

THE LINDA L. BEAN GALLERY

Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946)

Over a period of six decades, Jamie Wyeth has created a highly personal body of work. Familiar subjects – whether they be people, animals, or landscapes – are transformed by the artist's hand and limitless imagination.

The youngest child of Andrew and Betsy Wyeth, Jamie Wyeth demonstrated an advanced drawing ability as a child while he studied under his aunt, Carolyn Wyeth. Although embracing the figurative tradition of his father and grandfather early on, Wyeth developed a distinctive approach

that incorporated a vast array of experiences, including his immersion in Andy Warhol's Factory and the New York art scene in the 1970s. Wyeth has continued the family tradition of painting in Chadds Ford and in Maine, but his dramatic compositions – featuring pronounced shifts of scale and viewpoints, dream-like imagery, visceral gestures, and bold color palette – are entirely his own.

Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946)

First in the Screen Door Sequence, 2015

Oil on canvas on honeycomb aluminum support with American folk art “found object” construction of wood, metal, screen, and hardware

Gift of George A. Weymouth, 2016



In some of Jamie Wyeth's more recent work he has begun to cross the boundaries between painting, sculpture, and real life by using objects like doors and windows as the starting point of his compositions. He adds paintings, specialty lighting, and other objects to make what is sometimes called an "assemblage" – a collection of things brought together to make a single work of art. *First in the Screen Door Sequence* is an actual wooden screen door that Wyeth found decorated with patriotic stars and stripes. It was already a piece of American folk art when Wyeth added a painted panel depicting a life-size portrait of Andy Warhol holding his dog Archie.

Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946)

The Raven, 1980

Oil on canvas

Purchased with Museum funds, 1992



"I was alone for two months when I was doing [*The Raven*] and I got this whole thing of, 'Is it alive with me, in the dark?' Totally freaked me out." -*Jamie Wyeth*

This large-scale painting marks Jamie Wyeth's transition from New York City to the worlds of Mohegan Island and Southern Island in Maine. After seeing the painting at Wyeth's solo exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1980, Andy Warhol noted in his diary that "Jamie is painting bigger – more Pop – pictures now. I told him he should go even bigger." With mottled, glossy feathers and one gleaming, beady eye, this larger-than-life raven approaches the edge of the canvas with its beak partly open, ready to attack its prey.

Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946)

A Very Small Dog, 1980

Oil on canvas

Gift of MBNA America, 2003



Nestled in an ornate wicker pram, under a lacy parasol, is, indeed, a very small dog, as the title of this painting suggests.

Although the fierce little creature is being treated like royalty, it is clearly very displeased. Baring its tiny teeth amidst the swirls, hearts, and flowers of its elaborate confine, the tiny dog's aggression contrasts sharply with the loving attention lavished upon it.

Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946)

Hill Girt Farm, 2000

Oil on canvas

Purchased with the Museum Volunteers'
Fund, 2000



In this seasonal scene, a jack-o-lantern
glows in the midst of a moonlit field. The

painting records a haunting dream Jamie Wyeth had in which he was walking through a field of pumpkins. A strange scratching sound led him farther into the field where he discovered a pumpkin mysteriously carving itself from the inside out. As the face appeared, Wyeth realized the rows of pumpkins looked to him like rows of human heads strewn throughout the field. Wyeth's point of view is down low to the ground, with a rising mound of earth giving the sense that the pumpkins (or heads) may all come rolling toward the viewer. The background story adds a deeply unsettling aspect to an already spooky painting.

Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946)

Portrait of Pig, 1970

Oil on canvas

Gift of Betsy James Wyeth, 1984



Den Den, the pig in this portrait, belonged to a neighboring farmer, but endeared herself to Jamie Wyeth, who brought her to his farm, Point Lookout. Wyeth works

closely with his portrait subjects, whether human or animal. To occupy her during long hours of posing, Wyeth fed her sweet feed, a mixture of grains and molasses, and played classical music. Wyeth's thickly applied oil paint reveals Den Den as both a personality and an interesting shape with texture. Life-size scale adds to the impact of this portrait.

Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946)

Frolic, 2016

Acrylic, enamel, oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert V. Kohler, Jr.
in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the
Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art,
2018



In this exuberantly handled painting, Jamie Wyeth honors his close friend, George A.

“Frolic” Weymouth (1936-2016). Weymouth was one of the founding board members of the Brandywine Conservancy and Museum of Art and its chairman for almost fifty years. Working with a variety of media, texture, and colors, Wyeth presents Weymouth driving four horses, all rendered so loosely that some areas of the canvas are visible. Together with the vigorous, animated brushwork of the background – in vibrant green and yellow hues denoting the first signs of spring – Wyeth not only creates an impression of the carriage’s swift movement through the landscape but also draws attention to Weymouth’s richly hued face and steely concentration.

Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946)

The Faune, 2002

Oil on canvas

Purchased with funds from the Robert J.

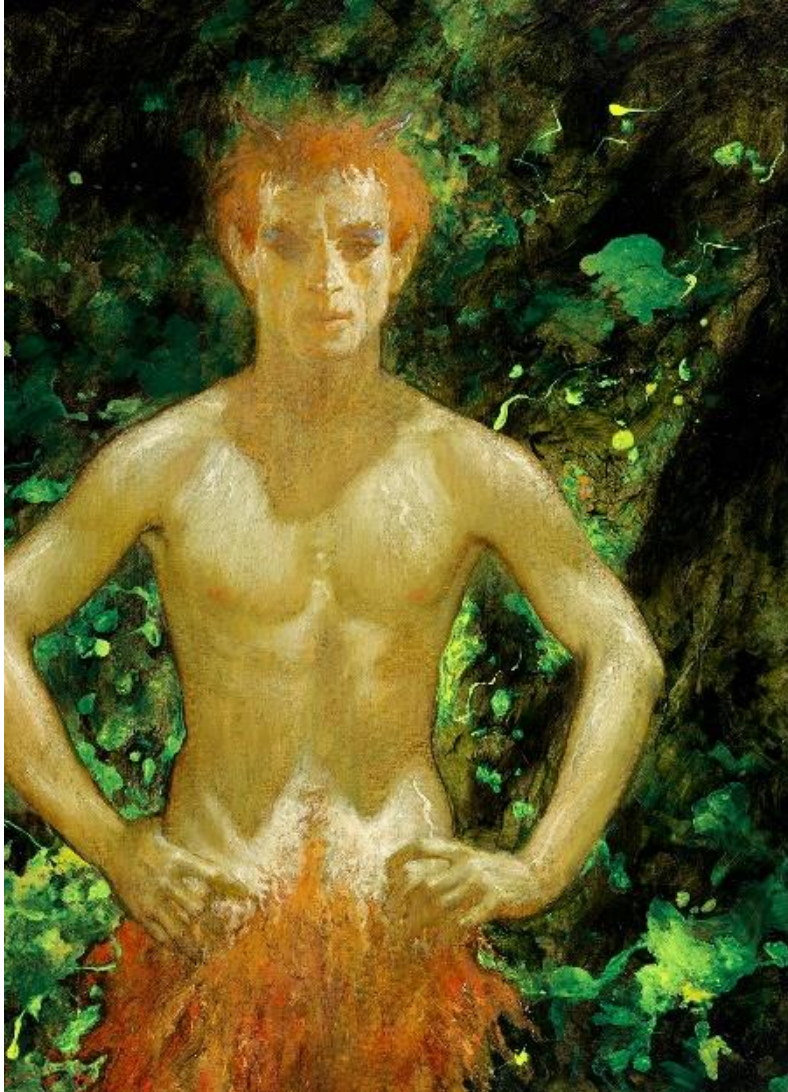
Kleberg Jr. and Helen C. Kleberg

Foundation, the Roerner Foundation, the

Margaret Dorrance Strawbridge Foundation

of PA I, Inc. and an anonymous donor,

2006



Beginning in 1976, Jamie Wyeth and the dancer Rudolf Nureyev partnered in an artistic conversation resulting in a series of portrait studies. Wyeth measured Nureyev's muscled frame with calipers, taking down

