JAMIE WYETH: UNSETTLED

There are things in the world that are scary, even terrifying. Then there are things that are not quite frightening or upsetting—they are the *prelude* to fear, the unexplained feeling that something is not quite right. In the visual world, these unsettling scenes inspire dread, anxiety, or perhaps an uneasy calm.

Across the decades of his career, Jamie Wyeth has honed his attention on these unnerving events, zeroed in on uncanny experiences, and marshalled a wide range of disconcerting elements—subjects, compositional approaches, and techniques—

within his works. Having developed a skillful, cinematic shorthand, Wyeth has the power to evoke anxiety in nearly every viewer. “My life has been full of ghosts,” he said in an interview, and in many of the works in this exhibition he shares these hauntings with us.

This focused look at Wyeth’s arresting, visceral imagery offers fascinating insight into the artist and the art of visual storytelling. *Unsettled* traces a persistent vein of intriguing, often disturbing scenes, which have frequently been countered and even obscured by Wyeth’s fuller body of work—particularly his well-known coastal views, farmscapes, and animal portraits. The darker

and more troubling imagery is constant throughout his oeuvre.

This exhibition explores three veins of his unsettling universe “Strangers and Specters,” “The Natural and Supernatural Worlds,” and “Haunted Places and Disturbing Spaces.” Whether introducing curious characters, surveying mysterious landscapes, or weaving menacing narratives, Jamie Wyeth is at home with uneasy subjects. This master of the unsettled mood is fiercely independent in the face of prevailing art trends, standing apart in a shadowy and strange world of his own creation.

STRANGERS AND SPECTERS

As we enter Wyeth's unsettling world, we find his strongest means of evoking disquieting moods is perhaps via the straightforward presentation of eccentric portraits. His subjects conjure, with the artist's keen eye for outward signs of inner peculiarities, strikingly powerful, if unnerving, character. Even more disturbing than some of the people we meet face-to-face are the figures left partially hidden, which lend an added air of mystery, if not peril. Wyeth effectively deploys the *Rückenfigur*, a backward-turned figure and a device used to great effect in many thrillers and horror

movies, paying off in shock when the figure turns to face the camera. The tension is frustratingly heightened by a static *Rückenfigur* rendered in paint, as the viewer awaits a reveal that never comes.

Perhaps just as unsettling is the *Rückenfigur*'s opposite: the confrontational full-frontal figure. In life, the experience of encountering someone who meets your gaze so directly can range from surprising to heart-stopping. Wyeth's figures surveil, guard, startle, and generally unnerve the viewer with their intense stares and foreboding postures. There is no shortage of haunted and haunting beings in his figurative work, including portraits of friends and

relatives who have died as well as more anonymous figures who appear to be enchanted or otherwise possessed.

Gustave Vichy and Maria Teresa Burger

Bob et Son Cochon Savant, ca. 1880

Papier-mâché and mixed-media musical automaton

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

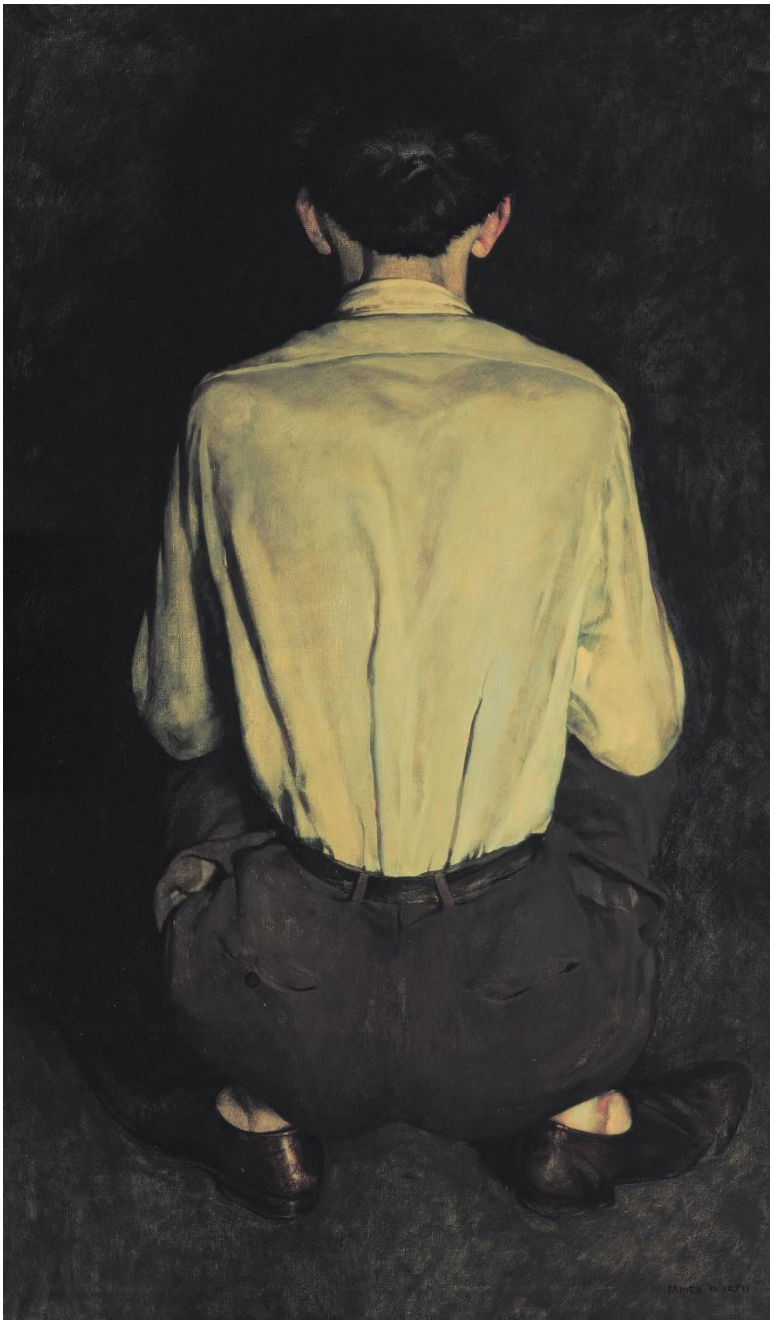
In Wyeth's most unsettling personal collection—a small group of automatons—one particular piece reaches the pinnacle of unsettling experiences: the mechanical imitation of life. *Bob et Son Cochon Savant* is a masterpiece of late nineteenth-century automata. The largest and most complex automaton produced by Gustave Vichy and his wife, MariaTeresa Burger, in France around 1880, this fantastic musical clockwork clown and his porcine friend perform more than twenty nuanced movements to the accompaniment of four songs. One of only four known to exist, Wyeth's version still executes its acrobatic routine: the pig balances on a ladder, twisting and twirling,

while Bob taps along, ready to catch the little gymnast should he lose his balance. The mechanism that drives the work is sophisticated enough to produce relatively smooth movements during its unexpectedly complex operation.

Record Player, 1964

Oil on canvas

Collection of Lisa and David Spartin



In one of his most striking uses of the *Rückenfigur*, Wyeth tantalizes the viewer with the crouching, backwards turned figure of Lester Stanley in *Record Player*. Stanley, a local man who occasionally modeled for Wyeth in the early 1960s, fills nearly the entire picture plane and is transfixed by an unseen record player in artist's studio. Wyeth engages the viewer with voyeurism in this work and, by placing us so close to the subject, magnifies the sense of the danger of our imminent discovery. At the same time, our imaginations reel with what would confront us if Stanley turns around.

Child Chairs, 1988

Mixed media on paper mounted to board

Private collection

Other Voices, Study #1, 1995

Charcoal and gouache on cardboard

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Bean Boots, 1985

Oil on panel

Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine

Gift of the Cawley Family, 2001.29.1

Wyeth composed *Bean Boots* in a manner that places the viewer amid a disconcerting scene. The oilskin-clad figure's piercing stare is muted by the brim of his cap, but the gauntlet on his hand connects him to the caged raptor at the left. Above hang the trophies of this seemingly skilled hunter. Rather than just displaying the antlers of his prey, the artist depicts entire skulls with gaping eye sockets and snarling grins, adding menace to the scene. Wyeth positions the viewers as trespassers in a dangerous situation. To the right, two long guns hang on the wall, and now the hunter has us in his sights. One question remains: who will reach the weapons first?

