, makes the values of their craftsmanship inseparable from their art. They are a proper medium for the expression of clear uncompromising thought. Love them for that.

In a letter to Professor Marques E. Reitzel of the American College Society of Print Collectors, which had its headquarters in the art department at Ohio State University, Columbus, Kent gives the following description of how his own wood engraved blocks were printed:

Practically all of my prints have been printed from electrotypes of the blocks. Between prints made from an electrotype and prints made from the block itself I have been able to discover no difference, even under the magnifying glass. Using an electrotype insures the original block against such damage to its fine lines as may easily occur despite the vigilance of the printer, and

against the cracking of the block under the pressure that must be applied. Such cracking is a not infrequent occurrence.

For clarification, a few additions are necessary to Kent's paragraphs on the various processes used in the making of prints. The additions concern the linoleum block, the silk-screen (or serigraph), and the direct method of engraving on zinc or copper plates. There are distinctions to be made, too, concerning the various procedures used in the making of lithographic prints, both artistic and commercial.

The linoleum block is made in a manner similar to that used for the woodcut, as the same tools are used for cutting the image or design. These tools are usually gouges and knives, although some solid gravers are also used. The uncut, hence raised areas are left as the image, and all areas and lines not wanted are cut away. The method of printing proofs is the same as that used for the woodcut or wood engraving.

The silk-screen process is a modern development of the old Japanese stencil technique. A silk-screen mesh is stretched on a frame that is hinged to a printing bed. In the blockout method, the unwanted areas of the image are painted out with glue, shellac, or lacquer, leaving those areas of the silk untouched where the paint is to go through to produce the image. Different materials can be used for the mesh, depending on the type and character of the print desired; some of these meshes (silk-screens) are produced by photomechanical process. Kent produced only two known prints by the silkscreen method, print number 130, "Happy Birthday to Me," and the undated print number 156, "Asgaard Dairy Milk," the latter being a poster used in advertising milk from Kent's Asgaard Farm on the Ausable River in the Adirondack mountains of northern New York state.

Kent also did a number of engravings directly on metal. This is an unusual method done somewhat in the manner of the old mapmakers. Kent actually used his wood engraving tools for the cutting in on

zinc or copper plates in the same manner in which he used them in cutting a wood engraving. Unfortunately, it is not known how he routed out the white areas, other than the smaller areas which he did with a burin. His first print made by this process was number 16, "Imperishable," done on a zinc plate; the second was print number 78, "Prometheus," done on a copper plate. The vignettes of the figures on the title pages done for the famous three-volume edition of *Moby Dick* were hand-engraved directly on the copper plates. They also serve as an example of combined techniques because the lettered portions of these title pages were photomechanically reproduced and etched after the hand work was completed on them. Combined techniques were also used in making print number 50, "Invitation to a Tea," where the photomechanical process was used to reproduce a pen-and-ink drawing on a linecut plate and then used in combination with two linoleum block cuts made by Kent and used as the color plates.

Kent made two experimental etchings under the guidance of John Sloan, the famous painter and etcher. An entry in Sloan's journal states that he had given Kent some instructions, tools, and materials that Kent might work on an etching at Monhegan Island, Maine, where he was about to go for a month of painting. The two small etchings, "Mother and Child at Monhegan" and "King Street" ["King Street" was not created by Rockwell Kent—RR], are undated and in this catalog are placed with two other prints, done in different mediums, at the end of the print section (nos. 153-56). Perhaps the first mentioned etching was done on Monhegan Island, and the other, since it appears to be slightly more ambitious, may have been done under Sloan's guidance in New York. Asked why he did not make greater use of the etching process, Kent replied that it neither intrigued him nor seemed applicable or appropriate to any of the drawings he was producing at the time.

Distinctions should be made at this point among the procedures used in the making of lithographic prints, both artistic and commercial. In the

artistic procedure, the artist can make a drawing in reverse with a lithographic crayon on a special transfer paper. This is run under pressure through a press, face down against the stone or plate, producing the image. The image is then "fixed," and the plate or stone is ready for printing proofs. The artist may also make an outline tracing of his drawing, reverse it, dust it with charcoal or carbon crayon powder, trace it on the stone or metal plate, and then complete the drawing or image. After this has been done, the image is fixed and the stones inked with a leather brayer. Dampened paper is placed over the image, and a white blotter and a greased tympan are laid over all for protection as it is run under pressure through the press to produce a proof.

