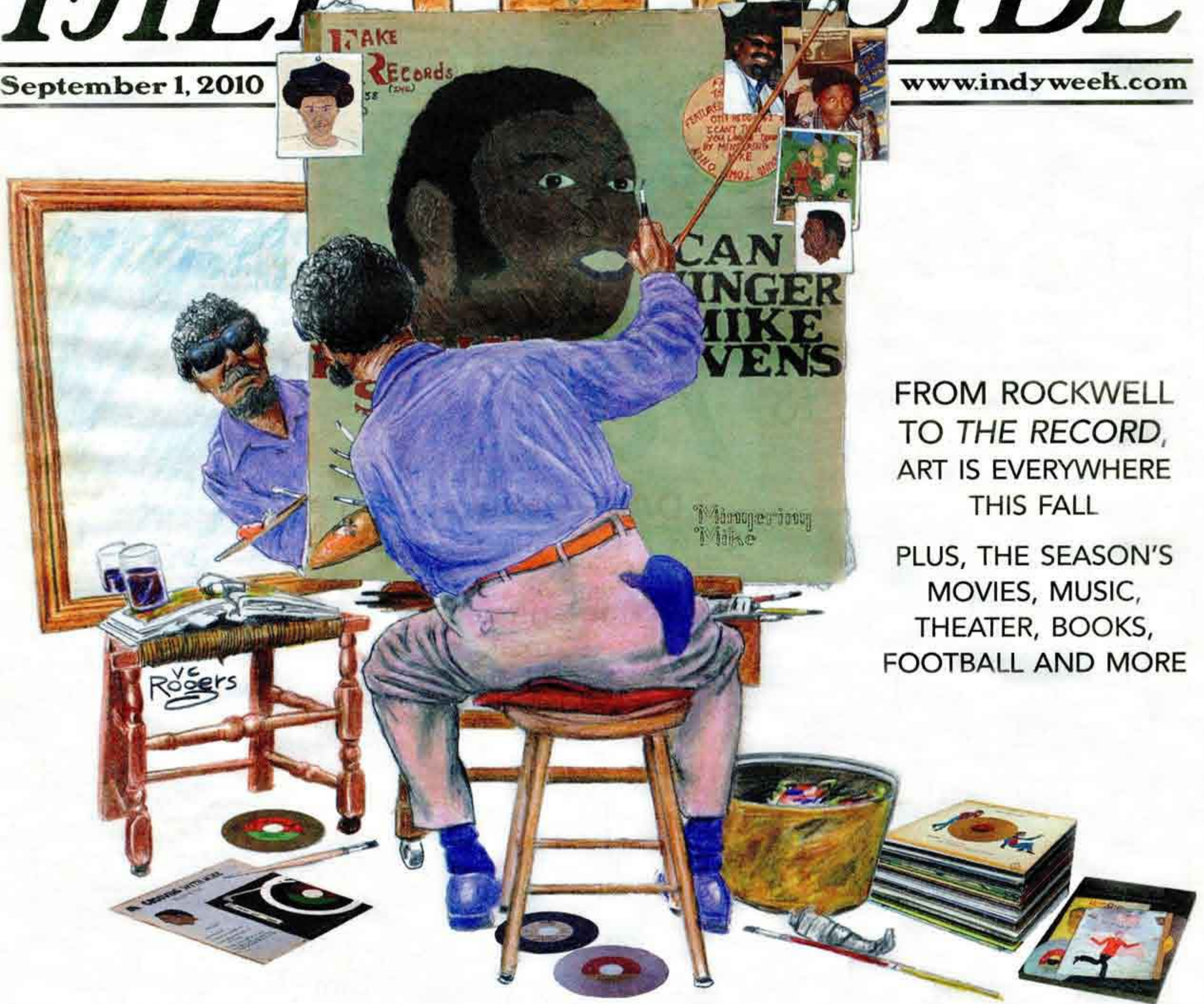


# INDEPENDENT FALL GUIDE

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[www.indyweek.com](http://www.indyweek.com)



