

ANDREW WYETH'S TEMPERA PAINTINGS

Wyeth is most widely known for his work in the ancient medium of egg tempera. In this challenging painting method, which he learned from the fifteenth-century treatise *Il Libro d'Arte* by Cennino Cennini, crushed mineral colors are suspended in a mixture of egg yolk and distilled water, mixed fresh daily and applied to a prepared rigid surface in successive fine layers.

There was a wider tempera revival in the 20th century, which included artists like Mark Rothko and Jacob Lawrence, but Wyeth was uncommonly committed to weeks or months

of work to build up a picture in the medium in which oil and acrylic paints readymade in tubes offered far more immediate results. The benefit of such an undertaking was a highly refined enamel-like surface that served the artist's goals best for certain subjects, while he opted for the freedom and spontaneity of watercolor for others.

Dryad, 2007

Tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P5079



This late tempera originally featured a nude figure in the void within the tree, which inspired Betsy Wyeth to title it after a forest nymph from Greek mythology. The artist subsequently decided to paint out the figure, leaving only the vaguely human form of the tree for a more cryptic, less literal statement of the evocative potential he found in plant life.

Raccoon, 1958

Egg tempera on panel

Acquisition in memory of Nancy Hanks made possible by David Rockefeller, Laurance S.

Rockefeller, Mimi Haskell, and The Pew Memorial Trust, 1983 83.15



In this sensitive study of character and texture, one dog strains at the chain while another, illuminated by sunlight, seems resigned to his fate. These raccoon-hunting dogs belonged to a Chadds Ford neighbor of the Wyeths' and whose property would become Andrew and Betsy Wyeth's home less than a decade later.

Night Sleeper, 1979

Egg tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P5020



This monumental work is a portrait both of the Wyeth's dog, Nell, and of Brinton's Mill, the eighteenth-century industrial site that Betsy James Wyeth transformed into a family home. Like so many of Wyeth's works, the view is visionary rather than photographic, combining views of multiple sites in Chadds Ford with memories of overnight trains.

Woodshed, 1944

Egg tempera on panel

Bequest of C. Porter Schutt, 1995 95.10



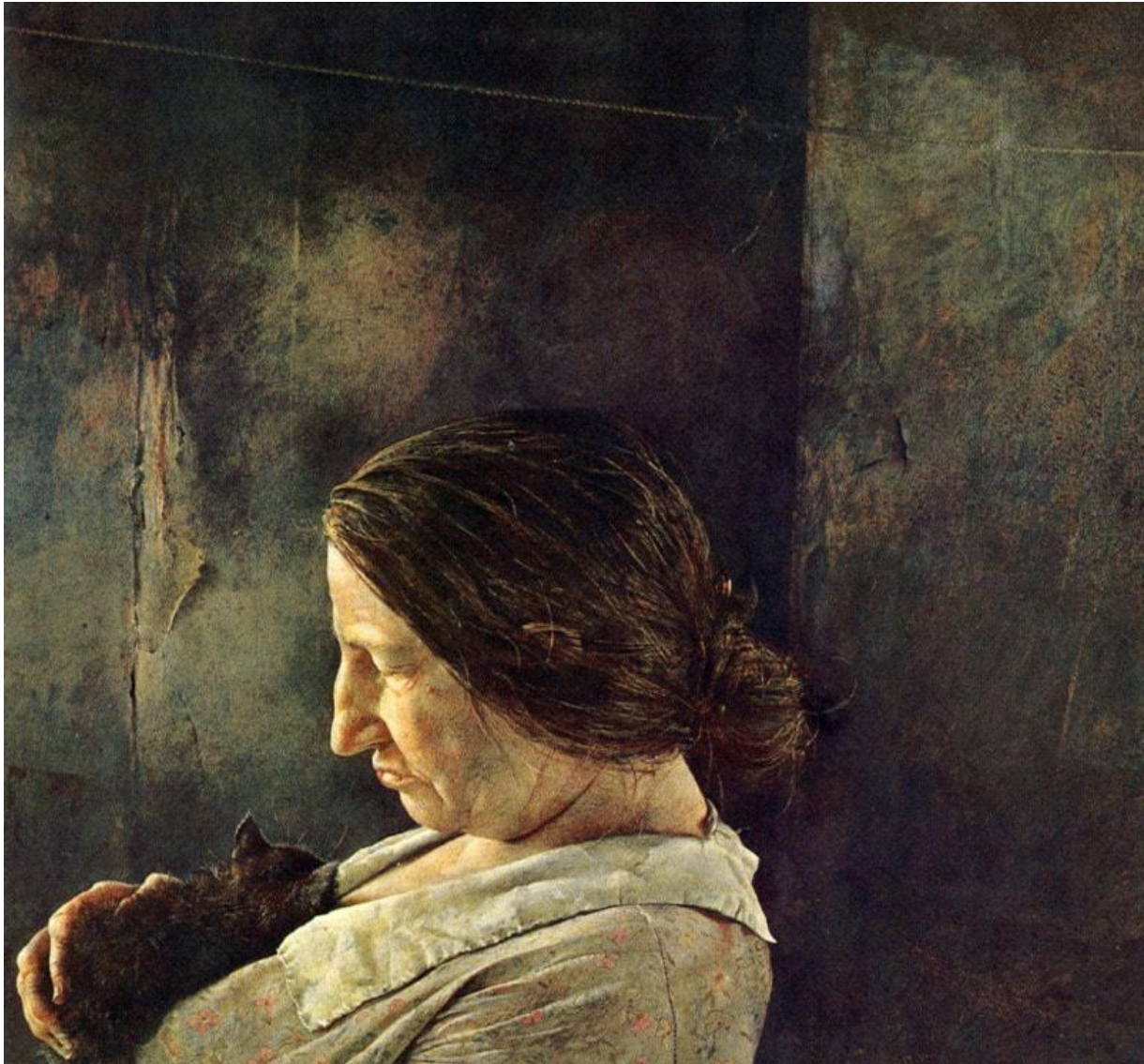
Even when highly refined in their details, Wyeth's tempera compositions could be startlingly experimental in their compositions, as in the case of *Woodshed*. The subject was one he stumbled on at Chadds Ford's Kuerner