Cat Bates of Monhegan, 1995

Oil on panel

Frye Art Museum

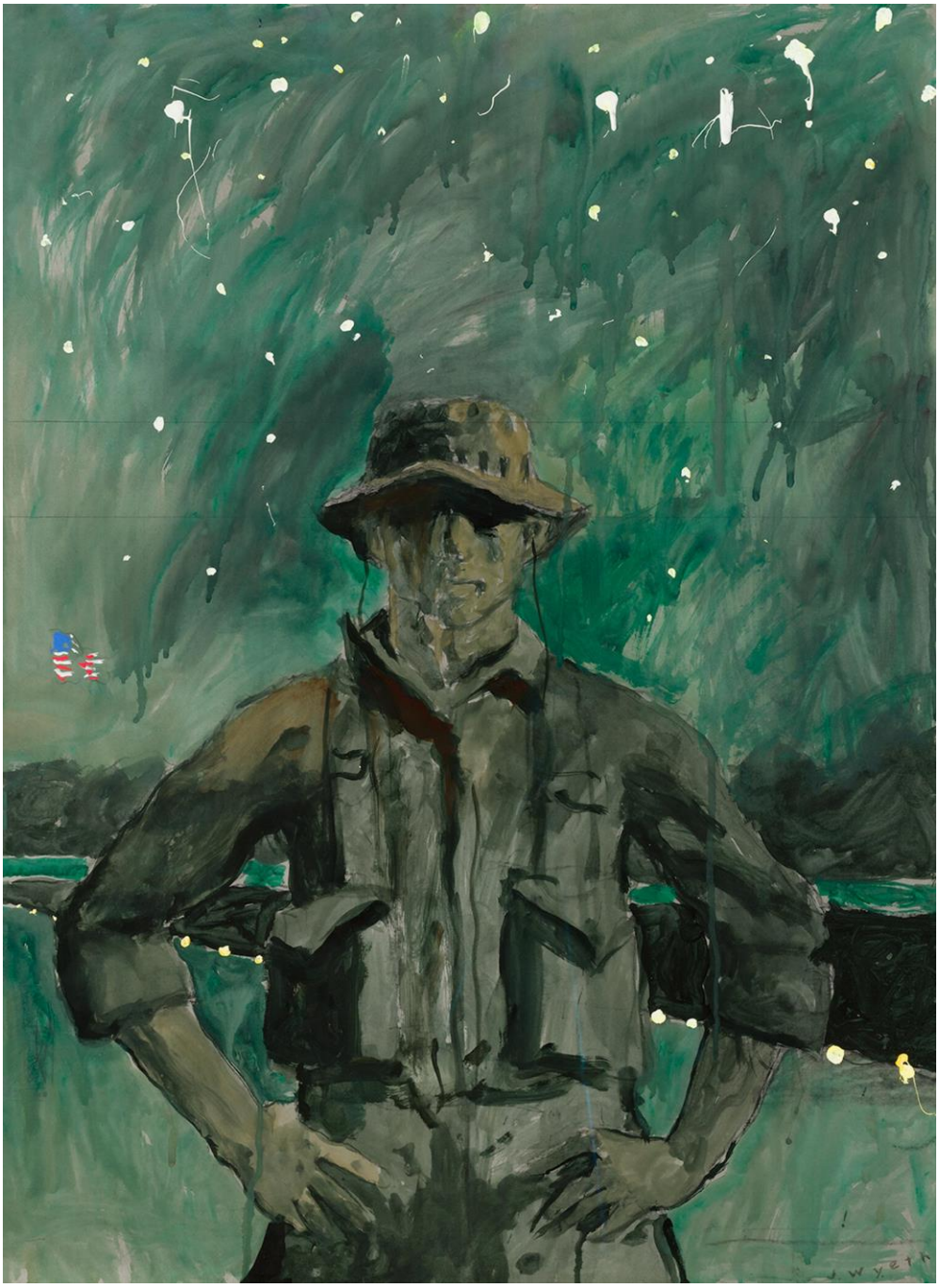
Museum Purchase, 1996.002

Wyeth recalls his observations of young Cat Bates, Monhegan Island's resident waste incinerator, with Wagnerian undertones. The leaping flames of the makeshift furnace tended by the slight figure elicit thoughts of Norse mythology to Wyeth. Another rendition of the scene is entitled *Inferno*, suggesting Dante's descent into hell.

Night Vision Study II, 2002

Oil on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

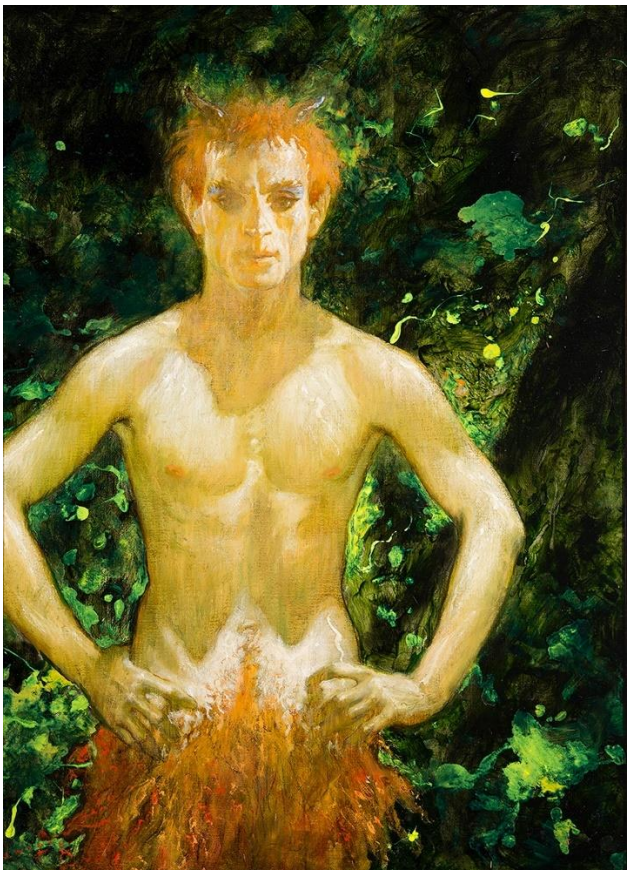


The Faune, 1977/2002

Oil on canvas

Brandywine River Museum of Art

Purchase made possible by the Robert J. Kleberg, Jr. and Helen C. Kleberg Foundation; the Roemer Foundation; the Margaret Dorrance Strawbridge Foundation of PA I, Inc.; and an anonymous donor, 2006



Dead Cat Museum, Monhegan Island, 1999

Oil on canvas

Collection of Linda Bean

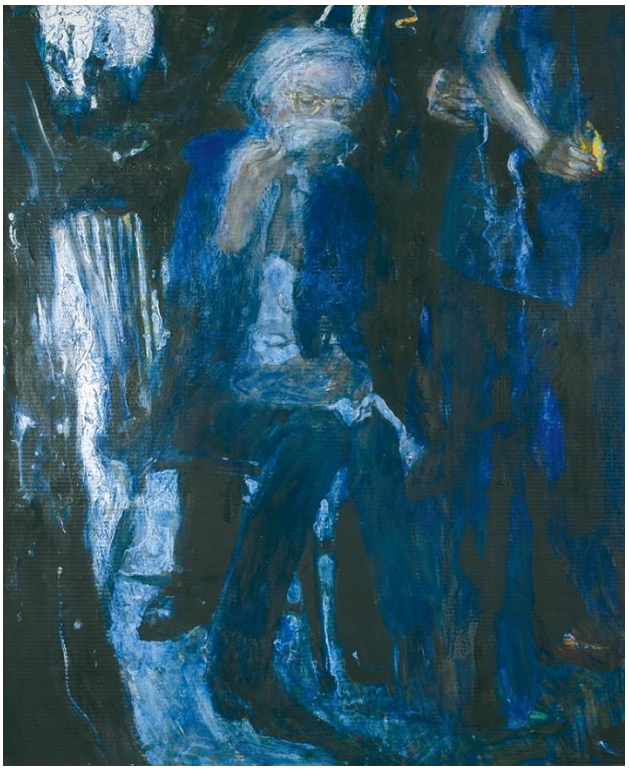
The figure of young Kyle Murdock, one of the children of Monhegan Island who modeled for Wyeth, stares as if in a trance, directly at the viewer, while pointing ominously at the placard inviting us to enjoy his offerings—both morbid and mundane. Behind him, a window reflects a distorted vision obscuring the view into the house/museum, adding further mystery to the otherworldly experience waiting beyond the door. The boy indeed created this macabre attraction on the island for the enjoyment of seasonal tourists.