In commercial lithographic offset printing, the drawing or design is photographed and the negative is reversed and exposed onto a sensitized zinc plate. The developing and fixing is the same as in the hand process, but the press is electrically operated. Proofs made from plates produced by this photomechanical process and printed by offset lithography are known as commercial proofs and are not to be confused with the artistic, or hand proofs, pulled by the artist.

In most instances, Kent followed a policy of having the images of his original prints reversed, or reduced in size, when they were commercially reproduced in books. A good example of this can be seen in the reproductions in the limited edition of *Beowulf* (1932). Here the prints were photomechanically reproduced with the images in reverse of the original prints, and they were printed by offset lithography. The colophon of this book reads: "*with eight lithographs by Rockwell Kent,*" when it should read, more correctly, "*with the reproduction of eight lithographs by Rockwell Kent used as illustrations.*" One exception to this rule can be seen in the limited edition of Kent's *N by E* (1930), where electrotypes of the original wood-engraved blocks were used but printed in light gray. The policy of protecting the purchasers of his original prints was strictly adhered to, to guard against the originals' being confused with those photomechanically reproduced and printed by offset lithography. There are, however, a number of books

with which Kent was associated which do contain original prints. These will be discussed further on in this introductory essay.

In the years from 1925 to 1935, despite his painting trips to France and Ireland, Kent produced a considerable number of prints. He had made enough contacts through friends and associates to set up a studio in New York, and there, in addition to work on illustrating the classics and doing a series of drawings for the Marcus Jewelry advertisements, he found time to produce many wood engravings and lithographs. When he was pressed for time to meet schedules, he sought help in the time-consuming task of cutting those parts of lesser importance in the blocks he was engraving for the American Car and Foundry Company. Though he does not state so in his autobiography, *It's Me O Lord* (1955), the young woman student he hired from Frankl Galleries to aid him in his work was Ione Robinson. From her book *A Wall to Paint On* (1946), we learn of her apprenticeship in Kent's studio, and, interestingly enough by way of confirmation, her first work was to assist Kent in the cutting of the above-mentioned blocks. Kent would prepare the finished drawing on the block, and Miss Robinson would cut out the larger open areas indicated by Kent. He would then finish the engraving of the finely detailed areas. The block was then sent to Elmer Adler at Pynson Printers who, according to Kent's instructions, would have an electrotype made of it, pull a number of proofs, store the original block, and send the electrotype along with proofs to Kent. Kent proceeded to make corrections on the electrotype plate with his burin before returning the plate to Adler and having an edition printed.

In *How I Make a Woodcut* Kent actually does not explain how he made a woodcut. Indeed, after making a few in the early years, he abandoned the process—nor does he tell us how he made a wood engraving. Rather he tells us what usually inspired him and led him to produce a print:

Almost every Sunday night in summer, here in the Adirondack mountains, we—our family and friends—go upon a picnic. Our picnic ground is

invariably a certain field of an abandoned mountain farm, from which, seated among those memorials of man's transitory tenure on earth, the moss grown stones of old foundations, we contemplate those universal symbols of immutability: the mountains and the starlit heavens. Yet so happy are the auspices, each other's company, under which we there convene, and so vast the self containedness of the immensity that is our spectacle, that we are under no constraint to solemn mood or bound to partake of that too lavish *table d'hôte* but in such little portions as from time to time we separately or collectively incline to. The firelight, the darkness and the stars: no wonder if to some of us there comes the recollection of some poet's lines; or to another merely "Gee, it's swell"; or that some other with a soul "not less therefore divine" says nothing and thinks less, content—but singularly so—to be. No wonder if the recollections of the night remain; nor that Monday morning finds the artist of the party re-invoking to himself its mood and trying with his pencil to recapture it.

