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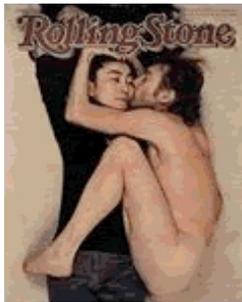
## ■ Editorial - [Top 40 Covers](#)

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### ASME's Top 40 Magazine Covers of the Last 40 Years

On October 17, 2005, the 40 greatest magazine covers of the last 40 years were unveiled at the 2005 American Magazine Conference (AMC) in Puerto Rico, by Mark Whitaker, Editor of *Newsweek* and President of American Society of Magazine Editors (ASME), and AMC Chairman Evan Smith, Editor of *Texas Monthly*. [Read the press release.](#)

*Click on the thumbnails to view larger images.*



#### #1 *Rolling Stone* (January 22, 1981)

*Rolling Stone's* cover of John Lennon and Yoko Ono was named the top magazine cover to appear since 1965. The image was photographed by renowned celebrity portraitist Annie Leibovitz mere hours before Lennon was shot on December 8, 1980. The photo was eventually used on the cover of *Rolling Stone's* tribute issue to Lennon on January 22, 1981.



#### #2 *Vanity Fair* (August 1991)

*Vanity Fair's* provocative cover shot of the naked and hugely pregnant Demi Moore (also shot by Annie Leibovitz) projected the actress to even greater heights after the huge success of the movie *Ghost* the previous year. The cover helped firmly establish Moore as a member of Hollywood's A-List at the time.

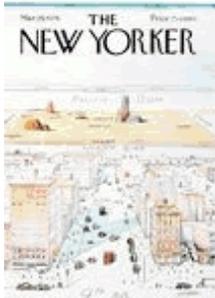


#### #3 *Esquire* (April 1968)

The controversial April 1968 cover depicting Muhammad Ali impaled by six arrows appeared on the heels of his refusal to be inducted into the U.S. Army because of his religious beliefs. (Ali, convicted violating the Selective Service Act, was barred from the ring and stripped of his title.) The cover, the second of three *Esquire* covers defending Ali, shows the



boxer martyred as St. Sebastian, a patron saint of athletes and one who was shot with arrows for his steadfast religious beliefs. This was one of the covers designed by George Lois, *Esquire's* Art Director during the 1960s.



#### #4 *The New Yorker* (March 29, 1976)

Saul Steinberg's March 29, 1976 *The New Yorker* cover, "View of the World from 9th Avenue," has come to represent Manhattan's telescoped perception of the country beyond the Hudson River. The cartoon showed the supposed limited mental geography of Manhattanites.



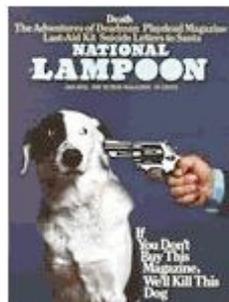
#### #5 *Esquire* (May 1969)

One of the most iconic of Art Director George Lois's creations, the May 1969 cover of *Esquire* juxtaposed the celebration of pop culture while deconstructing celebrity. The image of a drowning Andy Warhol was a friendly spoof of the artist's famous Campbell Soup artwork, a pervading symbol of the Pop Art movement.



#### #6 *The New Yorker* (September 24, 2001)

*New Yorker* Covers Editor Françoise Mouly repositioned Art Spiegelman's silhouettes, inspired by Ad Reinhardt's black-on-black paintings, so that the north tower's antenna breaks the "W" of the magazine's logo. Spiegelman wanted to see the emptiness, and find the awful/awe-filled image of all that disappeared the on 9/11. The silhouetted Twin Towers were printed in a fifth, black ink, on a field of black made up of the standard four color printing inks. An overprinted clear varnish helps create the ghost images that linger, insisting on their presence through the blackness.