Consommé, 2013

Enamel, gesso, gouache, and watercolor on archival cardboard

Greenville County Museum of Art, Greenville, South Carolina

Purchase with funds through the 2017 art for Greenville campaign and the 32nd Antiques, Fine Art and Design Weekend, presented by United Community Bank



In *Consommé*, Wyeth relies on more traditional practices to render ghostly forms. The hazy, glowing figure of Andy Warhol perches awkwardly on a chair as he sips from a bowl. This is no vengeful specter or restless spirit seeking closure here on earth. Such a relatively mundane vision of Warhol, who was a friend of Wyeth's until his death in 1987, is curious. The very ordinariness of the image, which is much how Warhol might have acted in life, points out the fact that this is *not* Warhol. It is his double, his ghostly twin, an image that makes us blink twice to confirm our vision.

First in the Screen Door Sequence, 2015

Oil on canvas on honeycomb aluminum support with American folk art "found object" constructed of wood, metal screen, and hardware

Brandywine River Museum of Art

Gift of George A. Weymouth, 2016

Wyeth conjures the spirits of the departed as part of his series “Screen Door Sequence.” In these works, life-size figures are painted as part of an assemblage that includes a found door or window. In the earliest of this series, simply titled *First in the Screen Door Sequence*, Andy Warhol and his dog Archie are tucked inside an antique wooden screen door embellished with stars and stripes. The glare of the overhead lighting accentuates the stark white of Warhol’s wig and ghostly pallor in a doorway reminding us that, metaphorically, our friends and loved ones are with us only briefly.

Apples: Fifth in the Screen Door Sequence,

2021

Assemblage

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Unlike the other works in Wyeth's screen door series, in which the figures appear to be inside an imagined building with relatively little to indicate the interior atmosphere, this portrait of eminent illustrator N.C. Wyeth, the artist's grandfather, captures him outdoors, collecting apples from an orchard. Given the ethereal appearance of the landscape, in which a brilliant green haze encompasses the trees and the apples seem to fall weightlessly to the ground, one may also read the scene as a hallucination or an illusion taking place within a house. The door then becomes a passageway not to the indoors or outdoors but to another world in which N.C. gathers fruit in an eternal autumn.

The Steeple Salesman, 2012

Oil on board

Greenville County Museum of Art, Greenville, South Carolina

Purchase with funds through the 2017 Art for Greenville campaign and the 32nd Antiques, Fine Art and Design Weekend, presented by United Community Bank

Wyeth’s ghostly figures are identified in a variety of paintings through different techniques that separate the supernatural world from reality. In *The Steeple Salesman*, the central figure is depicted *en grisaille* while the remainder of the scene is in full color. The effect of the monochromatic rendering is that of an old photograph, a visual cue easily connected conceptually with the past or with memories.

Portrait of Michael Jackson, 1985

Mixed media on board

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Teddy Kennedy Observing the King and Queen of England, 2013

Acrylic and gesso on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Self-Portrait of Jean Kennedy, 2013

Acrylic and gesso on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Portrait of Joseph P. Kennedy, 2013

Acrylic and gesso on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

The Seaweed and Honey Fitz, 2014

Oil on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Patricia Kennedy Listening to Sinatra

Records, 2013

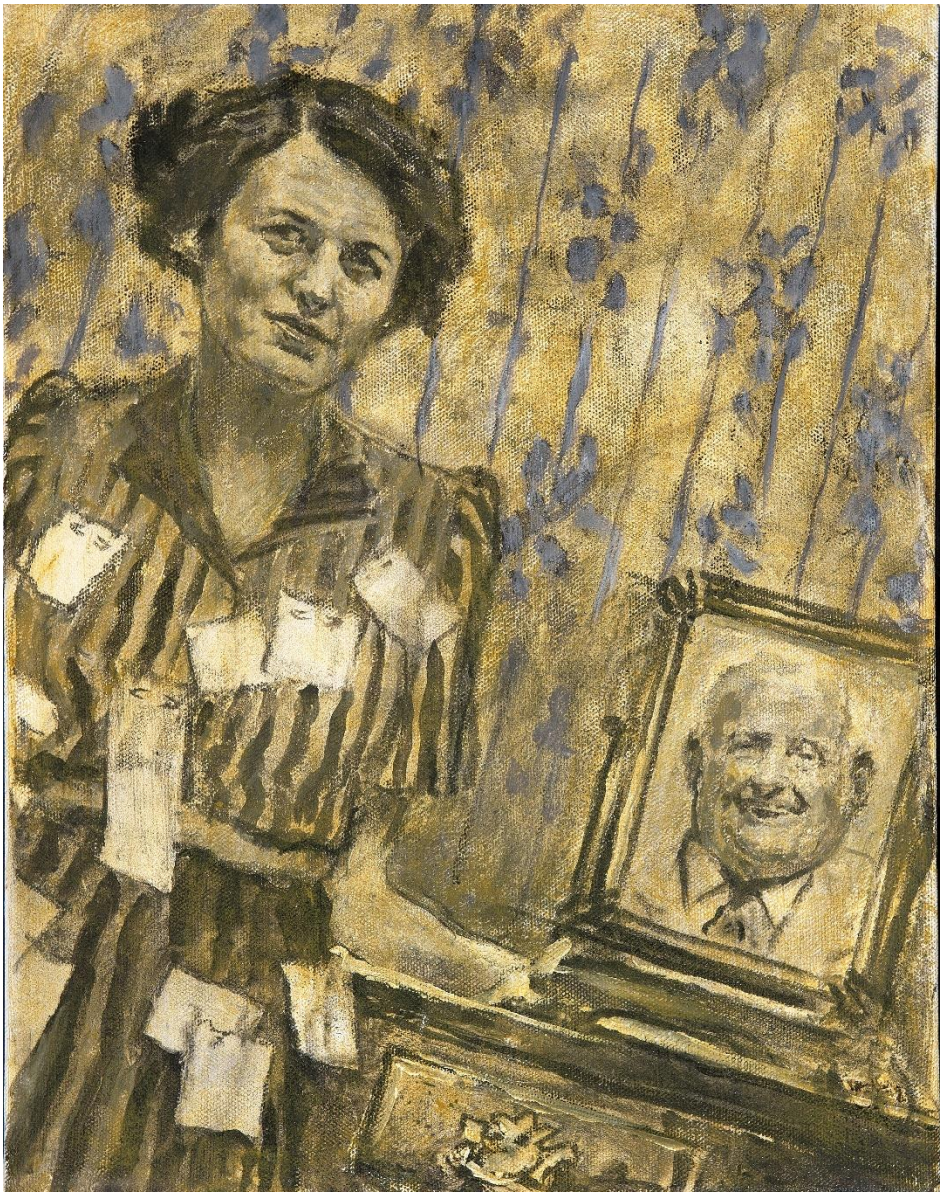
Acrylic and gesso on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Portrait of Rose Kennedy with Her Father's Photograph, 2013

Acrylic and gesso on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection



Portrait of a Moon Curser, Fifteenth in a Suite of Untoward Occurrences on Monhegan Island, 2020

Acrylic, gesso, and oil on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Despite their mystical sounding name, moon cursers are involved in piracy, not witchcraft. According to Wyeth's interpretation, in the absence of a lighthouse, moon cursers would set up deceptive bonfires to lure unsuspecting ships to rocky or shallow waters to rob them. Their trade was best plied on the darkest nights, but when the moon was full and bright, they could not easily deceive the ship captains, hence the term "moon curser."

THE NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL WORLDS

Wyeth's work in Maine frequently acknowledges the fearsome power of nature in contrast to the relative powerlessness of humans. When the sea churns and threatens it reveals a sublimely dangerous side of the natural world. However, it is the forest-based works from Pennsylvania that represent a more supernatural side of his landscape paintings. In these works, the imagination is unleashed on a walk through the woods or along the banks of the Brandywine Creek into a mystical world inhabited by enchanted sycamores. Wyeth's compositional

perspective often casts attention downward, rather than up at the canopy in a more traditional point of view, where the exposed and elaborate structure of writhing, serpentine root systems suggests a chaotic tangle of activity.

Within the broader natural world, the animal kingdom looms large in Wyeth's unsettling works. Acknowledging his self-proclaimed obsession with birds, he made them the subject of many paintings over several decades, rivaling Alfred Hitchcock's interpretation in *The Birds*. Winged creatures are not the only animals prowling Wyeth's canvases. The bodies, blood, and bones of

sheep, cows, whales, sharks, and deer make up some of the most disturbing imagery.

River Trunk, 1968

Watercolor on paper

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

More than the simple observation of a natural phenomenon, Wyeth’s tree paintings lean toward the paranormal, their curious organic forms endowed with an animating spirit. Wyeth’s trees sometimes become ancient creatures with a life force of their own. In the popular imagination, trees have often been granted the ability to come to life—frequently in unsettling ways.