Farm, a favorite subject that became a focus of many of his meditations on mortality.

Miss Olson, 1952

Egg tempera on panel

Gift of Alida R. Messinger, 2024 2024.6



The ability of tempera to impart detail allowed the artist to intricately capture the kitten's fur and Christina Olson's hair, as well as the subtle textures of the wall. Four years after Andrew Wyeth depicted her outdoors in *Christina's World* (Museum of Modern Art, New York), here he captures her profile in the Olson House. The composition, like that of Nicholas nearby, suggests his awareness of other artists who have used this pose to great effect, like James McNeill Whistler and Johannes Vermeer.

Maga's Daughter, 1966

Egg tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P5008



In this image of the artist's wife and creative partner, Betsy James Wyeth, he enters into dialogue with the austerity of Dutch portraiture, including the work of Rembrandt van Rijn. Her Quaker cap acquired at a local antique shop is a product of her deep interest in the Quaker history of this region. Maga was a family nickname for her mother, Elizabeth James.

Nicholas, 1955

Egg tempera on panel

Private Collection



This intimate portrait in muted earthtones depicts the artist's eldest son at age 12.

THE WYETH FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART COLLECTION

Many of the works in this gallery are drawn from the collection of the Wyeth Foundation for American Art. Through the estate plan of Betsy James Wyeth (1921–2020), the Brandywine Museum of Art has been entrusted with the management of approximately 7,000 artworks by Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009) that are owned by the Foundation, along with rare documents and books of great importance to researchers. In concert with the important Wyeth material in the Brandywine's permanent collection and archives, this newly public treasure trove

presents a unique opportunity for art lovers and scholars alike to engage with the full range of a complex creative life, from intimate preparatory drawings to some of the most iconic temperas and watercolors of this artist's career.

Betsy Wyeth's plans also provided for the creation of a new department, the Andrew & Betsy Wyeth Study Center, to oversee these holdings of the Foundation and to facilitate conservation, research, and exhibitions like this one across two collection care facilities. These offices are open by appointment at the Brandywine and at the Farnsworth Art Museum in Rockland, Maine, a key partner in our work to bring the highest professional

standards to the presentation of one of the best-loved stories in American art.