

## **ANDREW WYETH: ESSENTIALS**

*Andrew Wyeth: Essentials* continues the story of the partnership between the artist and his wife, Betsy James Wyeth. Behind the scenes, Betsy supported Andrew in every way, freeing him to concentrate exclusively on his artistic career. Each artwork, even when she is not in the composition, has something of her influence in it. Here, a range of selections from the collection of the Wyeth Foundation for American Art and from the Brandywine's permanent collection bring a new understanding to well-known compositions and introduces works that have not been exhibited before.

*Ides of March Study*

*Hoffman's Barn, 1959*

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P0978



*Candlestand, Study for Sparks*, 2001

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P5065



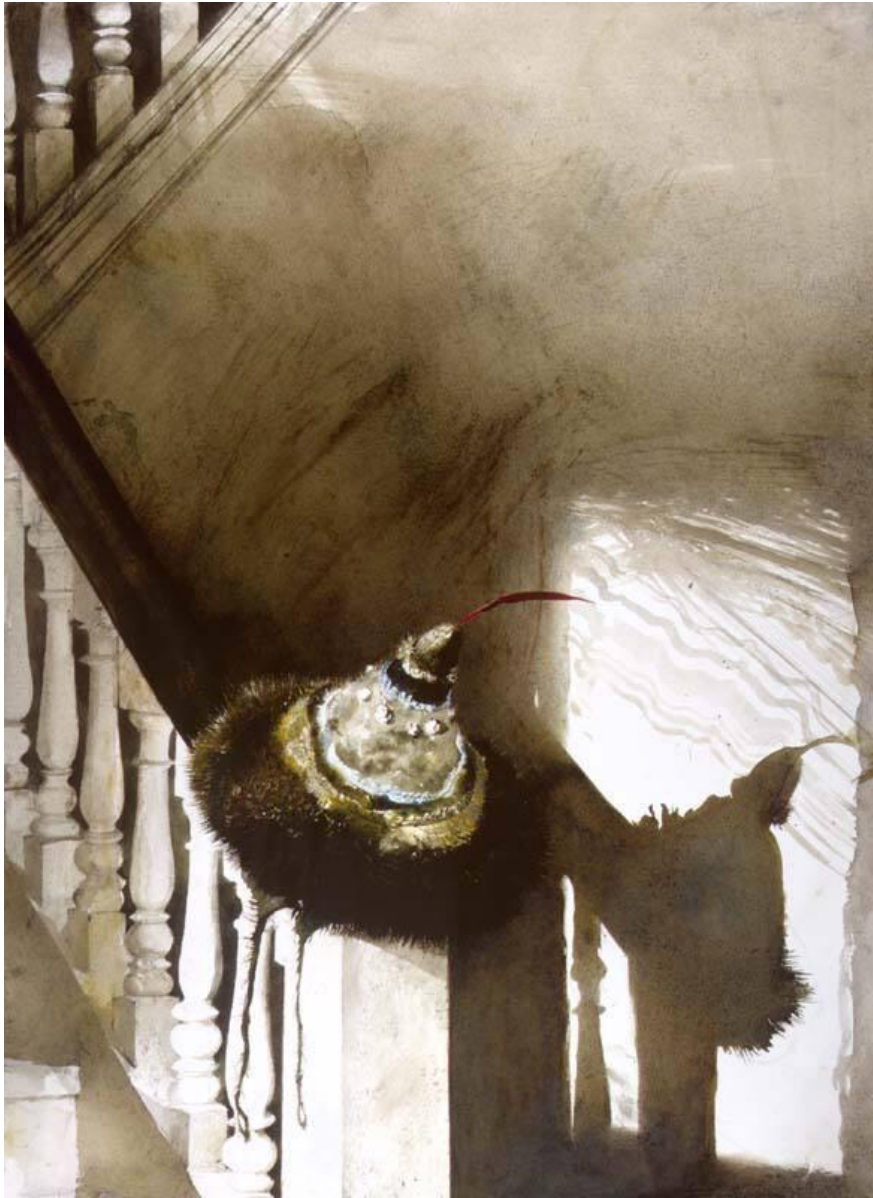
The artworks in this section continue the story of Brinton's Mill as told in the exhibition *By Design: The Worlds of Betsy Wyeth*. These depictions of the property, indoors and outdoors, can be considered portraits of Betsy "in absentia" because the compositions depict spaces she created as well as objects closely associated with her – her knitting bag, the fur trimmed hat, and a glowing hearth.