Spring, The Hanging of the Tree Rocks, 2017

Acrylic and oil on wood panel

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

The distinction between the earthly and unearthly realms is technically distinct in *Spring, The Hanging of the Tree Rocks*. The foreground figure of Wyeth's wife, Phyllis Mills Wyeth, and the trees represent an actual scene that captures her annual attempt to tame blossoming branches by weighing them down with rocks. The other figures intertwine with the branches, half emerging from the blossoms but lacking full bodily articulation. In Wyeth's imaginative world, the simplest interpretation is that these apparitions are tree nymphs or other spirits embodying nature or spring.

Lightning Struck, 1975

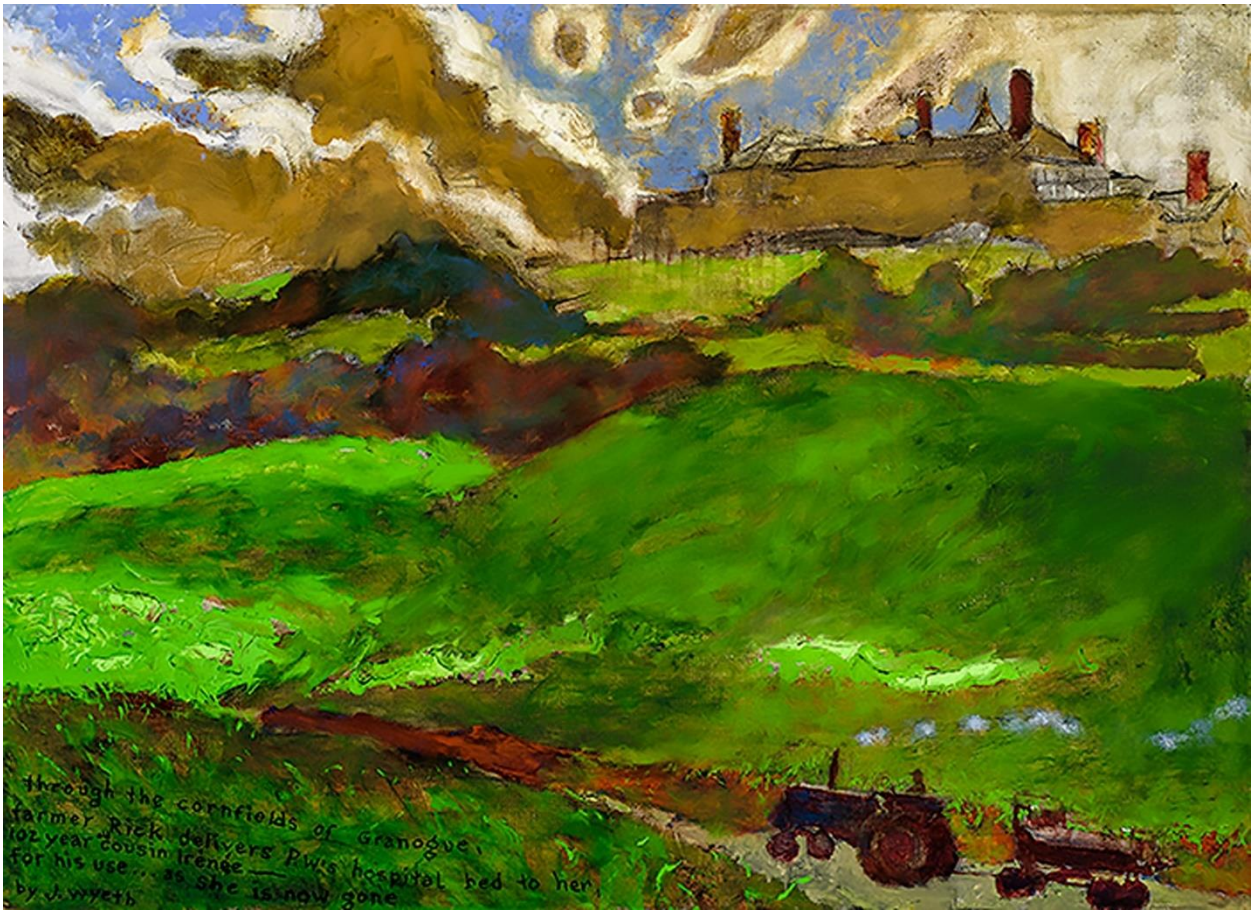
Oil on canvas

Collection of Sherry Delk Kerstetter

Through the Cornfields of Granogue, 2022

Acrylic and oil on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection



The du Ponts of Delaware Study, 2010

Oil on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Hill Girt Farm, 2000

Oil on canvas

Brandywine River Museum of Art

Museum Volunteers' Purchase Fund, 2000

In this seasonal scene, a jack-o-lantern glows in a moonlit field. The painting records a

haunting dream 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 knife mysteriously carving a pumpkin 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. His 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.

