



Rockwell Kent

Title

Figure in a Doorway

Medium

Watercolor on paper

Date

1926

Dimensions

10 × 16 in. (25.4 × 40.6 cm)

Accession number

89.12

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Credit Line

Purchased with Museum funds, 1989

Web Description

Although he studied with major American painters including Robert Henri, a leader of the Ashcan school, and William Merritt Chase, New York's foremost Impressionist, Rockwell Kent also attended architecture school at Columbia University. Combining the lessons of many masters, Kent formulated his own distinctive approach to modern painting. In this simple watercolor, Kent conveys an unsettling sense of drama and mystery. The limited palette suggests a nighttime scene visible only by the light of the moon. The architectural perspective of what appears to be a traditional clapboard-sided New England saltbox has gone askew—despite Kent's years studying architecture. As the figure steps through the slanted doorway, into the darkness. Using his knowledge of realism, Kent manipulated the advantages of dark and light to create a strong graphic linearity in the composition. The fact that the figure is faceless and unknown, quietly slipping out of view, further amplifies the enigmatic mood.