*A Feather in Her Cap*, 1987

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P5026



*Mill Headgates, 1942*

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P2018



*Untitled*, 1990

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P3168



*Nicholas*, 1955

Egg tempera on panel

Private Collection



Andrew and Betsy's older son captured the artist's attention while the eleven-year-old boy was sitting in Andrew's studio, lost in a reverie. Instead of completing a landscape he was struggling with, the artist covered it with this portrait.

*Adam*, 1963

Egg tempera on panel

Gift of Anson McC. Beard, Jr., 2002, 2002.9



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Adam Johnson was a longtime friend of the artist. Wyeth would walk to his house just a half-mile from the N.C. Wyeth home. It sat next door to Mother Archie's Church, a center of the African American community in early twentieth-century Chadds Ford, itself

another frequent subject of Wyeth's artwork. Johnson was active in preserving the abandoned remains of the church building and graveyard when it was threatened by proposed redevelopment in the 1950s. The site is now owned and maintained by Chadds Ford Township, and can be visited at the intersection of Ring and Bullock Roads.

*Swept Away*, 2006

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P5077



*Untitled*, 1962

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P1330



*Untitled*, n.d.

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P4031



*Lifting*, 1986

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P2953r



*Sticks*, 1980

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P2512



*April, 1992*

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art  
Collection, P5038



Painter's Folly, the Italianate house on Route 1 now owned by Chadds Ford Township, was a later subject of exploration for the artist. Note the depictions of the stone mermaid seen here and in *Painter's Folly*. The differences reflecting a change in season and medium continue the artist's habit of finding new expressions of the same object, model, or space each time he revisited them.

*Painter's Folly*, 1989

Egg tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection, P5036



*Hornet*, 2000

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection, P5063



*Spring on Kuerner's Hill – first version,*  
1984

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P2756



*Spring, 1978*

Egg tempera on panel

Gift of Frances L. Hofer, 1975, 75.7



Local farmer and German immigrant Karl Kuerner provided a teenage Wyeth permission to paint at his farm property in the 1930s. After these long years of companionship, roaming the property and the buildings as if a member of the family

himself, the artists sat at Kuerner's bedside during his final illness. Studies depict the patient in a medical gown, lying in a hospital bed set up in the farmhouse living room. This final composition instead images Kuerner free of his sickbed and encased in a snow drift, as if melting into the hill across the road from the farmhouse.

*Untitled*, 1962

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P0938



*Blue Dump*, 1945

Egg tempera on panel

Brandywine Museum of Art

Gift of Frances L. Hofer, 1975 75.7



*Hand on Hip*, 1952

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art  
Collection, P0174



*Woodshed*, 1944

Egg tempera on panel

Brandywine Museum of Art

Bequest of C. Porter Schutt, 1995

95.10



Wyeth's first egg tempera of Kuerner Farm is a bold experiment in the medium that was becoming his calling card. *Winter Fields* – another meditation on mortality featuring a bird – showcases the fine detail that the tempera medium allows. In contrast, this broad-brushed scene evokes the modernist gestures of the rising abstract expressionist movement. At the same time, it captures the subtleties of defining black feathers in shadow against a whitewashed wall bathed in sunlight.

