

= Freedom from Want (painting) =

Freedom from Want , also known as The Thanksgiving Picture or I 'll Be Home for Christmas , is the third of the Four Freedoms series of four oil paintings by American artist Norman Rockwell . The works were inspired by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt 's 1941 State of the Union Address , known as Four Freedoms .

The painting was created in November 1942 and published in the March 6 , 1943 issue of The Saturday Evening Post . All of the people in the picture were friends and family of Rockwell in Arlington , Vermont , who were photographed individually and painted into the scene . The work depicts a group of people gathered around a dinner table for a holiday meal . Having been partially created on Thanksgiving Day to depict the celebration , it has become an iconic representation of the Thanksgiving holiday and family holiday gatherings in general . The Post published Freedom from Want with a corresponding essay by Carlos Bulosan as part of the Four Freedoms series . Despite many who endured sociopolitical hardships abroad , Bulosan 's essay spoke on behalf of those enduring the socioeconomic hardships domestically , and it thrust him into prominence .

The painting has had a wide array of adaptations , parodies , and other uses , such as for the cover for the 1946 book Norman Rockwell , Illustrator . Although the image was popular at the time in the United States and remains so , it caused resentment in Europe where the masses were enduring wartime hardship . Artistically , the work is highly regarded as an example of mastery of the challenges of white @-@ on @-@ white painting and as one of Rockwell 's most famous works .

= = Background = =

Freedom from Want is the third in a series of four oil paintings entitled Four Freedoms by Norman Rockwell . They were inspired by Franklin D. Roosevelt 's State of the Union Address , known as Four Freedoms , delivered to the 77th United States Congress on January 6 , 1941 . In the early 1940s , Roosevelt 's Four Freedoms themes were still vague and abstract to many , but the government used them to help boost patriotism . The Four Freedoms ' theme was eventually incorporated into the Atlantic Charter , and it became part of the charter of the United Nations . The series of paintings ran in The Saturday Evening Post accompanied by essays from noted writers on four consecutive weeks : Freedom of Speech (February 20) , Freedom of Worship (February 27) , Freedom from Want (March 6) , and Freedom from Fear (March 13) . Eventually , the series was widely distributed in poster form and became instrumental in the U.S. Government War Bond Drive .

= = Description = =

The illustration is an oil painting on canvas , measuring 45 @. @ 75 by 35 @. @ 5 inches (116 @. @ 2 cm x 90 @. @ 2 cm) . The Norman Rockwell Museum describes it as a story illustration for The Saturday Evening Post , complementary to the theme , but the image is also an autonomous visual expression .

The painting shows an aproned matriarch presenting a roasted turkey to a family of several generations , in Rockwell 's idealistic presentation of family values . The patriarch looks on with fondness and approval from the head of the table , which is the central element of the painting . Its creased tablecloth shows that this is a special occasion for " sharing what we have with those we love " , according to Lennie Bennett . The table has a bowl of fruit , celery , pickles , and what appears to be cranberry sauce . There is a covered silver serving dish that would traditionally hold potatoes , according to Richard Halpern , but Bennett describes this as a covered casserole dish . The servings are less prominent than the presentation of white linen , white plates and water @-@ filled glasses . The people in the painting are not yet eating , and the painting contrasts the empty plates and vacant space in their midst with images of overabundance .

= = Production = =

In mid @-@ June Rockwell sketched in charcoal the Four Freedoms and sought commission from the Office of War Information (OWI) . He was rebuffed by an official who said , " The last war , you illustrators did the posters . This war , we 're going to use fine arts men , real artists . " However , Saturday Evening Post editor , Ben Hibbs , recognized the potential of the set and encouraged Rockwell to produce them right away . By early fall , the authors for the Four Freedoms had submitted their essays . Rockwell was concerned that Freedom from Want did not match Bulosan 's text . In mid @-@ November , Hibbs wrote Rockwell pleading that he not scrap his third work to start over . Hibbs alleviated Rockwell 's thematic concern ; he explained that the illustrations only needed to address the same topic rather than be in unison . Hibbs pressured Rockwell into completing his work by warning him that the magazine was on the verge of being compelled by the government to place restrictions on four @-@ color printing , so Rockwell had better get the work published before relegation to halftone printing .

