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Main Attractions of Rockefeller Center

What is Rockefeller Center, and what are the reasons to go to Rockefeller Center? The ice skating rink is one reason of going there. The ice skating rink is located at the Rockefeller Plaza in Manhattan between 48th and 51st Streets. It is open every winter for people to enjoy a good time skating. Also at Rockefeller Center is a great statue, Prometheus, a mythical Greek god who is standing in front of the skating rink and which brings with it many stories and a great honor to Rockefeller Center. The ice skating rink and Prometheus, the statue, are very meaningful and attractive features of Rockefeller Center, and they supply good reasons to visit the area besides the massive skyscrapers that make up the Rockefeller Center area.

Prometheus comes from ancient Greek mythology. The author Dianne Durante says in her book *Outdoor Monuments of Manhattan* that:

Prometheus formed humans out of clay and water. He gave them sense and understanding, then taught them to work wood and make bricks, to build shelters, to use stars to tell the season for planting, to write, do math, to harness beasts of burden, and to build ships. Prometheus also gave humans the gift of fire, smuggling it from Mount Olympus inside a hollow reed. Zeus, however, had forbidden anyone to give humans fire. He ordered Prometheus chained to a rock in the distant Caucasus Mountains, where each day an eagle came to rip out his liver. Each night his liver grew back so the torture could begin anew. (136)

When I read this, I knew the great difference Prometheus had done for humans. Ancient Greeks had their beliefs in their religion—which to us are now myths—and they should have honored a man/god like Prometheus. He gave life to humans and gave them basically all their knowledge. It is for these reasons that the man who made this statue in Rockefeller Center, Paul Manship, was very specific on how he sculpted Prometheus. From Dianne Durante, again, we learn that “Manship chose to show Prometheus bringing fire to mortals. A torch waving in one hand,”… “not looking warily toward an angry Zeus, but down toward Earth.” “For Manship, what mattered was the life-enhancing gift Prometheus brought, rather than his later suffering” (137).

Prometheus means happiness to New York City. He signifies a sacrifice due to his actions that he did for humans. He is also a sculpture that is seen by most residents of New York and the tourists that come to the center. For this reason and for many others, a statue like Prometheus is taken care of. This statue is the centerpiece of Rockefeller Center, especially given its placement. It is why so much work goes into it as Joseph Lederer says in his book *All Around the Town*:

“Manship’s floating Prometheus (“Leaping Louie” to its early detractors) was installed in 1934, when the rarity of massive bronze covered with gold leaf made it a startling presence. Framed within the spray of the fountain, this embodiment of Radio City Modern is the focal point of the sunken plaza in front of the RCA Building (30 Rockefeller Plaza). Early in 1974, the figure (18 feet long, weighing 8 tons) was stripped of several coats of old gold leafing down to the original bronze core, in order to repair old chips, revive the sharp detail obscured by added coats of gold leafing, and restore the work to its early high glitter” (…)

A statue always needs its maintenance and Prometheus is no different. For a statue so attractive as this one, it is only normal that Prometheus would be made out of gold, especially for a statue that weighs so much.

Prometheus is a significant statue. What this means is that many people might enjoy it in two ways. First, people might just go to enjoy the view of the statue because of the size and color of the design. Second, people might see the idea of Prometheus as a man or god who preferred to make a lasting impact. This relates to what Olga Raggio wrote in her article “The Myth of Prometheus”: “In the present study, we hope to show that before the middle of the eighteenth century, the ‘fire-bringing god’ has appeared in quite a different light.”

To connect this honorable statue to the surrounding area, it has been placed at the ice rink at Rockefeller Center. Why was this placement done? And what do people do here? They skate. Couples come during the winter to get a little romance and also to enjoy each other’s company. Couples hold hands and skate until one falls—which can be seen at various times if you go there. And, as Alexis Mainland says in his *New York Times* article “Where Knees Go Week,” “On a recent Saturday around sunset as big snowflakes come down, there was plenty of love at the Rock.” This image alone in one’s mind sets the mood for romance.

Romance is not the only reason people come to the rink. It may simply be to have a good time and hang out with some friends and family. Since the rink is open during the winter, the cold sometimes becomes unbearable, but people still come, so says Sarah Nir in her article “Nocturnalist/ Ice Hard, Skating Easy (for some).” Also during these times, prices for the rink go up and people want to be able to save their money. There are always coupons and offers that might help people enjoy the rink, though.

Prometheus and the ice skating rink at Rockefeller Center are both attractive amusements and features. Many people have had their opinions about these places acknowledged, but it should not take away the myth or the beauty of the statue. The ice skating rink is a great place for the Prometheus statue, the main reason being that so many people can enjoy it in its current placement. Both the statue and the rink are about enjoyment, education, and romance. Both statues are beautiful things in a beautiful city, and they also both have so much history within. I could go on about this place, which means a lot to me because of its iconic nature and also because I love to skate—even though I still fall a lot.