Yet the problem is not alone the recreation of those natural elements of last night's scene—night, mountains, stones, and stars—that has so moved him, but of the mood itself, how man reacted there that night to that environment. That is the problem, and he draws—a man.

Kent was most fortunate in the selection of his printers. His first lithograph, "Father and Son," was printed in a small edition of twenty-five proofs pulled by Bolton Brown, the famous teacher and lithographer who wrote the book *Lithography for Artists* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929). From 1926 to 1950, George Miller printed all of Kent's lithographs. After 1950 he was aided by his son, Burr Miller, who still carries on in the same tradition of fine workmanship as did his late father. The last lithographs printed by this father and son team were for *Greenland Journal* (1962). This series of six lithographs was printed from stone in very small trial proof editions of five and fifteen prints. The reason for this limitation is not known, unless Kent, after the book's publication, had intended to have them printed up in regular editions or to have a portfolio made up of them and to issue it later under

the imprint of his own Asgaard Press. For the book, these six lithographs were photomechanically reproduced with reversed images and printed by offset lithography. They were included in a small portfolio issued with the limited edition of the book. The first print of each portfolio was signed by Kent; all have facsimile titles, and the remaining five have facsimile signatures as well. These reproductions of lithographs did not, unfortunately, appear in the trade edition of the book.

Kent was no less fortunate in his choice of printers for his wood engravings. His first [second—RR] print, "Bluebird," was printed in 1919 under the supervision of Rudolph Ruzicka at William A. Rudge and Sons. His second print, which was in two colors, was printed under the supervision of T. M. Cleland at the Knickerbocker Press in 1924. After 1924, Kent was associated with Elmer Adler of Pynson Printers of New York. This relationship lasted until Adler closed Pynson Printers in the early 1940s and went to Princeton University, where he became advisor to the Department of Graphic Arts. During their fifteen or more years of close association, Adler printed or supervised the printing of all of Kent's wood engravings. As has already been noted, these blocks were printed by letterpress from electrotypes made from the original blocks. After an edition was printed, both the original block and the electrotype were sent to Kent for cancellation. Both the wood engraved block and the electrotype block made for print number 111, "Workers of the World, Unite!" were canceled and are now in the collection of the Art Department of Ohio State University at Columbus; and the canceled block of print number 93, "Mountain Climber," is in the print collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art.

After 1940, Kent sought a new printer for his wood engravings, and finally Abe Colish of A. Colish, Inc., New York, was recommended and took on the printing of his blocks. This firm carried on in the same manner of fine printing as did Pynson Printers. In 1955, when, after Mr. Colish's death, the shop was moved to Mt. Vernon, N.Y., this firm continued to do Kent's printing. Print number 55,

"Hail and Farewell," appeared as a reproduction in reduced size as the frontispiece for Kent's book *After Long Years* (1968).

All of Kent's graphic works were printed on fine quality paper from Japan, France, Holland, or Italy. Most of the wood engravings were printed on paper from Japan, or watermarked "Japan"; and most of the lithographs were printed on an all-rag or a high content rag paper from France. Sheets of paper of this quality come in fairly large sizes with the watermarks running along the edges or in one corner edge. The size of the print and the place it was cut from the larger sheet determine whether or not it will have a watermark. Watermarks are given in most instances, unless no confirmation was found.

Although we are here mainly concerned with Kent as a printmaker, his other activities and abilities affected and entered into their creation. When profoundly moved, either by the happenings on his far-flung travels or by his political and social beliefs, the elements generated by that emotion were, more often than not, visually represented in his prints. From the sketches made on his travels, from his beliefs in the great social causes of his time, indeed, from all that he did and thought, the effects can be plainly seen in his prints, whether examined singly or as a group. In an introduction he wrote for an old undated catalog, Kent said:

Loving the mountains and the sea, and feeling more at ease, at home in unfrequented places, I have traveled far, having adventures but not seeking them, finding such country as my soul delighted in and friendships that will ever warm my heart. The arts, born of experience and its enrichment of the mind and the heart being to me essentially a means—and only that of sharing with others what we may have learned and loved of life. It is demanding of us, those who follow any calling of the arts. It is demanding of us that truly and deeply respectful of people, we do our utmost to be fully understood.