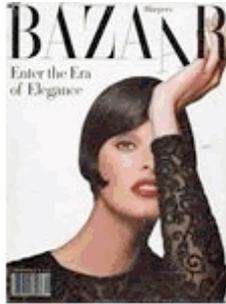
#### #7 *National Lampoon* (January 1973)

*National Lampoon* quickly grew in both popularity in 1970s, when it regularly skewered pop culture, counterculture and politics with recklessness and gleeful bad taste. The notorious January 1973 shot of a human hand holding a revolver to the head of a docile-looking dog, who suspiciously eyes the firearm with a sideways glance, was photographed by Ronald G. Harris and is the magazine's most memorable cover.



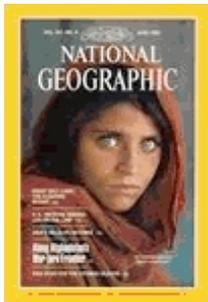
#### #8 *Esquire* (October 1966)

This cover story by legendary writer John Sack helped change public perception of the Vietnam War and was a landmark in the history of New Journalism. Early in 1966, when America had little more than 100,000 troops in Vietnam, Sacks became *Esquire's* war correspondent in Vietnam. At 33,000 words, the resulting article was and still is the longest ever published in *Esquire*. The all-black cover with the white inscription, "Oh My God—We hit a little girl," became the cover to reflect the story.



#### #9 *Harper's Bazaar* (September 1992)

*Harper's Bazaar*, which debuted in 1867 as America's first fashion magazine, celebrated its 125th anniversary in 1992, and the September 1992 issue under legendary Editor-in-Chief Liz Tilberis's direction heralded one of the most dramatic magazine reinventions in history. Tilberis helped transform the magazine from an "also-ran" fashion magazine into the one of the most cutting-edge and experimental of the big fashion glossies—illustrated by the creative typeface and avant-garde image of Linda Evangelista on the September cover.



#### #10 *National Geographic* (June 1985)

Photographer Steve McCurry immortalized the haunted eyes of a 12-year-old refugee in a camp on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Soviet helicopters destroyed her village and family, forcing her to make a two-week trek out of the perilous mountains of Afghanistan. The photo became a *National Geographic* icon after it was published on the cover in June 1985. Since then, this raw, untouched image has been used on rugs and tattoos, making it one of the most widely reproduced photos in the world.



#### #11 *LIFE* (April 30, 1965)

The fetus became widely recognized after *LIFE* published Linnart Nilsson's photograph of an 18-week-old fetus inside the womb on its April 30, 1965 cover. Swedish photographer Nilsson used an endoscope with an electronic flash to capture both the cover picture and pictures appearing inside the magazine to chronicle the beginning of human life. These pictures are part of Nilsson's book, *A Child is Born*, which sold eight million copies in the first four days after publication.

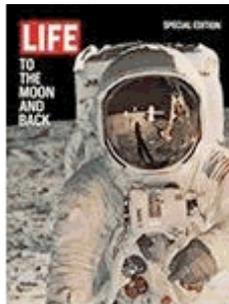


#### #12 *TIME* (April 8, 1966)

The question "Is God Dead?" appeared on the cover of *TIME* in red letters against a black backdrop, and this was the first time the magazine used a type only cover. The article, written by the editors and entitled "Toward a Hidden God," included the opinions of Christian theologians Gabriel Vahanian, Paul van Buren, William Hamilton, Thomas J. Altizer, and the Rabbi Richard Rubenstein. They believed the "death of God" had



come since God was no longer visible in public life and religion was dead. This article received much backlash from readers, but the radical movement died out by the end of the decade. This is one of two “type only” covers in the Top 40.



#### #13 *LIFE* Special Edition (1969)

This *LIFE* special edition “To the Moon and Back” chronicles the first moon landing, brought about by the courage of the Apollo 11 astronauts and the thousands of people who supported their mission. On the cover is a picture of Buzz Aldrin, taken by fellow astronaut Neil Armstrong. Along with color photographs of this historic walk on the moon, there are biographical sketches of Neil Armstrong, Edwin Aldrin and Michael Collins. There is also a history of manned space exploration from the first single orbit around the earth orbit to the launch of Apollo 11.