In 1942 , Rockwell decided to use neighbors as models for the series . In Freedom from Want , he used his living room for the setting and relied on neighbors for advice , critical commentary , and their service as his models . For Freedom from Want , Rockwell photographed his cook as she presented the turkey on Thanksgiving Day 1942 . He said that he painted the turkey on that day and that , unlike Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Worship , this painting was not difficult to execute . Rockwell 's wife Mary is in this painting , and the family cook , Mrs. Thaddeus Wheaton , is serving the turkey , which the Rockwell family ate that day . The nine adults and two children depicted were photographed in Rockwell 's studio and painted into the scene later . The models are (clockwise from Wheaton) Lester Brush , Florence Lindsey , Rockwell 's mother Nancy , Jim Martin , Mr. Wheaton , Mary Rockwell , Charles Lindsey , and the Hoisington children . Jim Martin appears in all four paintings in the series . Shirley Hoisington , the girl at the end of the table , was six at the time .

After the Four Freedoms series ran in The Saturday Evening Post , the magazine made sets of reproductions available to the public and received 25 @,@ 000 orders . Additionally the OWI , which six months earlier had declined to employ Rockwell to promote the Four Freedoms , requested 2 @.@ 5 million sets of posters featuring the Four Freedoms for its war @-@ bond drive in early 1943 .

Rockwell bequeathed this painting to a custodianship that became the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge , Massachusetts , and it is now part of the museum 's permanent collection . Rockwell lived in Stockbridge from 1953 until his death in 1978 .

= = Reactions = =

Freedom from Want is considered one of Rockwell 's finest works . Of the four paintings in the Four Freedoms , it is the one most often seen in art books with critical review and commentary . Although all were intended to promote patriotism in a time of war , Freedom from Want became a symbol of " family togetherness , peace , and plenty " , according to Linda Rosenkrantz , who compares it to " a ' Hallmark ' Christmas " . Embodying nostalgia for an enduring American theme of holiday celebration , the painting is not exclusively associated with Thanksgiving , and is sometimes known as I 'll Be Home for Christmas . The abundance and unity it shows were the idyllic hope of a post @-@ war world , and the image has been reproduced in various formats .

During the Cold War , Rockwell 's images affirmed traditional American values , depicting Americans as prosperous and free . Rockwell 's work came to be categorized within art movements and styles such as Regionalism and American scene painting . Rockwell 's work sometimes displays an idealized vision of America 's rural and agricultural past . Rockwell summed up his own idealism : " I paint life as I would like it to be . "

Despite Rockwell 's general optimism , he had misgivings about having depicted such a large turkey when much of Europe was " starving , overrun [and] displaced " as World War II raged . Rockwell noted that this painting was not popular in Europe : " The Europeans sort of resented it because it wasn 't freedom from want , it was overabundance , the table was so loaded down with food . " Outside the United States , this overabundance was the common perception . However ,

Richard Halpern says the painting not only displays overabundance of food , but also of " family , conviviality , and security " , and opines that " overabundance rather than mere sufficiency is the true answer to want . " He parallels the emotional nourishment provided by the image to that of the food nourishment that it depicts , remarking that the picture is noticeably inviting . However , by depicting the table with nothing but empty plates and white dishes on white linen , Rockwell may have been invoking the Puritan origins of the Thanksgiving holiday .

To art critic Robert Hughes , the painting represents the theme of family continuity , virtue , homeliness , and abundance without extravagance in a Puritan tone , as confirmed by the modest beverage choice of water . Historian Lizabeth Cohen says that by depicting this freedom as a celebration in the private family home rather than a worker with a job or a government protecting the hungry and homeless , Rockwell suggests that ensuring this freedom was not as much a government responsibility as something born from participation in the mass consumer economy .