The early prints of man and the sea came out of his experiences on Monhegan Island, Maine, and the depth of their perception and their beauty can be

seen in such prints as “Boatman,” “Home Port,” and “Godspeed.” The finely done small lithograph “Father and Son,” and many of the poetic and philosophical type prints, are directly traceable to some of Kent’s best drawings made during his sojourn on Fox Island, Alaska, with his seven year old son, Rockwell, Jr., and where, as has been said, he wrote one of his best and most beautifully illustrated books, *Wilderness* (1920). It was on Fox Island, too, that he first ventured into wood engraving, the results of a number of which can be seen in Appendix 1.

At various times, Kent journeyed to Newfoundland, France, Ireland, Puerto Rico, and South America, all of which journeys whetted his desire for further travel, finally culminating in a series of trips and long stays in Greenland. The many prints drawn from his Greenland experiences depict a fresh awareness attended by the newness of the discovery of the people and the rugged landscape of this far north country. They are of great ethnographic and geographic interest, as few artists have ventured to such a cold and barren place to paint, draw, and write about the people and the country. In his prints of Greenland, Kent, being a realist, displayed the Eskimo at work and at play, in daily and holiday dress, in kayaks and sledges used for traveling and hunting; and all were pictured with the sea and the icebergs, and with a backdrop of snow-capped mountains—all faithfully depicted in the rugged beauty of that stark and monumental environment.

Of equal importance are those prints which show a strong social consciousness and reflect Kent’s political beliefs and the actions associated with them. His political activism placed him, frequently, in the forefront of social causes. He wrote and illustrated many political tracts and articles, and the energy and devotion stimulated new prospects for the subject matter of his prints. He ran for Congress—and lost—on the Progressive party ticket headed by Henry Wallace; he was called before the McCarthy Senate Investigating Committee [Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations] and stood his ground, as an American artist and a fighting liberal; and he fought his case against the State Department

on the “right to travel”—fought it all the way to the Supreme Court—and won. And he made lithographs such as “It Is Later Than You Think,” “The Smith Act,” “Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Liberty,” and “Glory, Glory, Hallelujah,” to celebrate his protests against these violations of his personal liberty. And yet these prints somehow also reflect a personal satisfaction and happiness in being able to return to his work when these trials and tribulations were over and done with. From all that he experienced, he drew the most striking imagery of which he was capable and portrayed it with a determined forthrightness, and with great strength and beauty. There has been considerable discussion concerning the mysticism, symbolism, and poetic qualities found in Kent’s prints. In his autobiography, *It’s Me O Lord*, he covers some of these subjects in detail:

In many of my engravings and lithographs, and in much of my work in black and white, people have inclined to find a mystic quality that is so obviously at variance with my own proclaimed belief in realism, and my fundamental disbelief in Deity, as to deserve consideration. Mysticism, to begin with, is not subject to easy definition, for it is premised on the belief of an omnipresent unifying principle or spirit that by its own illusiveness is indefinable and inaccessible to understanding. I believe that all things can, and some day will, be understood. I believe in Man as the supreme consciousness; and in the arts as the supreme expression of his spirit.

Symbolism is quite other than mysticism. As an expedient of expression it is unrelated per se to any faith, serving in general merely to lend concrete form to mental concepts or to phenomena not otherwise apparent. In my own work I have often employed symbols—notably in the many drawings in which, in literal acceptance of a term of speech, I have shown soaring figures. And when, to those figures, I have chosen to give wings, it is through no belief in the existence of celestial beings but rather as a rationalization of mid-air suspension—mixed, perhaps, with a little bit of wishful thinking (pp. 424-25).