Rudolf Hess and the Raven, 1997

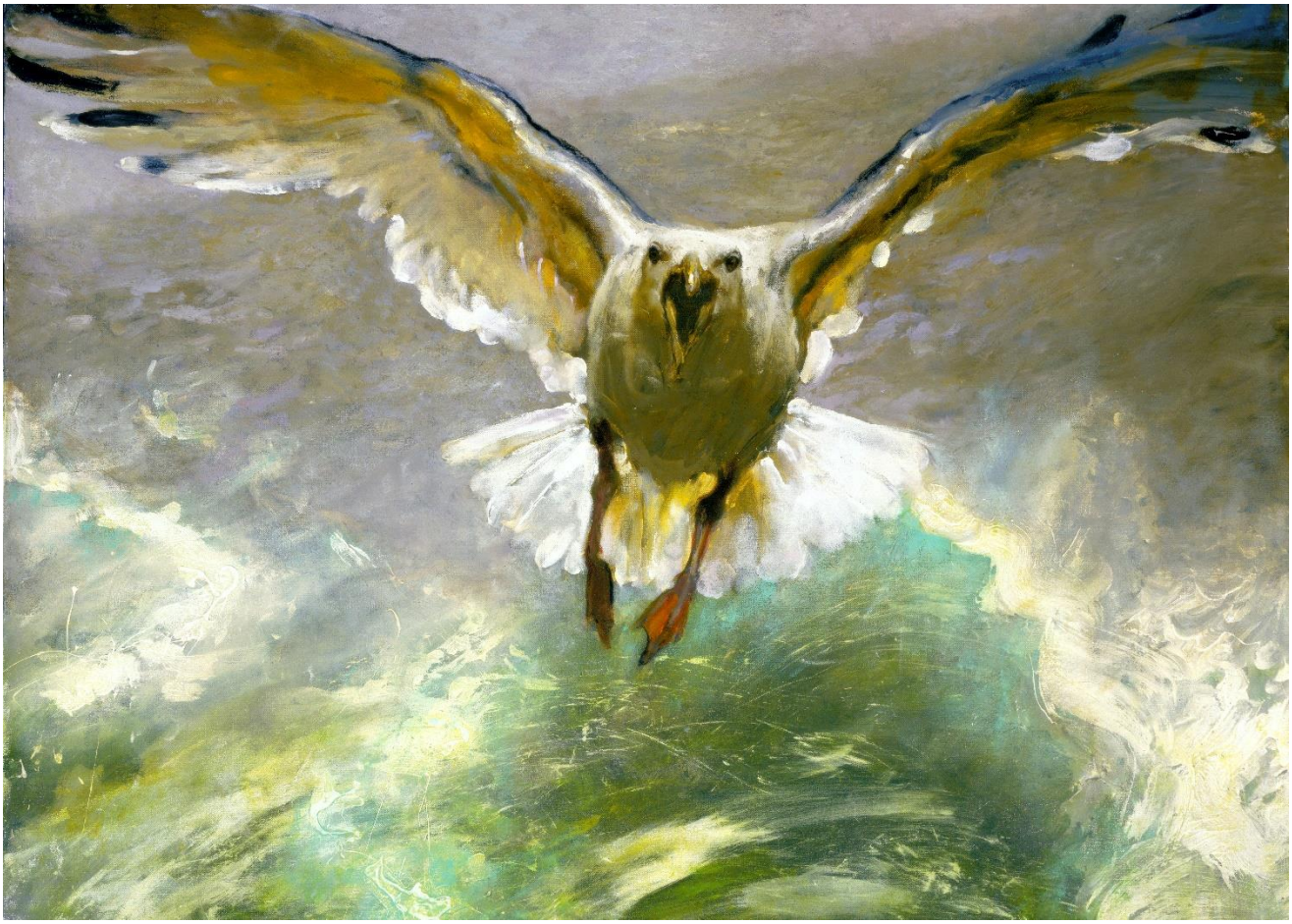
Combined mediums on wove board

Collection of Jim and Jocelyn Stewart

Wake, 2008

Gesso and oil on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection



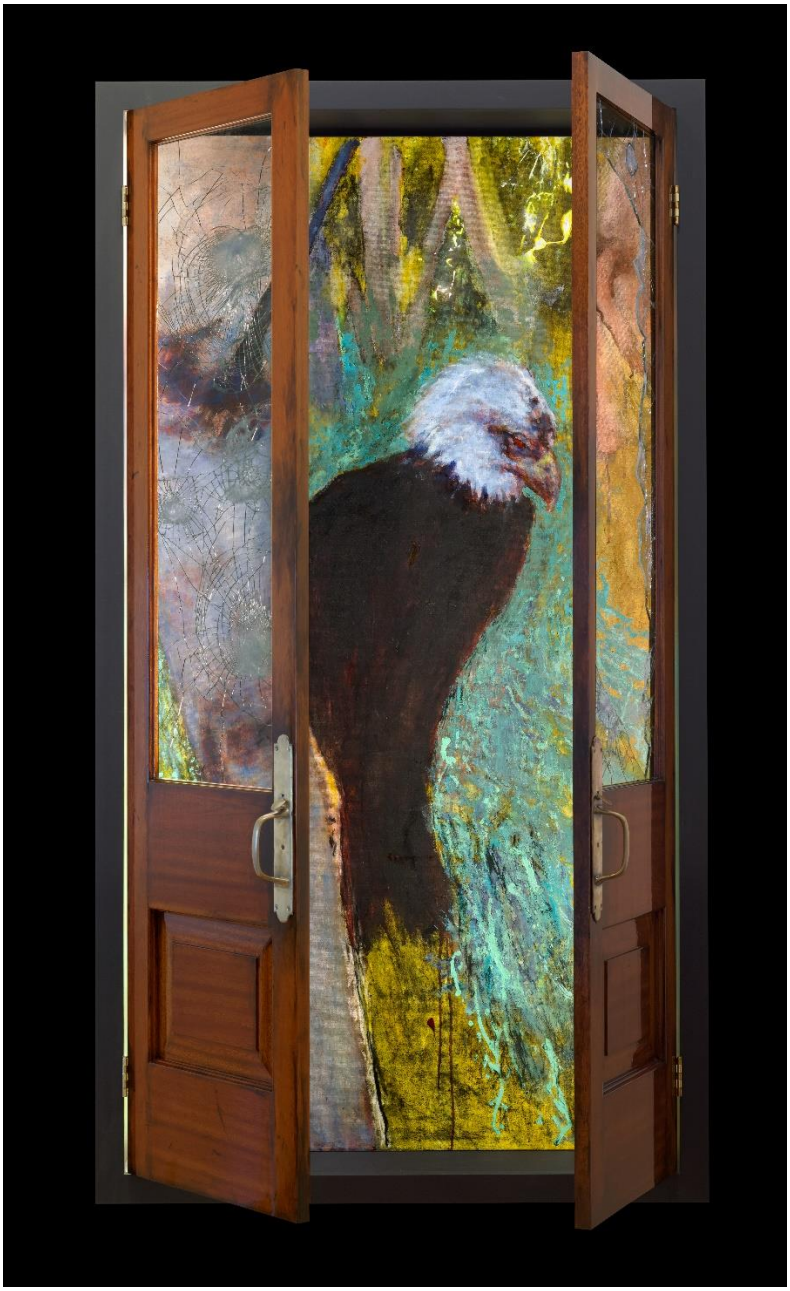
Wake is related to a broader study of both the playful and fearful nature of these common birds. This harrowing image of a

seagull, set against a foggy backdrop, portrays the ferocity of animals in their uncontrollable natural state. Wings outstretched, the bird bears down on the viewer so close that the tips of the wings are just out of view. The hooked beak is poised to make imminent contact, and one can imagine the screeches rising over the roar of the ocean in the background. This provoked state is most like the horrifying telephone booth attack sequence in Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*. While Tippi Hedren's character Melanie Daniels is feebly protected by the shattering glass, Wyeth's gulls descend on the defenseless viewer.

Poison: Seventh in the Screen Door Sequence, 2022

Assemblage

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection



Roots, Revisited, 2019

Acrylic, oil, and enamel on panel

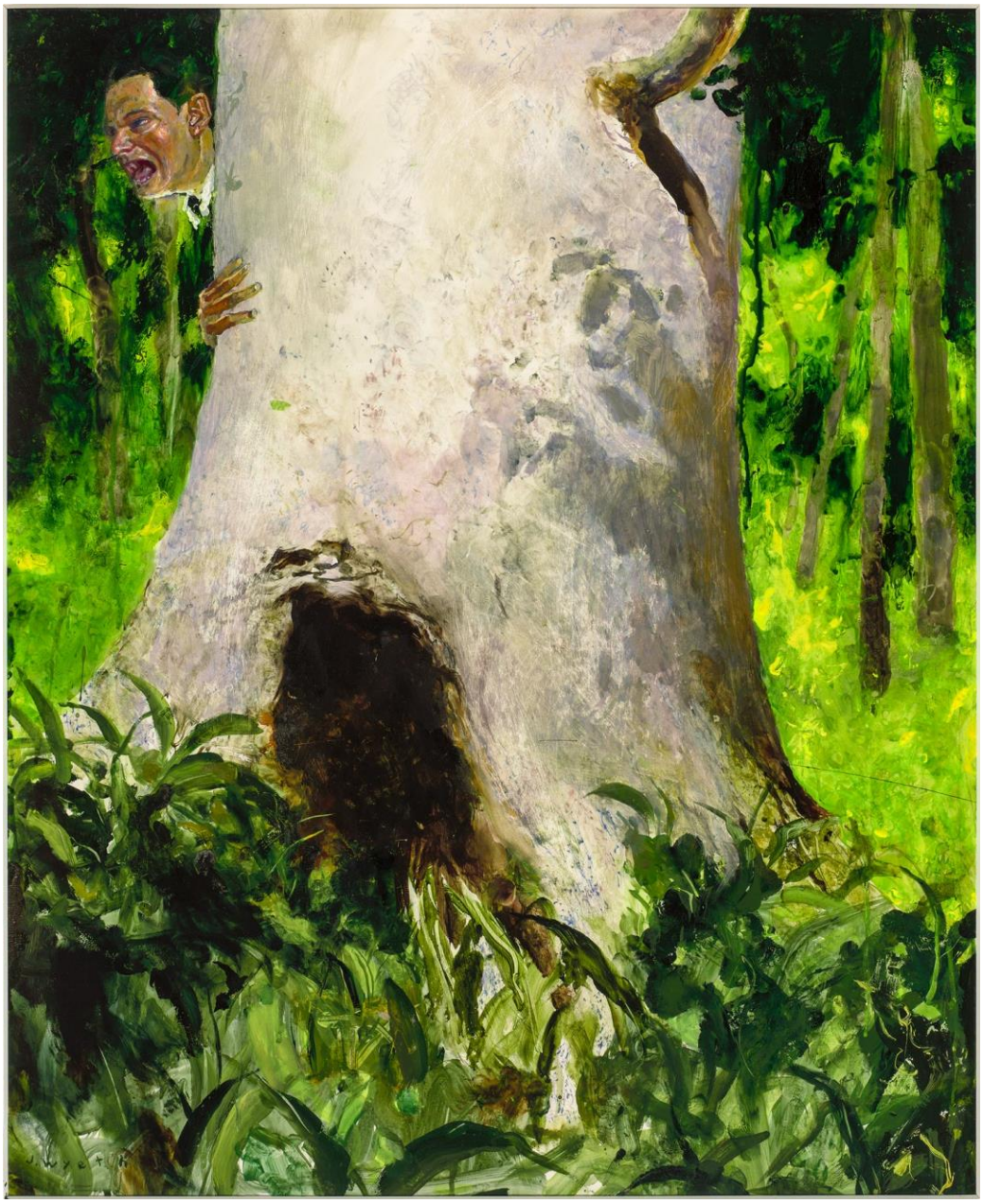
The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Mighty sycamores are rooted shallowly, with the slightest erosion allowing observers to see what for most other trees is hidden well below the surface. Wyeth's compositional perspective, here and in several other works, casts attention downward to the roots, rather than up at the canopy in a more traditional point of view. *Roots, Revisited* monumentalizes the persistently captivating sycamore. The twisted tangle becomes a springboard for Wyeth to explore an enchanted world underneath the forest floor.