#### #14 *The New Yorker* (December 10, 2001)

This *New Yorker* cover by Maira Kalman and Rich Meyerowitz features a map of “New Yorkistan” where the city is divided into Middle Eastern names. The pastel map showed a flat, bird’s-eye view of New York City drawn in pen and wash. It echoed Saul Steinberg’s map “View of the World from 9th Avenue,” published on the cover of *The New Yorker* on March 29, 1976 (ranking no. 4 on this Top 40 list).



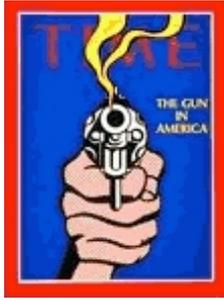
#### #15 *Harper's Bazaar* (April 1965)

This cover of *Harper's Bazaar* is a photograph of model Jean Shrimpton by photographer Richard Avedon. The cover of Shrimpton peering from behind a bright pink Day-Glo space helmet was designed by Art Directors Ruth Ansel and Bea Feitler. This photograph, with the *Harper's Bazaar* logo vibrating against it in acid green has been often reproduced as an emblem of the sixties.



#### #16 *The Economist* (September 10-16, 1994)

This controversial cover of *The Economist* portrays “The Trouble with Mergers” by showing an illustration of two camels mating. The London-based magazine published the cover in the North American edition, but not in the European edition. Reaction to this cover was mixed, with some readers disgusted and others highly amused.



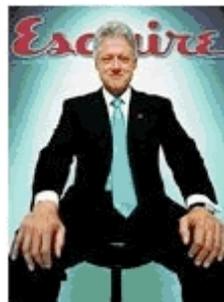
**# 17 TIME** (June 21, 1968)

Roy Lichtenstein's drawing of "The Gun in America" was the cover of the June 21, 1968 issue of *TIME*. Soon after the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy, pop artist Lichtenstein aimed a smoking gun at readers to emphasize the urgency for gun legislation. Before the end of the year, Congress passed the Gun Control Act of 1968 that banned most interstate sales, licensed most gun dealers and barred felons, minors and the mentally ill from owning guns.



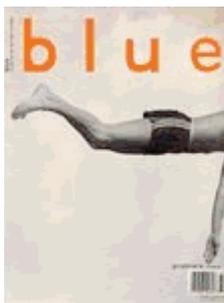
**#18 ESPN the Magazine** (June 29, 1998)

This *ESPN the Magazine* cover portrays Michael Jordan jumping against an all-white background in his Chicago Bulls uniform. Two weeks after winning his sixth title with the Bulls, the corresponding article speculates whether or not Jordan will retire from basketball. Jordan retired on January 13, 1999, but two years later signed a deal to play for the Washington Wizards. On April 16, 2003, Jordan played his last game and announced his final retirement.



**#19 Esquire** (December 2000)

Bill Clinton's appearance on *Esquire's* cover at the tail end of his administration provoked ire from both sides of the political spectrum. Accompanying an extensive profile of the President in his waning weeks in office, Platon's cover shot (the result of an 8-minute session in a cramped hotel bedroom in Princeton, NJ) was intended to evoke the Lincoln Memorial. Instead it came to be seen as fraught with sexual significance following the scandal with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.



**#20 Blue** (October 1997)

A man diving appears on the premiere October 1997 issue of *Blue*. Art Director David Carson, known for his innovative typography and photography designed the cover. Editor Amy Schrier launched the first adventure lifestyle magazine, covering outdoor recreation, action sport and adventure travel for men and women. The magazine also explored the diverse cultures of the world and took a look at their political, economic and social concerns.

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