Writers and critics have remarked that the prints invariably tell a story, have a mystical symbol-

ism inherent in them (though, as seen above, Kent denies the mysticism), are often romantic in subject matter, realistic in portrayal, philosophical in import, variable in mood and, in many instances, have a poetic atmosphere. In his autobiography Kent makes it clear that he enjoyed reading poetry and that Scott, Wordsworth, and Shelley were among his favorites. Occasionally he himself composed poetry, for the inscriptions he wrote in books, or for gatherings or dinner celebrations for friends. Still, his forte was prose, as the many books written about his travels give evidence. There is, however, one prose poem he wrote which is not without some distinct measure of poetic merit. On the invitation to an exhibition of his watercolors at Weyhe Gallery in New York, there is beneath the wood engraving “Supplication” the following text:

Of rain and sunshine and the earth, of all lesser moving things, is man the flower and the consciousness; of sea and mountain, of the starlit space of night, of the beauty of all things—and their mystery, is his spirit born; of that spirit God is the emanation.

In the special author’s edition of *N by E* there is a separate tipped-in page with a hand-lettered poem by Kent in four stanzas and the reproduction of a pen-and-ink drawing made especially to illustrate it. This drawing was later used as the inspiration for the lithograph “Hero” (no. 69).

Various poets have found inspiration in Kent’s prints, as did Marjorie Meeker in her poem “For Rockwell Kent’s “Twilight of Man,”” Robert Cameron Rogers in his “Night Watch,” and Ann Batchelder in her “And Women Must Weep.” The subject matter and the choice of words, the mood, the symbolism employed, and the narrative elements of these poems reflect the subject matter and mood of the prints for which they were named.

It is of interest to note, too, that Kent’s prints were often selected to illustrate collections of poetry or single poems in magazines. The lithograph “Foreboding,” for example, was used to illustrate Edna St. Vincent Millay’s “Elaine,” which appeared

in *Vanity Fair*. The wood engraving “Flame” appeared with Louis Untermeyer’s poem “Faith” in *The Book of Noble Thoughts* (1946), which Untermeyer also edited. The epic poem *Beowulf*, in the William Ellery Leonard translation published by Random House (1932), was illustrated throughout with reproductions of Kent’s lithographs. The original signed lithograph “Waldo Peirce” was used as the frontispiece in the rare book *Unser Kent* (1930), written by Peirce, Kent’s painter friend. This book of ribald quatrains by Peirce was withdrawn after twelve copies had been issued because of the typographical errors it contained. However, the folio sheet on which the lithograph was printed was salvaged and was used in the corrected second printing of his private publication. *City Child* (1931), written by Selma Robinson, has as its frontispiece the original lithograph “Farewell.” The other illustrations in this book are reproductions of drawings done by Kent in pen and ink. Other outstanding examples of Kent’s combined illustrative technique of pen, brush, and ink work—though sometimes confused with artistic prints—can be found in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1936) and *The Canterbury Tales of Geoffrey Chaucer* (New York: Covici-Friede, 1930).

The subject in a Kent print may be political; it may have a definite geographical location; it may be philosophical or poetic in mood; but what predominates—what is in fact the strongest feature—is the storytelling quality. The prints tell their stories in a forthright manner, with economy and precision of line and tone, with dignity and force; and they are unencumbered by any of the incommunicable aspects of abstractionism so abhorrent to him. In his article “Art and the People,” which appeared in the November 1943 *Christian Register Unitarian*, Kent has a paragraph which is relevant to this thought:

I have said that I don’t know what form art will take. But I can guess. It will have, I guess, realism, or representation, as its basis, and it will do that despised thing that was done by all the great masters of the Renaissance; it will tell

stories. Artists, like the writers of novels, will depend for interest on their narrative; and the stories will have to be different ones from what the surrealists are telling.

Kent adapted two of the printmaking processes, wood engraving and lithography, to advertising and illustration. One series of twelve engravings was done for advertisements for the American Car and Foundry Company, and they appeared in a number of the trade and popular magazines of the early 1930s. In most cases the reproductions covered the top half of the page, with the title, medium, and artist's name directly under the wood engraving reproduced. Some, however, were full-page, and carried the same format. There was no advertising text other than the firm's name, which was spread across the bottom of the page. The furor caused at the time in advertising circles was later defused by Kent's winning awards for them. In the October 1, 1933, issue of *Polity* magazine, Willard Loarie had this to say of this series of twelve prints:

Contemporary American artists are proud to have in their membership the brilliant modern master, Rockwell Kent, whose distinctive style of graphic delineations in any medium in which he finds expression is a decided departure from all that has gone before.