Ramps, 2013

Enamel, gesso, and watercolor on Strathmore paper

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

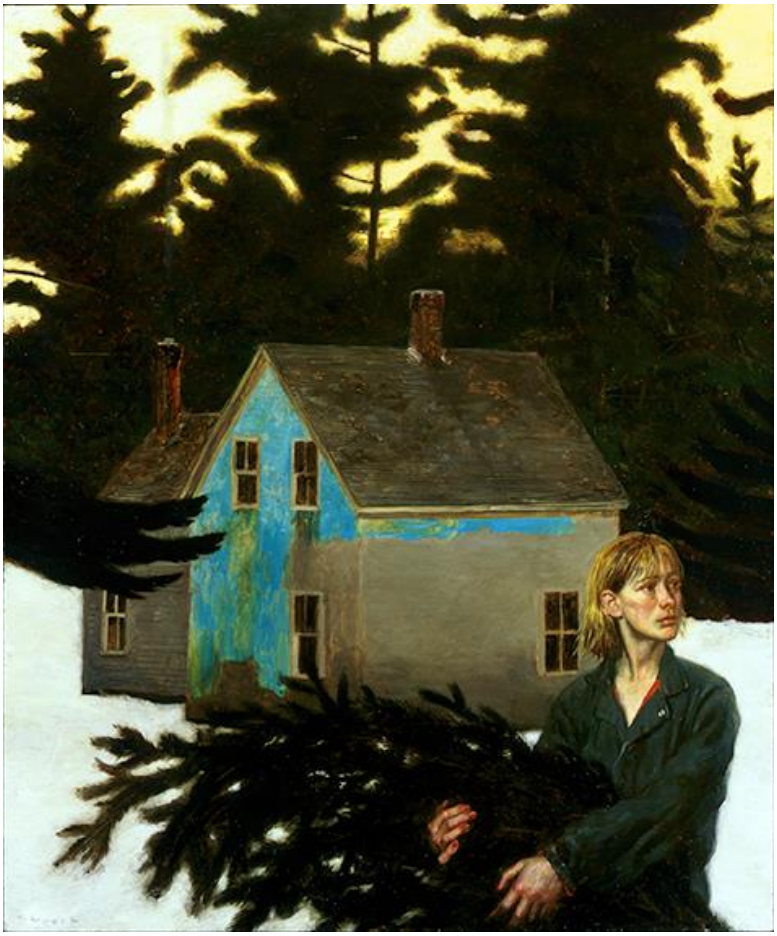


Black Spruce, 1994

Oil on panel

Collection of the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri

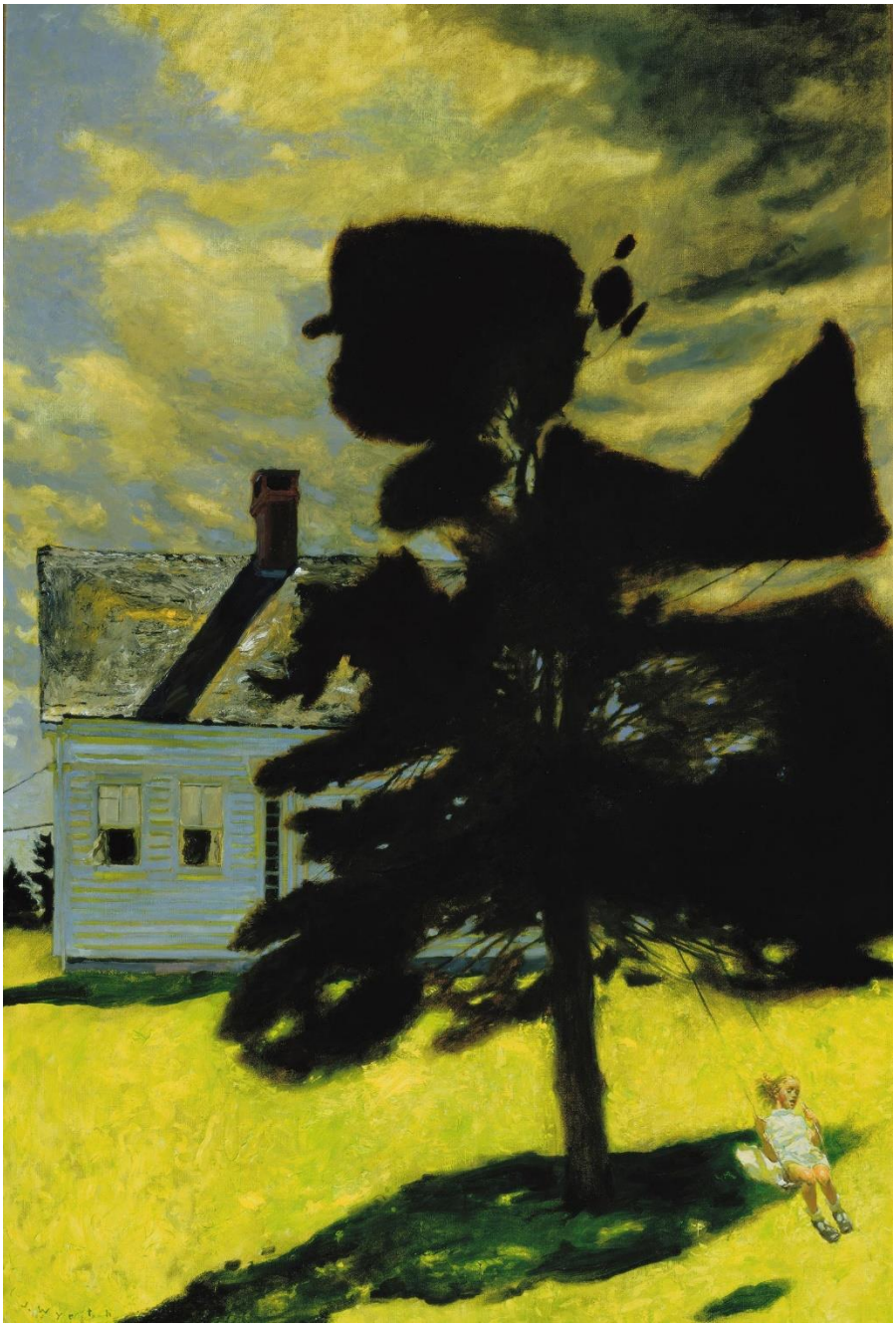
Bebe and Crosby Kemper Collection, Gift of the William T. Kemper Charitable Trust, UMB Bank, n.a., Trustee, 2002.03.01



Julia on the Swing, 1999

Oil on canvas

Private collection



“I don’t really intend [my paintings] to be spooky. I just get certain obsessions and certain things I want to do. I don’t say, ‘Well, now I’m going to do a spooky painting.’ So, there is no description to it. No sort of, ‘Well, let me use dark colors.’ It’s just the way it ultimately turns out.”

—Jamie Wyeth

HAUNTED PLACES & DISTURBING SPACES

The architectural nature of the “The Screen Door Sequence” introduces a classic subject used by purveyors of the uncanny: the haunted house. An image of a house that raises the hairs on the back of one’s neck is the ultimate in unsettling artworks, but Wyeth does not lead the viewer to a haunted house only to leave them on the doorstep. From early in his career, he has been breaching the thresholds of ominous spaces to investigate uncertain interiors and the visions they may bring. Always one to explore the darker corners, Wyeth is adept at

drawing out the anxiety inherent in everyday objects, such as furniture and farm tools.

Sketching from real bodies—both human and animal—is relatively common in traditional art training. Though Wyeth did not attend art school, he found a way to examine corpses by working in a morgue alongside a doctor and on farms where animal deaths are a part of the natural order. Wyeth's interest in the menacing side of the animal world begins to emerge in scenes of death and dismemberment. The culmination of his unsettling interiors is the spectacular tableau *Butcher Shop.* Entering the viewer's physical world in the way a two-dimensional work does not, *Butcher Shop* stands out as the

terrifying gateway to the artist's unsettling interior world.

