

Basic Detail Report



Title: Weighing In

Date: 1958

Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@28f3f

Medium: Oil on canvas

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Description: "Weighing In" shows famed jockey Eddie Arcaro and model James Mower, posing as the track steward, in a ceremony that takes place after every race at important tracks. Before each race a jockey is "weighed out" and afterwards they are "weighed in." This tradition was instituted to limit any possibility of lightening a horse's weight before a race. Arcaro's jodhpurs are shown splattered with mud, establishing a timeframe for the action depicted. The scales in the steward's office are sensitive enough to detect the splatterings, jockeys are allowed to weigh a little more after a race when the track is muddy.(1) On a trip to California in 1958 Rockwell made photographs of this world-famous jockey at the Santa Anita racetrack to use later in his studio. The artist was quoted on the inside cover of the June 1958 "Saturday Evening Post": "He's a wonderful little guy. My cover, as usual, has some trifling exaggerations, but I'm sure he won't mind that."(2) The cover description goes on to say that while at Santa Anita, Rockwell placed his first pari-mutuel bet at a racetrack, ten dollars on Arcaro's mount and another ten on a long shot. "So Eddie's horse ran out of the money and the long shot won; profit \$120.00. Norman should quit, but will he?" This anecdote puts Rockwell, the quintessential small-town patriot, in an amusing juxtaposition with the underworld characters associated with racetrack gambling. "Weighing In" is painted in the photographic style associated with Rockwell's middle and later period paintings for reproduction. He used photographs to figure out small-scale compositions (one photograph used for reference for this painting is reproduced in Rockwell's autobiography(3)) in charcoal, which he later enlarged to the actual size of the painting. He then transferred the full-scale drawing to canvas, to which he applied, in preparation for the imprimatura, a thin monochromatic underpainting. The final colors and impasto touches were laid in as the last step. Rockwell's catalogue raisonn  lists five preliminary studies for "Weighing In": one pen-and-ink drawing, two charcoal drawings, and two studies in oil.(4) The finished version of "Weighing In" clearly demonstrates Rockwell's technique. The figure of the steward is painted in a very thin umber imprimatura (exposing the rather coarse weave of the linen canvas) and serves as a backdrop for Arcaro's more thickly painted and colorful silks. Impasto touches are used to depict the illusion of gleaming metal in the jewelry worn by the steward and to give the scales a trompe-l'oeil effect on the scales. John Updike, writing in "Art and Antiques", noted that the scales' "corroded matte metal and faintly scratched enamel present a marvel of mimesis, so vividly tactile as to steal attention away from the joke."(5) The "joke" must be the juxtaposition of the tiny jockey and the gargantuan steward looming above him. Rockwell's proclivity for satire is also evident in the contrast between the sallow, smoking, corpulent steward and Arcaro's tanned, healthy, sportsmanlike complexion. MRS Bibliography: Arthur L. Gupitll, "Norman Rockwell, Illustrator" (New York: Watson-Gupitll, 1946); Norman Rockwell, "Norman Rockwell, My Adventures as an Illustrator, as Told to Thomas Rockwell" (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960); Laurie Norton Moffatt, "Norman Rockwell: A Definitive Catalogue" (Stockbridge, Mass.: Norman Rockwell Museum, 1986); Karal

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Ann Marling, Norman Rockwell (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997). NOTES: 1 . Some facts verified by Stewards Office, Saratoga Springs Racetrack, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 2. "The Cover," "Saturday Evening Post" 230 (June 28, 1958), inside cover. See also Stanley Frank, "A Visit With Eddie Arcaro," "Saturday Evening Post" 230 (June 28, 1958): 26. 3. Norman Rockwell, "My Adventures as an Illustrator" (New York: Doubleday, 1960), follows p. 224. 4. Moffatt, "Norman Rockwell", nos. C488a-d. 5. John Updike, "An Act of Seeing," "Art and Antiques" 7 (December 1990): 93.
Dimensions: 33 x 30 7/8 in. (33 3/4 x 31 3/4 x 1 3/4 in. framed)