detailed notes on the dancer's anatomy in his sketchbooks. The studies from 1976 and 1977 came into service for a second series of portraits Wyeth embarked upon well after the dancer's death in 1993. While the 1970s studies are exacting and careful renderings, the twenty-first century works are colorful, daring, and vivacious. Some of the 1970s works were even repurposed and revised, combining Wyeth's firsthand observations of Nureyev with an expressionistic memorial to the dancer.

Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946)

Draft Age, 1965

Oil on canvas

Purchased with funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. Randy L. Christofferson; Mr. and Mrs. George Strawbridge, Jr.; Mary Alice Dorrance Malone Foundation; Margaret Dorrance Strawbridge Foundation of PA I, Inc.; The William Stamps Farish Fund; and Mr. and Mrs. James W. Stewart, III; and MBNA America, 1999



This bold image of Jamie Wyeth's closest childhood friend, Jimmy Lynch, is among the artist's most imaginative early portraits. Lynch originally posed for the painting wearing an aviator's scarf and goggles, but, after seeing Marlon Brando in

The Wild One (1953), arrived at the studio dressed as he is here. Lynch's attire and bad-boy stance embody the rebellious attitude of many young people during the politically turbulent 1960s. Ironically, Lynch received his draft notice the day the painting was completed.

Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946)

Portrait of Jeffrey, 1966

Oil on canvas

Private collection



Early in his career, Jamie Wyeth's exceptional talent in realism found expression in portraiture, both

commissioned and non-commissioned. He could just as easily have been found painting a friend or local resident as painting the President of the United States, as he would in 1967 when John F. Kennedy's family asked Wyeth to paint a posthumous portrait. In *Portrait of Jeffrey*, a great darkness envelops the sitter, yet an unseen bright light creates a glare on his glasses. The reflected light obscures our view of Jeffrey's eyes, putting the viewer at a disadvantage since Jeffrey – with the help of his glasses – undoubtedly sees us with great clarity.

Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946)

Lester, 1963

Oil on canvas

Private collection



Just seventeen years old when he completed this remarkable portrait, Jamie Wyeth demonstrated near mastery of the realist tradition in his youth. *Lester* shows off a variety of technical feats: from capturing a strikingly realistic portrait, to orchestrating the variety of white tones needed to delineate the wrinkles of the shirt, to the expert handling of the subtle shifts in skin tone. Wyeth's work in this phase of his career has often been compared with that of seventeenth-century Dutch painters who were known for rendering meticulous detail.

N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

Newell Convers Wyeth was one of America's foremost illustrators of the 20th century. His renowned images of armor-clad knights and swashbuckling pirates fueled the imaginations of readers for generations.

In 1902 Wyeth moved from Needham, Massachusetts to Wilmington to study at the Howard Pyle School of Art. Pyle was not only a teacher to Wyeth but also a mentor, and the student quickly developed into one of the period's most sought-after magazine illustrators. The early success of his paintings created as illustrations for *Treasure Island* in 1911 led to further

commissions for *Kidnapped* (1913), *The Boy's King Arthur* (1917), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1919), and *The Yearling* (1939), all done while continuing his own private artistic pursuits.

Wyeth settled in Chadds Ford in 1907, later building a house and studio that are now part of the Brandywine River Museum of Art and open seasonally to the public. He and his wife, Carolyn, raised five talented children, among them artist Andrew Wyeth. Though he died prematurely in 1945, N.C. Wyeth's imagination and larger-than-life personality helped shape two generations of artists in

his own family and many more in the broader art world.