Berg, 2011

Watercolor, gesso, and enamel on joined rag boards

Private collection

Spindrift, 2010

Oil on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

My Mother and the Squall, 2016

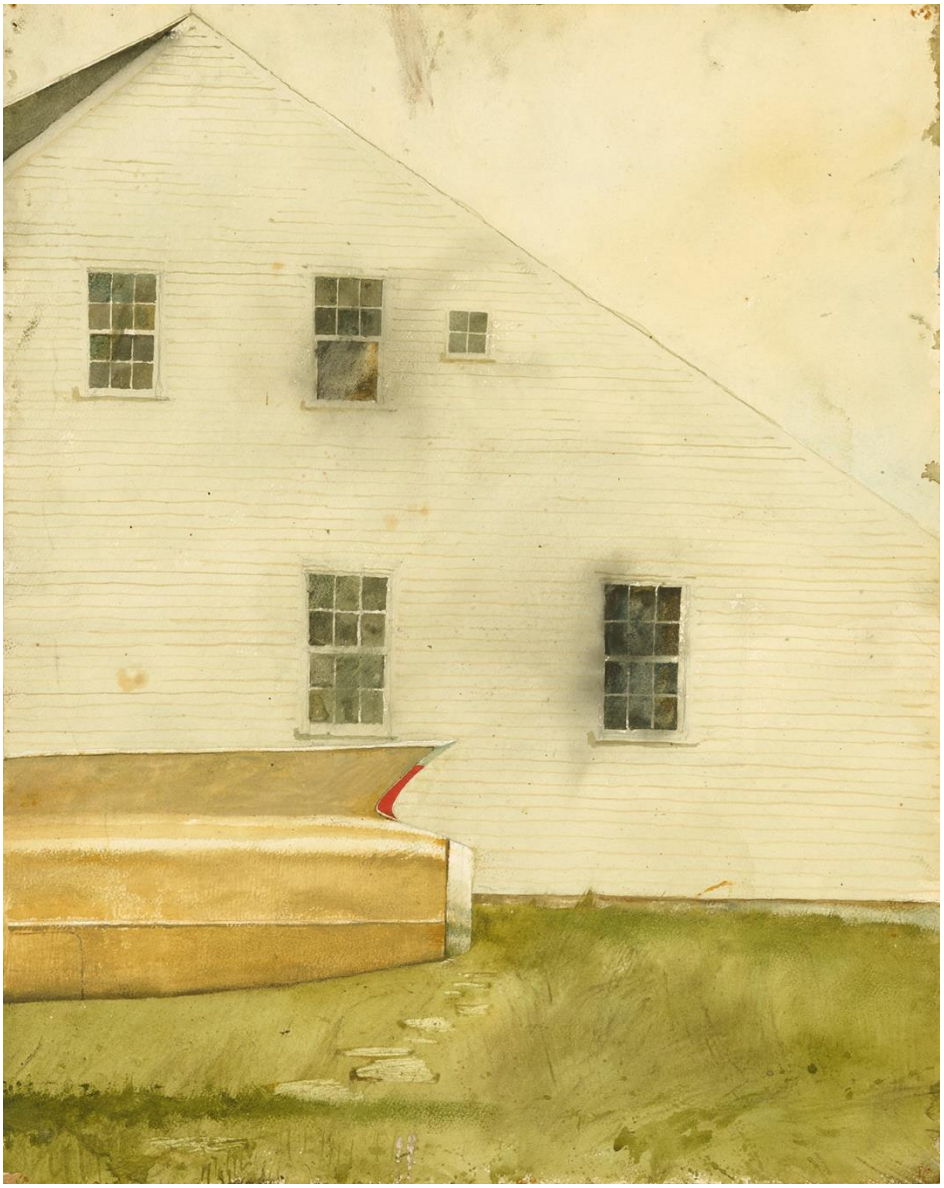
Acrylic, gesso, oil, and watercolor on panel

Private collection

Pom Pom's Cadillac, Broad Cove Farm, ca. 1965

Watercolor on paper

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection



In this painting, which feels intensely like an establishing shot in a horror film, the viewer suspiciously takes in the house and car—both cropped as a means of controlling our vision and therefore our understanding of the scene. While Wyeth is a master of this visual suspense, he was called on by his literary equivalent, author Stephen King, to create inspirational drawings for King's television series *Kingdom Hospital*. "You're even weirder than I am," Wyeth recalls King having told him in their first conversation.

Barn Door, Broad Cove Farmhay, ca. 1965

Watercolor on paper

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Barn Door, Broad Cove Farmhay positions the viewer inside a questionable space, looking toward a door or, more fittingly, a potential escape. Wyeth offers us clues to our unlucky fate in the sparse elements of the composition. The grids of the barn door windows suggest the bars of a jail cell. Given the tenor of so many other works by Wyeth, it seems likely that we are meant to feel shut in, as if the doors are closing on us and we are being given a final glimpse of the outside world.

The Scythe, 1966

Watercolor on paper

Hunter Museum of American Art,

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Gift of the Benwood Foundation, 1975.2

Inside several of Wyeth’s disturbing spaces, he captures portraits of tools, the sorts that are naturally used around farms or workspaces. While many artists have found beauty in everyday objects, Wyeth is adept at drawing out the anxiety inherent in them by suggesting a backstory. This scythe is momentarily at rest, and in this state of disuse, it entices the viewer to picture its function, with thoughts drifting from the legitimate to the nefarious.

Buzz Saw, 1969

Oil on canvas

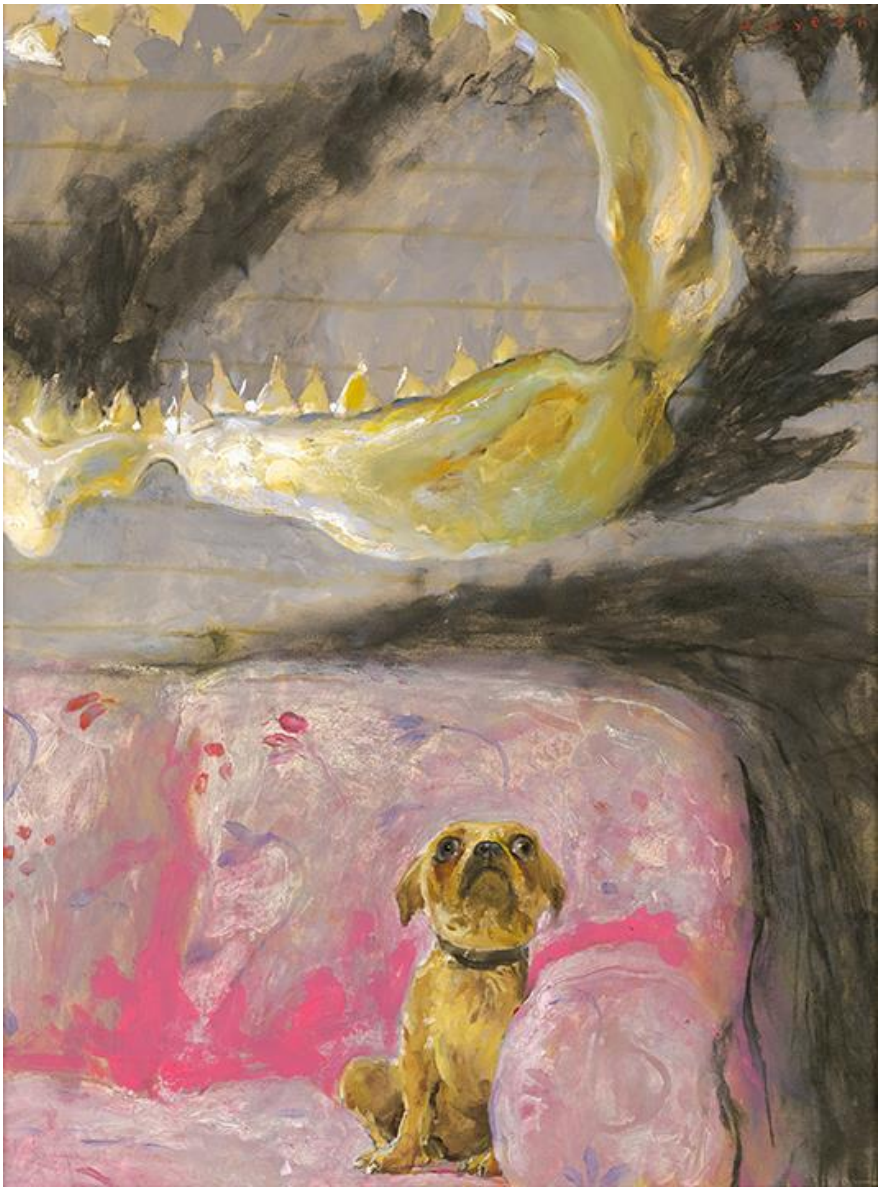
Collection of Sherry Delk Kerstetter

The artist’s meditations on tools elevate them out of the world of work, but doing so sometimes positions them into environments more akin to a crime scene. Tools are common for a workshop but are also implements of great violence. Perhaps the current popular fixation with true crime, forensics, and the psychology of murder adds to the disturbing perception of the dangerous potential such tools possess. Seen as weapons, the subjects of these paintings are accomplices to crimes. They are the evidence that may link an assailant to an attack. They are agents of mayhem that have been deployed in countless horror films to bloody effect.