One of the notable and artistically challenging elements of the image is Rockwell 's use of white @-@ on @-@ white : white plates sitting on a white tablecloth . Art critic Deborah Solomon describes this as " one of the most ambitious plays of white @-@ against @-@ white since Whistler 's *Symphony in White* , No. 1 " . Solomon further describes the work as " a new level of descriptive realism . Yet , the painting doesn 't feel congested or fussy ; it is open and airy in the center . Extensive passages of white paint nicely frame the individual faces . "

Jim Martin , positioned in the lower right , gives a coy and perhaps mischievous glance back at the viewer . He is a microcosm of the entire scene in which no one appears to be giving thanks in a traditional manner of a Thanksgiving dinner . Solomon finds it a departure from previous depictions of Thanksgiving in that the participants do not lower their heads or raise their hands in the traditional poses of prayer . She sees it as an example of treating American traditions in both sanctified and casual ways . Theologian David Brown sees gratitude as implicit in the painting , while Kenneth Bendiner writes that Rockwell was mindful of the Last Supper and that the painting 's perspective echoes its rendition by Tintoretto .

= = Essay = =

Freedom from Want was published with an essay by Carlos Bulosan as part of the Four Freedoms series . Bulosan 's essay spoke on behalf of those enduring domestic socioeconomic hardships rather than sociopolitical hardships abroad , and it thrust him into prominence . As he neared his thirtieth birthday , the Philippine immigrant and labor organizer Bulosan was experiencing a life that was not consistent with the theme Rockwell depicted in his version of Freedom From Want . Unknown as a writer , he was subsisting as a migrant laborer working intermittent jobs . Post editors tracked down the impoverished immigrant to request an essay contribution . Bulosan rose to prominence during World War II when the Commonwealth of the Philippines , a United States territory , was occupied by Japan . To many Americans , Bulosan 's essay marked his introduction , and his name was thereafter well recognized . The essay was lost by The Post , and Bulosan , who had no carbon copy , had to track down the only draft of the essay at a bar in Tacoma .

Freedom From Want had previously been less entwined in the standard liberalism philosophies of the western world than the other three freedoms (speech , fear , and religion) ; this freedom added economic liberty as a societal aspiration . In his essay , Bulosan treats negative liberties as positive liberties by suggesting that Americans be " given equal opportunity to serve themselves and each other according to their needs and abilities " , an echo of Karl Marx 's " from each according to his abilities , to each according to his needs " . In the final paragraph of the essay , the phrase " The America we hope to see is not merely a physical but also a spiritual and intellectual world " describes an egalitarian America . In a voice likened to Steinbeck 's in works such as *The Grapes of Wrath* , Bulosan 's essay spoke up for those who struggled to survive in the capitalist democracy and was regarded as " haunting and sharp " against the backdrop of Rockwell 's feast of plenty . It proposed that while citizens had obligations to the state , the state had an obligation to provide a basic level of subsistence . Unlike Roosevelt , Bulosan presented the case that the New Deal had not already granted freedom from want as it did not guarantee Americans the essentials of life .

= = Pop culture = =

The painting was used as the 1946 book cover for Norman Rockwell , Illustrator , written during the prime of Rockwell 's career when he was regarded as America 's most popular illustrator . This image 's iconic status has led to parody and satire . New York painter Frank Moore re @-@ created Rockwell 's all @-@ white Americans with an ethnically diverse family , as Freedom to Share (1994) , in which the turkey platter brims over with health care supplies . Among the better known reproductions is Mickey and Minnie Mouse entertaining their cartoon family with a festive turkey . Several political cartoons and even frozen vegetable advertisements have invoked this image .

A snapshot at the end of the 2002 Walt Disney Feature Animation film Lilo & Stitch shows the movie 's characters , including some clearly alien life forms , seated at a Thanksgiving table that echoes the painting . The painting was also featured in the May 16 , 2012 , season 3 " Tableau Vivant " episode of the comedy series , Modern Family . Another well @-@ known imitation of the work is the cover art to Tony Bennett 's 2008 Christmas album , A Swingin ' Christmas (Featuring The Count Basie Big Band) . The parody includes all 13 members of Count Basie 's band .