Treasure Island

In 1911, Charles Scribner's Sons engaged N.C. Wyeth to illustrate Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, his first commission in Scribner's popular series of classic stories. The seventeen paintings that make up the set are masterpieces of American illustration. Their large scale, unusual in illustrations of the period, give the paintings a heroic quality that is apparent even in smaller reproductions. Action and character study are united in each painting to further the narrative

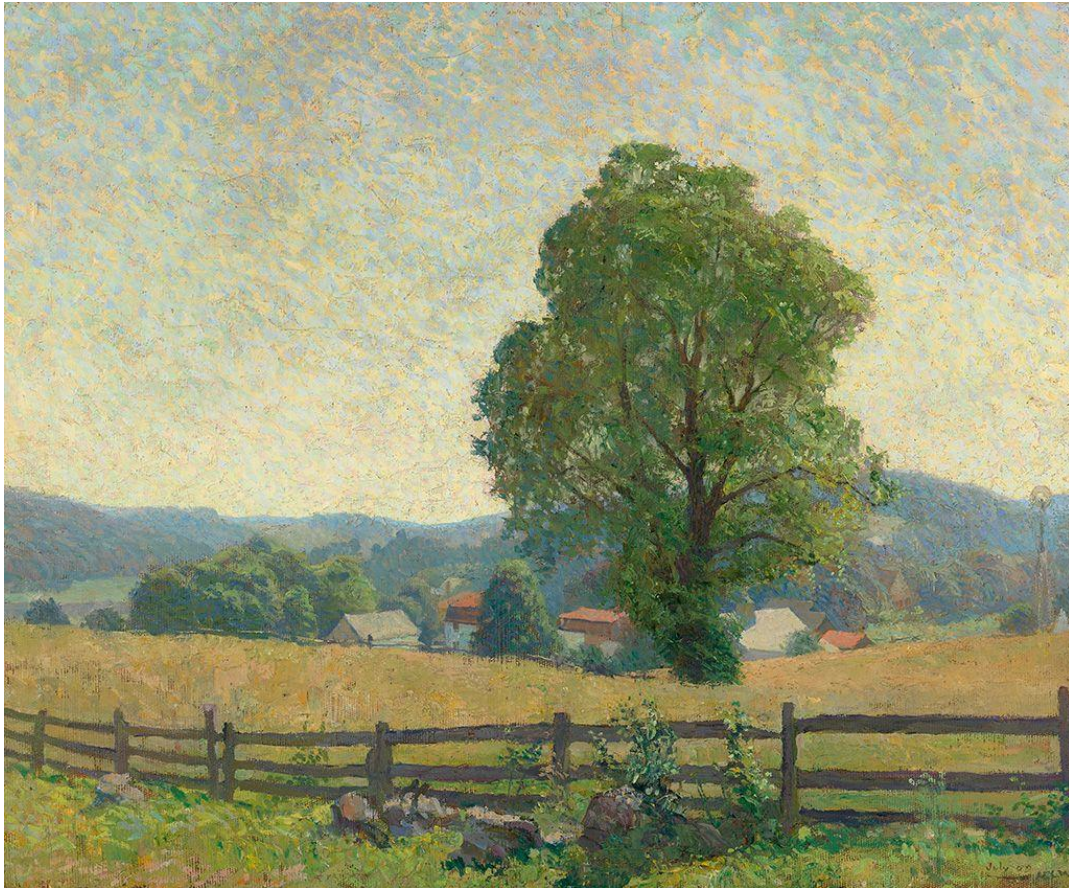
beyond the text. In every canvas, Wyeth's superb sense of color and his ability to mix painterly passages with authentic detail prove him a master of the art. Complex compositions and his skillful use of intense light contrasted with deep shadow contribute to a palpable dramatic tension in the paintings. These pictures made the Wyeth-illustrated edition of *Treasure Island* a favorite of generations of readers.