Great White Shark, 2011

Charcoal, oil, and watercolor on toned paper board

Private collection



In *Great White Shark*, a small dog bravely lifts his chin under the grisly shadow of the fish's gaping jaw. Wyeth makes the shadows more ominous with intense raking light, and the settee veritably quivers with energy, threatening to transform into a living beast. Rather than simply posing with the monstrous jawbone, the dog asserts a kinship with this distant evolutionary cousin of the ocean.

Bones of a Whale, 2006

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri

Bebe and Crosby Kemper Collection, Gift of the Enid and Crosby Kemper Foundation, 2006.19.01

Farm Talk, 2016

Oil and gesso on panel

Greenville County Museum of Art, Greenville, South Carolina

Purchase with funds through the 2020 Art for Greenville campaign and the 36th Antiques, Fine Art and Design Weekend, presented by United Community Bank Foundation

The use of bones as common props in Wyeth's world, where death and decay have become ordinary and unremarkable, is in itself unsettling. Skeletal remains of animals—another of the artist's creepy collections—also appear frequently in Wyeth's paintings, although they might seem somewhat tame after viewing his more visceral works. In *Farm Talk*, the grinning skulls of a cow and a horse in the foreground appear reanimated in a macabre conversation.

Below the Barn, 1965

Watercolor on paper

Frye Art Museum

Museum Purchase, 1982.006

Wyeth grew up immersed in life on a farm; although his parents did not have their own, he frequently visited and worked at the farm of Mattie Ball in Chadds Ford. Many of his

teenage works revolve around this site. Among the potentially traumatizing events he witnessed on the Ball farm was the burning of a cow carcass. Having died overnight, the cow was dragged into a field and set on fire; the smoke billowing across the landscape drew young Wyeth from his home. In this composition recording the event, he not only highlights the grisly remains, charred and still smoldering, but also includes live cows in the background. They are, perhaps, nonchalant witnesses to the immolation of a fellow creature, a somewhat disturbing behavior. Or, given a more anthropomorphic reading, they might be seen as mourners at the funeral or guardians of the corpse.

Deer Head II, ca. 1965

Watercolor on paper

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

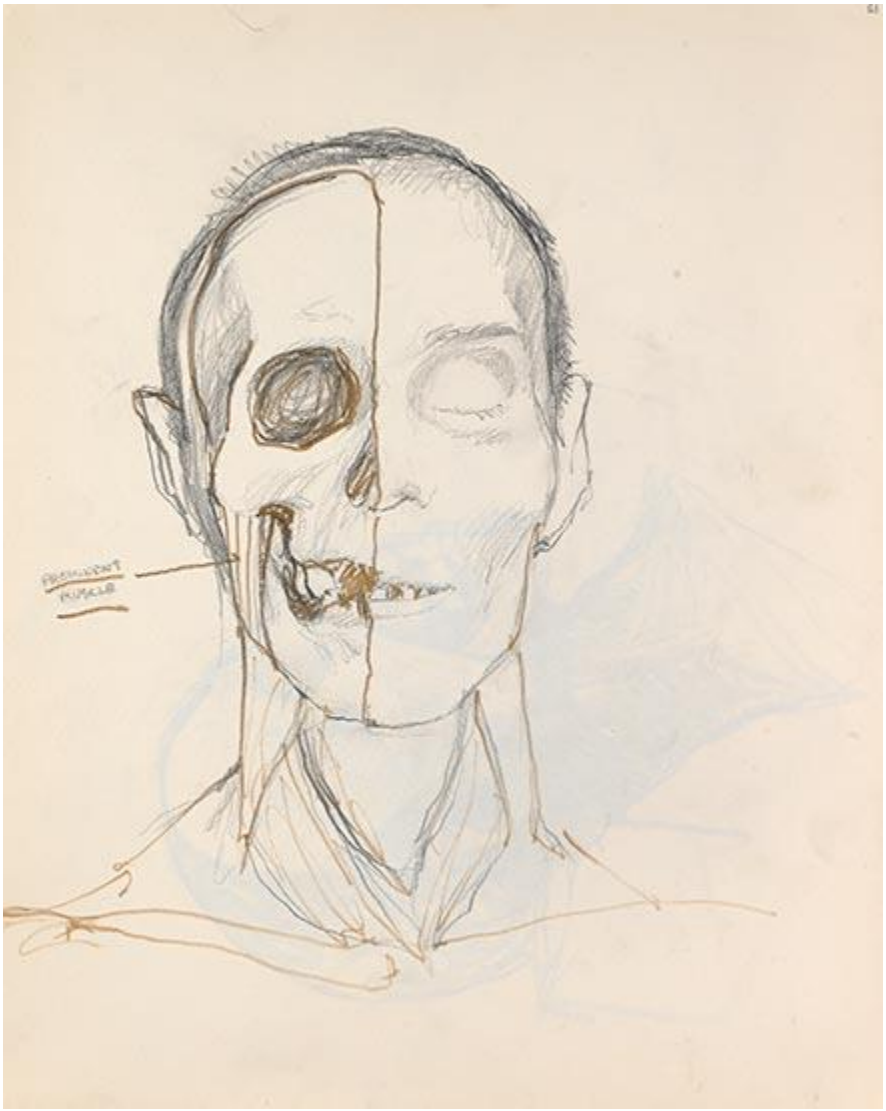
Anyone living in or driving through a rural area is apt to be familiar with the sight of roadkill. However, the animal that Wyeth captures in *Deer Head II* is not a typical victim of a collision. The intentional slaughter of an animal provided an opportunity for Wyeth to create one of his darkest works to date.

Morgue Sketchbook, 1965–66

Graphite on paper

Brandywine River Museum of Art

Gift of Robert J. Demarest, 2015



The study of human anatomy is standard art-training practice, and though Wyeth did not attend art school, he found a way to examine corpses by working in a morgue alongside a doctor. Several sketchbooks of his morgue studies bear witness to the depth of his knowledge of the human form with flesh and tissue removed. In a completely nonstandard practice, Wyeth was given permission to dissect bodies on his own, working with a researcher in comparative anatomy. He recalled that these sketchbooks smelled like formaldehyde for years afterward.

Butcher Shop, 2015

Tableau

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

A Midsummer Night's Dusk, 2022

Oil, enamel, and acrylic on Claybord panel

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

"Those are my cattle on the farm. I love their sort of kabuki masklike faces coming toward me. They sort of terrified me."

—Jamie Wyeth

Sheep Eyes, 1968

Watercolor on paper

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Beginning as early as 1968 in a group of studies related to the painting *Portrait of Lady*, Wyeth's interest in the menacing side of the animal world begins to emerge. In *Sheep Eyes*, he demonstrates how the gaze of even a purportedly gentle creature might evince menace.

Wyeth layers and repeats the central motif of the animals' black masks and glowing eyes bisected by horizontal slits. The unusually shaped pupils are directly tied to the survival of sheep: grazing animals require a broad scope of vision to guard against ambush.

Portrait of Lady, Study #1, 1968

Watercolor on paper

Private collection

This study echoes the sentiment Wyeth inscribed on another sketch of this sheep named Lady. Below a black ink and wash rendering of a sheep's head, he wrote, "His face is the blackest of blacks and his eyes are an unearthly pale—he terrifies me." In *Portrait of Lady, Study #1*, the eyes remain a focus, but the full upright body of the animal alludes to the importance of vigilance through its alert posture. Even in the relatively safe confines of a farm, Lady is fully prepared against attack.

Gull and Windsor, 1993

Combined mediums on paper

Collection of Lindsay and Candice Hooper

The concept of imprisonment arises in *Gull and Windsor*, a view inside Wyeth's lighthouse on Southern Island. The empty

chair echoes the body that once sat there (and possibly will again). The person and their whereabouts remain a mystery, while the gull on the windowsill replaces the human element. Why and how is this bird inside? Is it injured and under someone's care? Is the house abandoned and now reclaimed by nature? Trapped inside by a thin pane of glass, the gull peers out the window. His confinement is further emphasized by the many spindles of the chair, functionally meant to wrap around a human form but which now become a partial cage for this forlorn creature.

Snow Owl, Fourteenth in a Suite of Untoward Occurrences on Monhegan Island, 2020

Acrylic, oil, and watercolor on canvas

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

Lessons learned from the animal world sometimes appear on Wyeth’s canvases. The sight of a frenzied group of crows midair is a typical signal of danger. While the snow owl in the foreground may appear majestic to the viewer, it incites sheer panic in the crows. Snow owls, now more commonly seen on Monhegan Island in Maine where Wyeth has a home, are the natural enemy of crows and are known to attack and devour them.