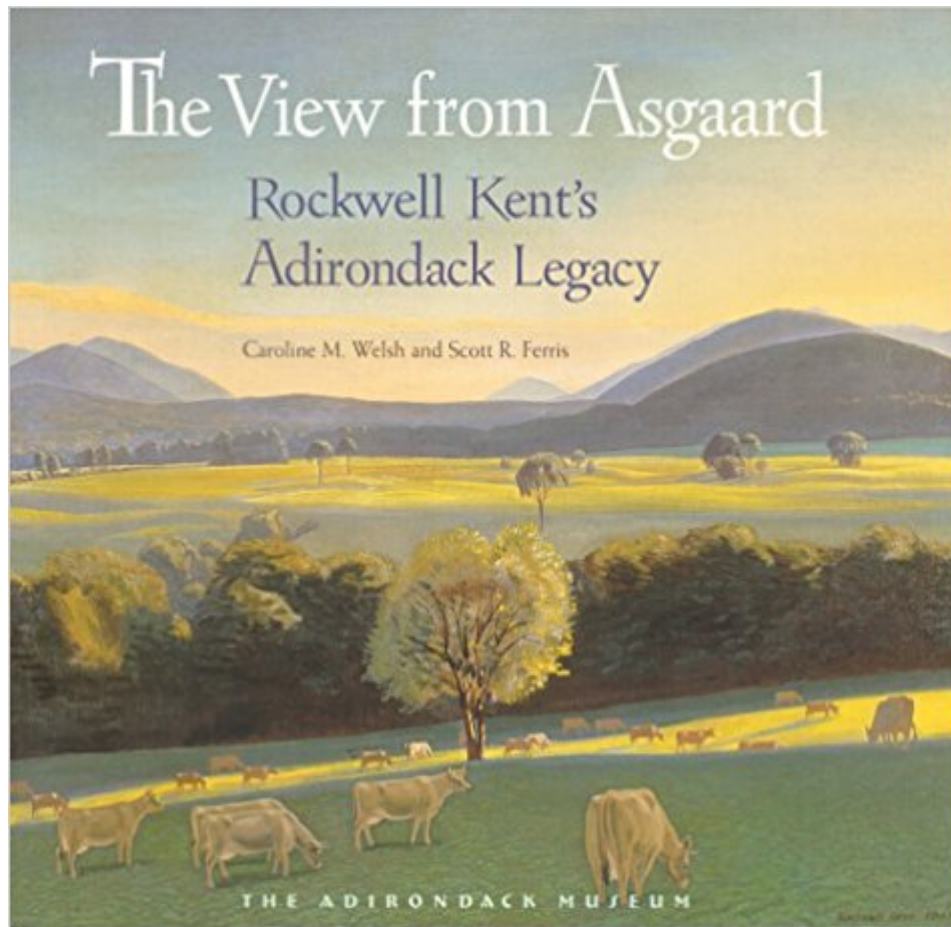




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The View From Asgaard: Rockwell Kent's Adirondack Legacy



Synopsis

In keeping with a renewed interest in the American artist Rockwell Kent (1882-1971), this book for the first time in the literature focuses solely on Kent's Adirondack art. Essays define the man and his art, emphasizing the breadth of his activities over forty-three years in northern New York and the role played by the Adirondack Wilderness landscape as inspiration and refuge in his life and creative work. Illustrated throughout the text, this volume contributes to Kent scholarship by identifying and interpreting Kent's known Adirondack oeuvre. The bibliography cites national as well as regional sources. This book accompanies an exhibit of the same title installed at the Adirondack Museum until October, 2000.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This was a really thin, flimsy book for \$85.00. I was expecting a hard cover. I would not recommend this book unless it's \$20 or less.

In the graceful Adirondack mountains, Rockwell Kent bought farmland, built a house and barn and set up his studio for painting. He named the place "Asgaard," Norse for "farm of the gods." Operating from this spot he painted exquisite landscapes of the region, many of which the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake, NY, has compiled into an exhibit in keeping with its mandate "to preserve and interpret the cultural history of its region." Although it was designed to supplement the exhibit, this book stands strong and worthy in its own right. It contains an excellent, 19-page biography of Kent, probing his idealistic nature and strong political beliefs which time and

again got him in trouble with (1) his dairy customers, who deserted him, (2) the federal government, which lifted his passport, and (3) Sen. Joseph McCarthy, who grilled him in public hearings. The biography of this very complex man is skillfully assembled by Caroline Welsh. Her co-author Scott Ferris writes a fascinating 23-page detailed essay on the spiritual Kent -- how his paintings reflect powerful social forces that drove him. Ferris discusses the allegorical nature of Kent's pictures, especially in relation to political events, including World War II and the dreadful cold war with Russia. The book itself is beautiful: printed on heavy, coated stock, with clear pictures in color on virtually every page. Most are 3 1/4" x 4 1/2" in size, varnished to add extra sparkle for the reader. For those who wish to dig more deeply into the life of this remarkable man, Ferris provides a selected checklist of his Adirondack works with detailed notes on every entry (including Adirondack paintings not in the museum exhibit). He also lists Kent's books, drawings and prints, and five pages of selected references for further reading. -- Allen Long, Arlington, VA.

This comprehensive overview of the life of Rockwell Kent in the Adirondacks is part of a much needed revival on this incredible American Renaissance man. Some of the pastoral/mountain scenes are particularly well reproduced. Many of these works were gathered for this exhibit from individuals and some on loan from Russia. Kent's association with the Soviets caused a virtual artistic rejection from his American art world. The book is small, and unfortunately only in paperback, but the color is excellent. The documentation and historical data is accurate and engaging. This book is the first effort to group Kent's Adirondack paintings. The layout is lovely and the book has an intimate feel to it. The book also showcases some of his well known and not so well known illustrations. The book reminds us that Kent was also an adept typographer, as he was a consummate graphic artist. Some of his Adirondack inspired graphics reflect the "back to the land" sensibility he embodied. I also had the opportunity to hear Ms. Welsh (author, historian) in person at the Adirondack museum where many of the paintings have been for the last year (1999-2000). She is an astute scholar and admirable expert on Mr. Kent. Kent is sure to find a more secure place in art history, now that he has once again gained recognition for his energetic and artistic art spirit. Welcome back Rockwell, it's about time.

"The View from Asgaard" will serve as a good introduction to the life and art of political activist and nature lover Rockwell Kent. Produced by the Adirondack Museum, the book focuses on the portion of his life spent living and working in this Northern New York area. Indeed, this is only a part of his entire life, but in two essays written by the co-authors, this slim (less than 80 pages) catalogue

offers enough discription of his socialist agenda plus some amazing examples of the work he created to allow us to begin to understand the man. It could be argued, using the paintings, sketches, engravings, and lithographs in this book, that Kent is a much under-appreciated artist. The book is supported by excellent research, including 20 pages listing his creations relating to the Adirondack area and giving the names and addresses of the institutions where they can be seen. If you're lucky, there may be a Rockwell Kent in your own back yard. There are four listed in the New York City area where I live, and this book has intrigued me to the point where I will check them out.

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