N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

Chadds Ford Landscape July 1909, 1909

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Wyeth, 1970



In this view of the village of Chadds Ford,
Wyeth records the hot, muggy atmosphere

of a Brandywine July. From about 1908 to 1912, Wyeth experimented with various Impressionist techniques in small scale landscapes. Like the Impressionists, Wyeth painted this work outside, directly in the landscape, a technique known as painting en plein air. The looser brush strokes that appear as individual dabs of paint reflect a modern approach to landscape that captures a moment in time.

N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

Treasure Island, endpaper illustration,
1911

Oil on canvas

Purchased with funds given in memory of
Hope Montgomery Scott, 1997



N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

*All day he hung round the cove, or upon
the cliffs, with a brass telescope, 1911*

Illustration for Robert Louis Stevenson,
Treasure Island (New York: Charles
Scribner's Sons, 1911)

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Gertrude Haskell Britton, 1992



N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

*Tapping up and down the road in a frenzy,
and groping and calling for his comrades,*
1911

Oil on canvas

The Andrew and Betsy Wyeth Collection



N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

*It hung upon a thorn, and there he blew
three deadly notes, 1917*

Illustration for Sidney Lanier, ed., *The
Boy's King Arthur* (New York: Charles
Scribner's Sons, 1917)

Oil on canvas

The Andrew and Betsy Wyeth Collection



N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

The Pledge, 1921

Illustration for Jane Porter (Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora A. Smith, eds.), *The Scottish Chiefs* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921)

Oil on canvas

Gift of the Estate of Louisa d'A. Carpenter, 1976



N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

Westward Ho!, cover illustration, 1920

Cover illustration for Charles Kingsley,

Westward Ho! (New York: Charles

Scribner's Sons, 1920)

Oil on canvas

Gift of Margaret D. Williamson, Roy

Williamson, Ann Williamson Yunkins, 1985



NEW ACQUISITION

N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

Captain Nemo, 1918

Illustration for Jules Verne, *The Mysterious Island* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918)

Oil on canvas

Betsy James Wyeth Bequest, 2022



Jules Verne's novel *The Mysterious Island* was originally published in 1875 as a sequel to his *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, with the famed Captain Nemo appearing in both books. N.C.

Wyeth's portrait of the character is an unforgettable image. The captain's eerie skin color is Wyeth's interpretation of the effect of electric light in the undersea salon of the legendary recluse. Wyeth conceived the sumptuous peacock tapestry behind the figure to allude to Nemo's past life as the wealthy and learned Prince Dakkar of India, the peacock's native habitat.

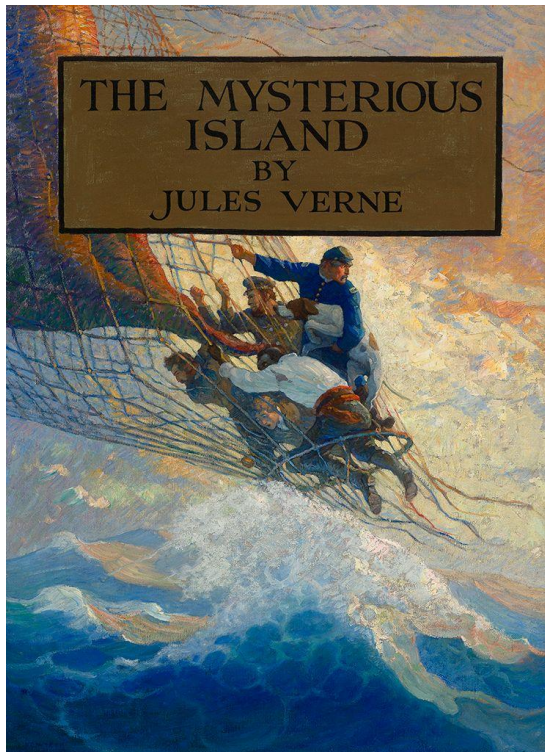
N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

The Mysterious Island, cover illustration,
1918

Illustration for Jules Verne, *The Mysterious Island* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918)

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. S. Hallock du Pont, Jr.,
1992



In his cover illustration for Jules Verne's *The Mysterious Island*, N.C. Wyeth presents the daring escapade that sets the story's adventure in motion. The five characters (and one dog) featured on the cover are escaped prisoners of war at the Siege of Richmond during the American Civil War. The group takes flight on a hydrogen-filled observation balloon. As depicted by Wyeth, they precariously hang on to the remnant of the balloon as it is carried into darkness by a strong wind. The castaways finally land on the titular, "Mysterious Island," which they eventually learn is the secret base for the legendary

Captain Nemo and his submarine, the
Nautilus.