FROM ROCKWELL  
TO *THE RECORD*,  
ART IS EVERYWHERE  
THIS FALL

PLUS, THE SEASON'S  
MOVIES, MUSIC,  
THEATER, BOOKS,  
FOOTBALL AND MORE

# Fall into the groove

Nasher's *The Record* is only the biggest of the fall's numerous new art shows

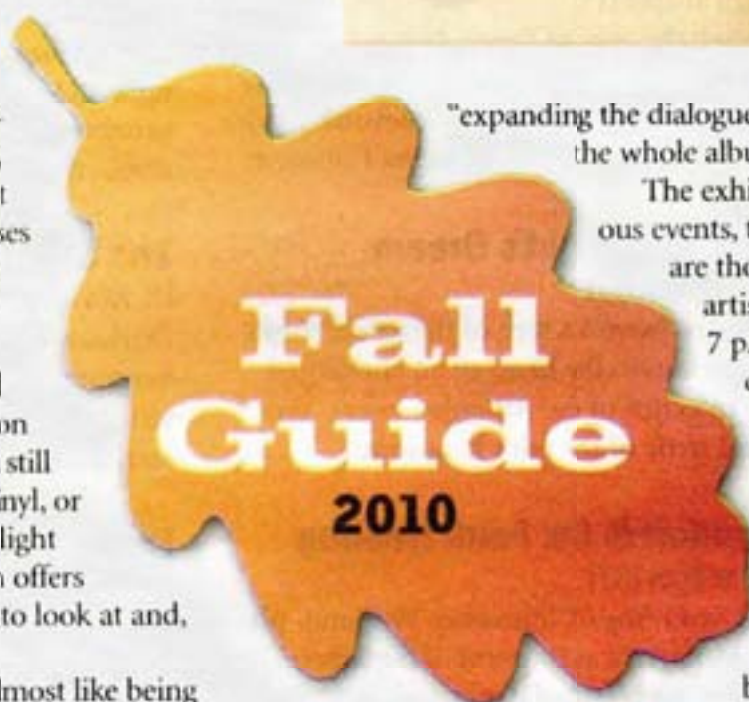
BY KATE DOBBS ARIAIL

Art is not, despite what some say, all about ideas. It may detour around, short-circuit or transcend ideas in favor of sensation or emotion. An art show is another matter, the group art show in particular. A well-curated exhibition involving the work of multiple artists *must* be idea-driven. And when the ideas have relevance beyond the academy, and the curator pushes them like he was riding a Ducati on a mountain road, the viewer gets to have almost as much fun as the driver.

Trevor Schoonmaker, curator of contemporary art at Duke's Nasher Museum of Art, has spent the last three years accelerating out of the curves and downshifting on the reverses to bring us this season's most exciting, most intellectual museum show. Officially opening Thursday, Sept. 2 after a preview week, *The Record: Contemporary Art and Vinyl* will spin your head, no matter where you stand on the timeline of record albums. Whether you still have your BIC turntable and a wall full of vinyl, or you tend to view 12-inch LPs in a historical light and subsist entirely on MP3s, this exhibition offers plenty to think on, lots of interesting things to look at and, naturally, a significant aural component.

"Looking backwards to records is now almost like being on the cutting edge," says Schoonmaker. Enough time has passed since both the death of the LP and its more recent and totally unexpected revival that artists, curators and ordinary thinkers can begin to consider all the ways in which vinyl records and analog recording have led up to this day. There have been many—maybe too many—museum shows with multimedia content, but there has never been one on this concept, and possibly never one as mature as this in terms of the complete integration of formats. Multimedia now, says Schoonmaker, is "not being defined any specific way. It has become common, not rare." The "media" part doesn't stick out like a sore thumb, either in the art or the exhibition—a social statement in itself.

Schoonmaker turned up 300 artists from around the world who are working with records—actual vinyl disks and their covers, or the idea of records and recording. He reduced that number to a mere 41 to include in the exhibition and has designed a show that comfortably includes their astonishing range of expression. As interesting as the mix of formats, media, styles and concerns in the art is, the mix of artists is given equal billing in the gallery. From household names like Laurie Anderson and Jasper Johns, to the almost famous and the locally famous, to the totally unknown outside a tiny art world, everybody's jamming on the recording phenomenon and the wondrous graphic and physical qualities of the record and its cover. In museum-speak, this is called



"expanding the dialogue," but you might call it listening to the whole album.

The exhibition is accompanied by numerous events, talks and listening parties. Notable are those on Sept. 16, when exhibiting artist Xaviera Simmons will speak at 7 p.m., and Superchunk will play a concert afterward. See [www.nasher.duke.edu/therecord](http://www.nasher.duke.edu/therecord) for details.

In Raleigh, the N.C. Museum of Art will reopen its East Building Nov. 7 as a center for temporary exhibitions, leading off with a traveling exhibition that most definitely looks backward, and without the tonic commentary of the irreverent. *American*

*Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell*, organized and circulated by the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Mass., will feature 323 *Saturday Evening Post* covers from 47 years of Rockwell's association with that magazine. It will also include a chronological survey of his paintings, 40 of which will be hung in the gallery. Many of Rockwell's images, out of context, have been degraded by overfamiliarity, and yes, the sweet odor of Mayberry hangs over them, but Rockwell, who covered an important slice of the American scene (post-World War I to the Vietnam War era), was an expert graphic artist and a surprisingly good painter. As another Rockwell exhibition currently on display at the Smithsonian American Art Museum demonstrates, he was preternaturally talented at shaping a narrative within the confines of a magazine cover, and the paintings that preceded the graphic form are often quite powerful, with delicate spatial and color relationships that make them very satisfying. The show will be balanced by another exhibition opening at the same time, by one of North Carolina's most important sculptors. *Bob Trotman: Inverted Utopias* will feature Trotman's carved, painted figures from the last 10 years—they are quite thoroughly anti-Rockwellian in attitude, action and tone.

Should you be longing to see some good old-fashioned drawing—and don't want to wait for Rockwell in November—consider a short road trip to the Greenhill Center for North Carolina ▶



Top: Japanese artist Lyota Yagi handles a record made of ice in his work titled "Vinyl." The record actually plays music on a standard record player until the grooves melt. PHOTO BY JEREMY M. LANGE

Above: Norman Rockwell, "Triple Self-Portrait," 1959, oil on canvas, cover illustration for *The Saturday Evening Post*, Feb. 13, 1960. NORMAN ROCKWELL ART COLLECTION TRUST, NRACT.1973.19, 1959 SEPS; LICENSED BY CURTIS PUBLISHING, INDIANAPOLIS, IND.