*Untitled*, 1950

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P0193



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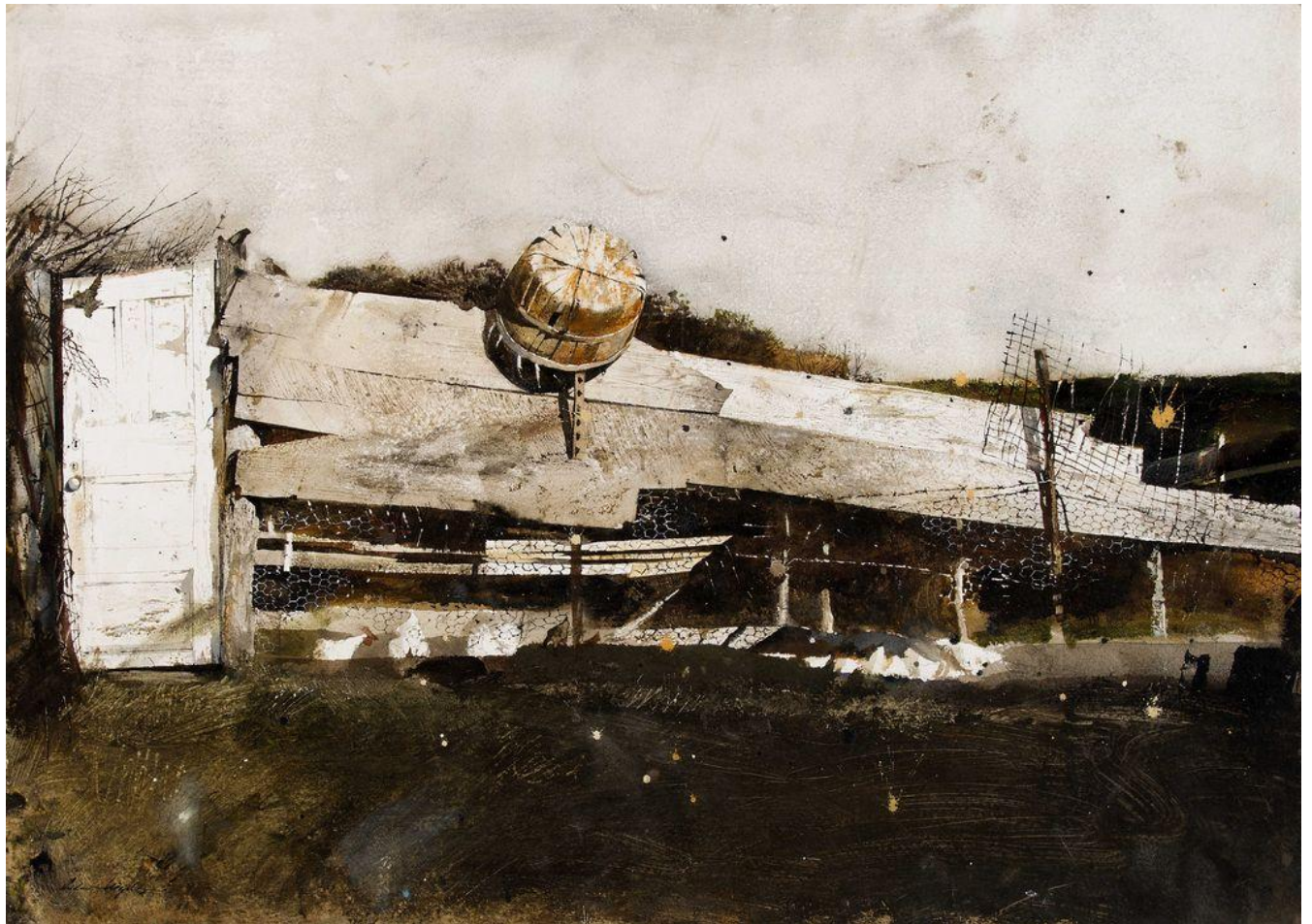
The octagonal roof still sits atop Mother Archie's Church here, but the encroaching vegetation hints that the building is no longer in use. Chadds Ford Township would acquire the site in 1954.