N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

Island Funeral, 1939

Egg tempera and oil on hardboard

Gift of E.I. du Pont de Nemours and

Company in honor of the Brandywine

Conservancy and Museum of Art's 50th

Anniversary, 2017



Originally conceived as an illustration for Kenneth Roberts's 1939 book *Trending into Maine, Island Funeral* developed into an independent composition. In this painting, N.C. Wyeth used an aerial view to depict people gathering for the funeral of the patriarch of a large and historic Maine lobstering family. Wyeth was inspired by the sight of boats arriving on the family island, each bearing mourners for 96-year-old Rufus Teel. While Wyeth had painted members of the Teel family on other occasions, this painting focuses not on specific individuals but rather on the rituals of the funeral. Like Wyeth himself, his gallerist Robert Macbeth saw the painting

as a major achievement of Wyeth's career and insisted on its presence in Wyeth's first solo exhibition in New York in 1939.

N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

Fairy Cove, Port Clyde, ca. 1925/1930

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Carolyn Wyeth, 1996



The lush, loose brushwork of this painting demonstrates N.C. Wyeth's growing range of styles in the 1920s. Painting over a 1921 illustration for *The Ladies Home Journal*, Wyeth casts off the business of commercial illustration for a much more personal painting done during a summer spent with his family in Maine. The tall spindly pines block the view of the beach beyond, which the Wyeth children called Fairy Cove. The glints of sunlight filtering through the trees enliven the foreground and contrast with the hazy atmosphere of the background.

N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

The Recipe Book, 1933

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Carolyn Wyeth, 1996



In this unusual portrait by her husband, Carolyn Bockius Wyeth appears to be occupied with her baking, paying no attention to the artist in the room. Painted during an experimental phase of his career, Wyeth expressively toys with perspective in this composition. The wall behind Mrs. Wyeth tilts backward, and the cabinetry leans in toward her. The tabletop in front of her is tipped up, allowing us to see inside her mixing bowl. Mrs. Wyeth seems, at first, inappropriately dressed for the snowy landscape beyond the window. Mrs. Wyeth's baking has no doubt raised the temperature of the small kitchen in the Wyeth's Chadds Ford home.

N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

Herring Gut, 1932

Oil on canvas

Gift of John Biggs III, Charles R. Biggs,
and Anna B. Pierce, 1982



Herring Gut is a harbor in Port Clyde, Maine, where the Wyeth family kept a summer home. In this painting of the harbor, N.C. Wyeth composes a scene that emphasizes the simple geometry of the houses and fish shacks that gradually rise up the hill. The water seems particularly solid, with the boats resting on the surface, rather than in the water. The choice to render the scene in this way reflects Wyeth's interest in Modernist painting, which was mainstream by the 1930s.

N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

Nightfall, 1945

Tempera on hardboard

Bequest of Helen and John Kenefick, 2019



Nightfall is the last of the monumental temperas that occupied N.C. Wyeth in the 1940s prior to his sudden death. The

painting demonstrates his mastery, decades into his career, in creating a powerful sense of narrative.

Correspondence reveals that the artist based the composition on a Chadds Ford farmer whose wife was dying, her presence symbolized by the light emanating from the upstairs window in the distant house. The enigmatic expression on the farmer's face denotes both strength and vulnerability.

Wyeth's letters at the time indicate his own dark mood, fueled by anxiety related to the ongoing war as well as concern for his own artistic legacy.