One instance where there was no conflict between his ideas and those of an advertiser is the example of the American Car and Foundry Company, who, through their advertising agency, Calkins and Holden, sought out this genius of chiaroscuro as being the most suitable artist both from the standpoint of ability and temperament to portray the spirit of this organization on the pages of the current publications. Mr. Kent's beautiful woodcuts created an impression on the public for the American Car and Foundry account which never could have been achieved with the written word alone.

The essence of moral independence so characteristic of the man is reflected throughout his work. The pure simplicity and direct beauty of his woodcuts and woodcut technique tell the story of a philosophical approach that belongs to a strong individual—a man who has made a righteous

decision in the face of strife and with the calm detachment and utter sanity that marks the poet.

A number of this series of wood engravings done for the American Car and Foundry Company were also used, along with other illustrations, in both the limited and trade editions of Kent's *N by E*. Six lithographs were done for the United States Pipe and Foundry Company in the early 1940s, and they appeared in advertisements in a number of trade journals. Titles do not appear on the advertising reproductions, and only two of the six prints in the series, which were found in the artist's files after his death, have written titles. The Philadelphia Museum of Art has the only known complete set of this series of prints, and they also are without titles.

Kent was one of the best-known illustrators of his time. Though his illustrative work was done mostly in black-and-white, he was as popular as N. C. Wyeth, whose primary work in illustration was done in color. Kent illustrated many of the classics, and it is because of this that his work reached such a large audience. Some of the editions he illustrated are still in print today, namely, Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Heritage Press, 1936), and the two classics already mentioned, the *Complete Works of William Shakespeare* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The illustrations for the Shakespeare were done with pencils, the dead blacks being touched-up with pen, brush, and India ink. For making his lithographic prints Kent used lithographic pencils and crayons and liquid lithographic tusche combined with hand rubbing and scraping with a razor blade. The drawings done in these two mediums may look alike, but they are produced by entirely different processes. To produce a lithographic print the artist makes his drawing directly on the stone, "fixes" it, and makes his prints by hand. Carbon crayon drawings are made on art paper or illustration board, and are photo-mechanically reproduced and printed by offset lithography or letterpress printing. One is definitely an artist's process; the other is strictly commercial. Kent's pen-and-ink drawings used for illustrative purposes have sometimes been confused with his

wood engravings. Perhaps it is the distinctive elements of his style and the imprint of it carrying over into the various mediums of black-and-white that have led some critics and laymen, lacking a knowledge of these mediums and methods, to be unable to distinguish between them when comparisons are made.

Years after she had worked in Kent's studio, when in fact she had become an artist in her own right, Ione Robinson heard Kent speak for the Spanish Republican cause—it was during the Spanish Civil War. She remembered him saying at the time that artists should be active in movements against war, for artists of all people in the world are most concerned with life, and that it was by virtue of their love of life that men were artists. She thought Kent a curious mixture of romantic dreamer and practical craftsman, and was happy in the thought that her working under his direction in his studio had disciplined her as a student. She did not care too much for his painting but considered him as revolutionizing the art of illustration in America. And while he seemed to her to be always getting himself out on a limb to defend what he believed in art and politics, this she thought was conditioned by his love of country; for she had never known any artist who loved America as much as Kent did. Alice Dixon Bond, the writer, held somewhat the same opinion when she wrote, in a review of *This Is My Own* in the *Boston Herald*, that one could only imagine the magnitude of Kent's devotion to his America, for it was a love of country which held in its depths the deeper love of humanity, and that Kent realized the essential kinship of all humankind. Kent's love of art, of people, of all humanity, and his great love of country are found scattered throughout his own writings and, as has been mentioned above, in the writings of those who have written, reviewed, and reported on him.

