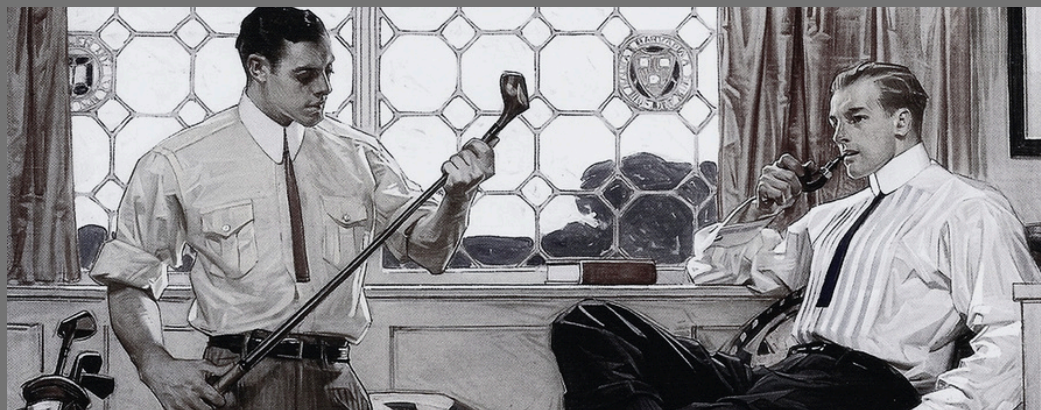
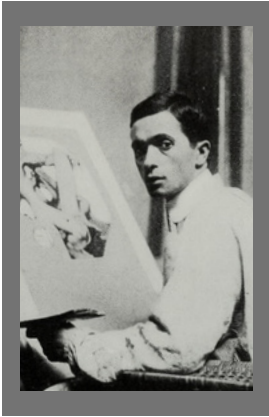


J.C. _____
LEYENDECKER:

**THE
QUEER
AMERICAN
IMAGIST**



WHO IS J.C. LEYENDECKER?



1874 - 1951

Joseph Christian Leyendecker

Commercial Illustrator

- J.C. publicly, Joe to friends.
- Born in Montabaur, Germany, Leyendecker family immigrated to Chicago
- Died from acute cerebral occlusion
- Created 322 covers for the Saturday Evening Post. Produced illustrations for 12 books.

Known for work in:

- Saturday Evening Post
- Collier's Weekly
- Ladies' Home Journal
- Inland Printer
- And more

Particularly known for his Arrow Shirts ads, Kuppenheimer Clothes ads, and invention of the New Year's Baby.

LEYENDECKER 'S HISTORY

A general history, with assorted facts.

- Participated in the golden age of American illustration.
- “Leading illustrators were sought after by the highest echelons of society” (Cutlers). Illustrators achieved celebrity status, including Leyendecker.
- Leyendecker’s New York studio in the (now) Beaux Arts Building drew a mix of all sorts of people, actors, writers, fighters, etc.
- He often visited a speakeasy called Club Intime ran by Texas Guinan (Cutlers).

Leyendecker and Beach set fashion fads, drinking and smoking trends, and even provided salacious stories to journalists.

Their glamorous party life lead to them being represented in *The Great Gatsby*, written by their friend F. Scott Fitzgerald.

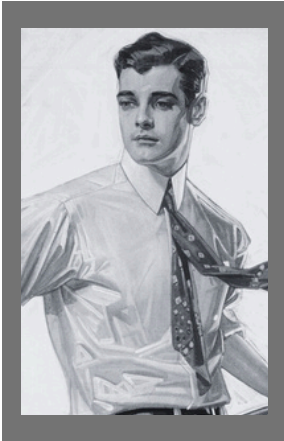


LEYENDECKER'S TIMELINE

- 1885 & 1889 - Designed Ads for family business McAvoy Brewing Company
- 1889 - Apprentices at J. Man and Co, an engraving firm
- 1894 - Start of professional illustration career. 60 bible illustrations published by Powers Brothers Company.
- Enrolled at art institute of Chicago while still working at engraving firm.
- 1896 - Won first prize in a cover design contest for The Century's magazine. (Century known as best american magazine of the time - this success started his fame)
- 1896 - Studies in Academie Julian (Parisian art school). Compared to others of the time, such as Alphonse Mucha.
- 1897 - Art Exhibition at the Salon du Champs de Mars. Moved to NYC and started working for the Saturday Evening Post
- 1903 - Meets Charles Beach, first hired by Frank (brother) then handed over to JC. Beach moves into NY studio spare room.
- 1916 - JC's dad dies, JC & Charles move in to JC's mansion.
- 1943 - Produces last cover for Saturday Evening Post
- 1952 - Dies from acute cerebral occlusion

(Cutlers)

THE MODEL: CHARLES BEACH



1886 - 1952
Beach, painted by
Leyendecker

Charles A. Beach

The Arrow Collar Man

- Partner to JC for 50+ years
- Business manager, Model, Studio Staff, etc.
- First male sex symbol
- Adonis-like figure & very handsome
- Put on affections unusual for coming from Canada and later had ‘outrageous fashion’. (Cutlers)

He could model for extended periods of time without strain, though was described as ‘unusually silent.’

Not liked by Norman Rockwell and often fought with Frank. Described by Rockwell as a parasite to JC. (Though this could be because Rockwell was jealous of how close he was to JC. {Ignacio Darnaude})



FADING FROM THE SPOTLIGHT

Reclusion

- The high glam and fancy lifestyle featured in his illustrations fell out of favor in the public's eye once the Great Depression hit. (The Guardian)
- “When the commissions stopped pouring in, he and Beach had to let the house staff go, and they became semi-reclusive.” (J.C. Leyendecker: A trailblazing pioneer in queer advertising)

After Leyendecker's Death

- “While not “destroyed” in the traditional sense, Beach (perhaps due to a combination of grief and booze) hacked most of them into jigsaw puzzles of odd shapes and sizes. [...] Beach put them out in a kind of yard sale and local fans and artists quickly picked the tables clean.” (JC Leyendecker: The Studies, American Art Archives)
- After Beach died, Leyendecker fell even more out of the spotlight.

Rockwell's Impact

Rockwell imitated Leyendecker to the best of his ability. He “picked Joe's brain for ideas, for contacts, and ultimately for clients” (Cutlers). This led to him stealing Leyendecker's clients and eventually replacing Leyendecker as the iconic American Imagist in many people's minds.



WHAT DOES THIS CHANGE?

New Context

We are able to recontextualize Leyendecker's art through analyzing the queer subtext and the subtle homoeroticism in his works. As we do this though, we need to keep the time's gender separation in society and their more tactile forms of bonding in mind, which was what made many of his illustrations okay in society's mind, even though many people were still homophobic.

Leyendecker was concerned about his public image and that his sexual orientation would ruin it. He asked the father of model Phyllis Frederic for her hand in marriage (to be his beard) though the father said no.

Leyendecker rarely gave interviews or permitted photographs. Consequently, there are very few photos of him or Charles Beach.

(Cutlers)

SOURCES



PRIMARY:

Book: “J.C. Leyendecker: American Imagist” by Laurence S. Cutler and Judy Goffman Cutler (2008)

INFO

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- pronouns: they/he
- gender: nonbinary



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