One of his ideas on art was that we should preserve all the different strands of culture that had come into the making of our country, and make the culture of America more like a tapestry, woven of

brilliantly colored threads, every one of which could be distinguished and thereby keep its own characteristics. He had a feeling—and it was a strong one—that it would make for a richer and more beautiful America if the arts of these cultures were kept alive. His main objective in the arts was to bring more beauty to people—or, in other words, to bring more people to appreciate the beauty of their world and their fellow men as being the one supremely worthy purpose of the arts. His love of people and of his native land is expressed in the epilogue of his book *This is My Own*, where he closes with these words:

In this country that is my own, on Asgaard that's my own, I live. Here in America leave me and mine and all Americans at peace. Here and not elsewhere let us die, that here at last each of us may claim six feet of native soil and on his headstone carve: *THIS IS MY OWN*.

At this point something should be said about Appendix 2, "Print Patterns and Designs for Cloth." As has been noted, Kent ventured into many fields of artistic endeavor, and among these were ceramics, silk screen designs for draperies and scarves, and lithography as adapted to book bindings. While some of these activities do not directly relate to printmaking, a number do, as they actually employed the artistic processes used in the making of prints. One example of this can be seen in print number 82, "A Birthday Book," which was used for the binding of the book bearing the same title, and it was actually printed by the hand lithographic process. While other items listed in Appendix 2 do not fit into a tight conception of the hand-printed category, it was thought, since enough hand work was done in the repeated drapery patterns necessary to making the complete designs and corrections on the cylinders used for the printing of the various colors, that they could be included as a supplementary feature related to the wider aspects of printing.

The primary objective in researching and compiling this work was to provide a ready reference tool not only for all those interested in the prints of Rockwell

Acknowledgments

Kent but for all those associated in any way with the world of prints. The earlier catalog, compiled in 1933 by Carl Zigrosser, has been completely revised with the help and the approval of Mr. Zigrosser, and any corrections and emendations found necessary were made. Whereas the earlier catalog contained 88 prints known at the time of compilation, the present catalog includes 156, plus, in the appendixes, numerous lesser prints, pattern designs for textiles, and prints made from drawings for woodcuts done in collaboration with the woodcut artist J. J. Lankes.

Each print has been covered as an entity in itself and all data related to it are organized as a self-contained unit. This plan of presentation has necessitated some repetition, but from the point of view of research and reference, the plan provides a necessary unifying factor. The repetition becomes especially noticeable in the listings of prints issued in a series, such as those done for Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1929) and *Beowulf* (1932), and for those used in advertising for the United States Pipe and Foundry Company and the American Car and Foundry Company. This unity in the presentation of each item will, it is hoped, contribute to a clearer and fuller understanding of the particular print catalogued.

Following the practice of many museums, galleries, and print dealers, the present catalog gives the title, the medium, the size, the date, the number of proofs in the edition, the known locations of sketches and drawings related to the prints, known watermarks, reproductions and writings of interest related to the print, and lastly, collections. There were, here and there, some variations from this procedure, but only when the nature of the material demanded it; otherwise this general plan has been followed throughout. Variations are noted between the top and bottom measurements of a print, and other irregularities, such as saw marks along the edges of the blocks; and corners rounded or angled have also been noted.

¹ *International Studio*, December, 1920.

² Quoted in *Biographical Sketches of American Artists* (Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State Library, 1924), pp. 176-77.

³ *John Sloan's New York Scene*, ed. Bruce St. John (New York: Harper & Row, 1965) entry for April 13, 1907.

⁴ *American Artists Honors at a Testimonial Dinner: Rockwell Kent* (New York: United American Artists, 1941), p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶ *American Book Collector*, Summer 1964.

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number of visits were made to check the late artist's own collection at his Asgaard Farm near Ausable Forks, N.Y. In addition, museums both here and abroad were contacted, as well as galleries, libraries, and a number of private collectors known to have a fairly extensive number of Kent prints. Also, an author's query was placed in *The New York Times Book Review*, appearing on July 9, 1972, to locate additional preliminary sketches and drawings related to the prints. This proved a valuable method of enquiry, as much source material was gleaned by this generous and public spirited practice offered by *The New York Times* to scholars seeking a wider field of research for the projection of their endeavors.

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