*Bushel Basket Study, 1958*

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection, P0927



*Snow Hill*, 1989

Egg tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P5037



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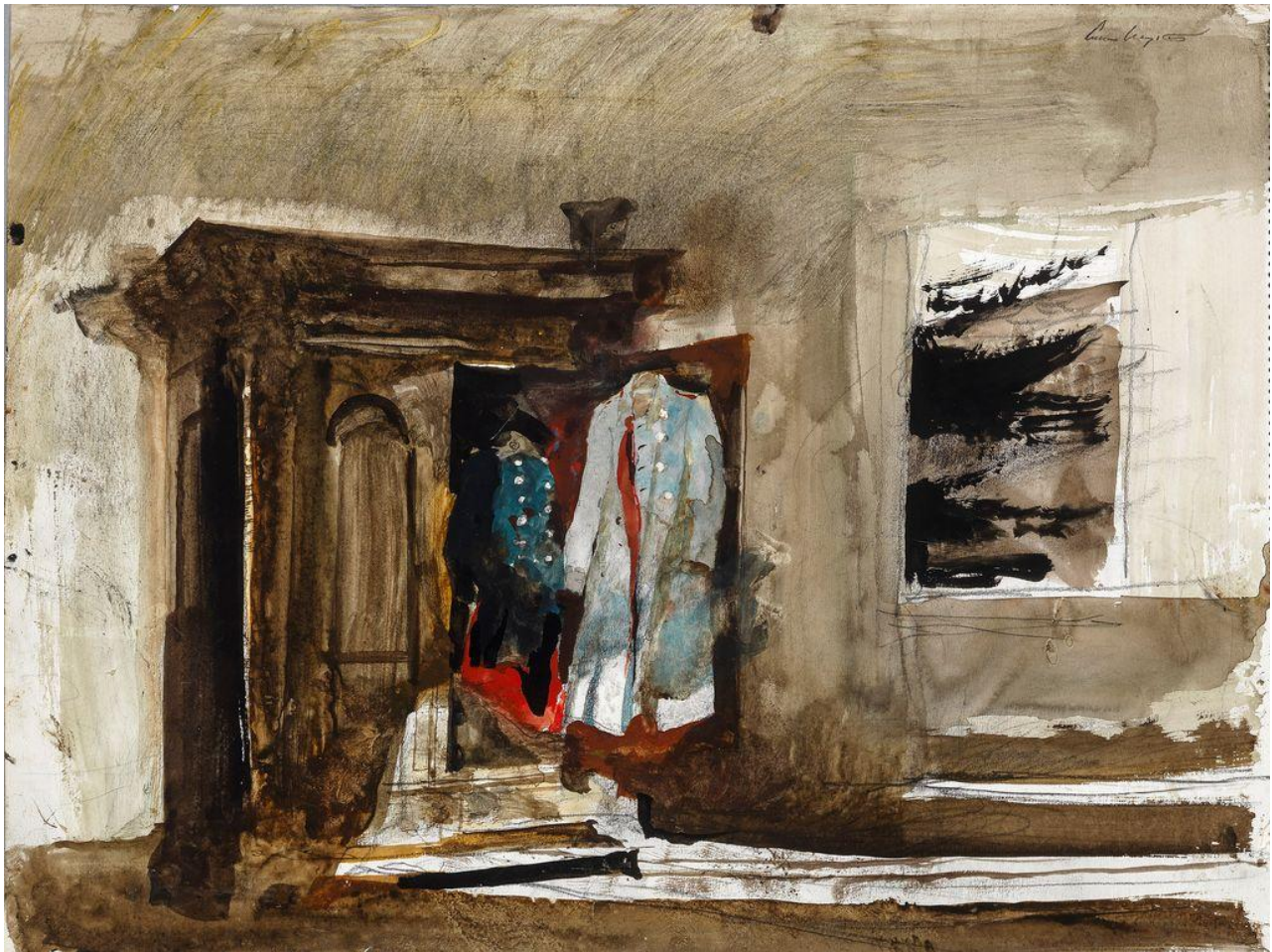
*Snow Hill* is both fantasy and memorial: a summation of the places and people of Chadds Ford that had occupied Andrew

Wyeth's life and work for the previous 55 years. Dancing around an imaginary maypole atop Kuerner's Hill are, from left, Karl and Anna Kuerner, Bill Loper, Adam Johnson (partially hidden), Allen Lynch, and Helga Testorf. The railroad tracks where the artist's father, N.C. Wyeth, was killed, are seen at left near the Kuerner farmhouse and barn. At right, the distinctive octagonal roof of Mother Archies has been brought back from the ruin it is today. The Ring Road cut leads to the Bullock House and Adam Johnson's house with hay bales complete the scene. Of all the models, Anna and Helga were the only two still alive when the painting was done.

*Wardrobe Study, 1985*

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art  
Collection, P2727r



*Untitled*, 1950

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P0389



*The Bachelor Study, 1964*

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P1135



*Slight Breeze Study*, 1968

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P1804



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Wyeth began most of his egg tempera paintings by making preliminary studies that allowed him to explore different aspects of a scene before selecting the details of

the final version. By closely rendering isolating objects within the composition, he was able to find their most essential elements. Wyeth could experiment with the placement of shapes and tones using pencil and watercolor, quicker and more spontaneous media than the exacting work of tempera. Studies were often done on site and brought to the studio to serve as visual notes for the artist. The final work was often done off-site due to the unwieldiness of a stiff and heavy board supporting the many layers of paint required by the tempera process. These studies have never been publicly exhibited before.

*Slight Breeze Study*, 1968

Watercolor and pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P1805

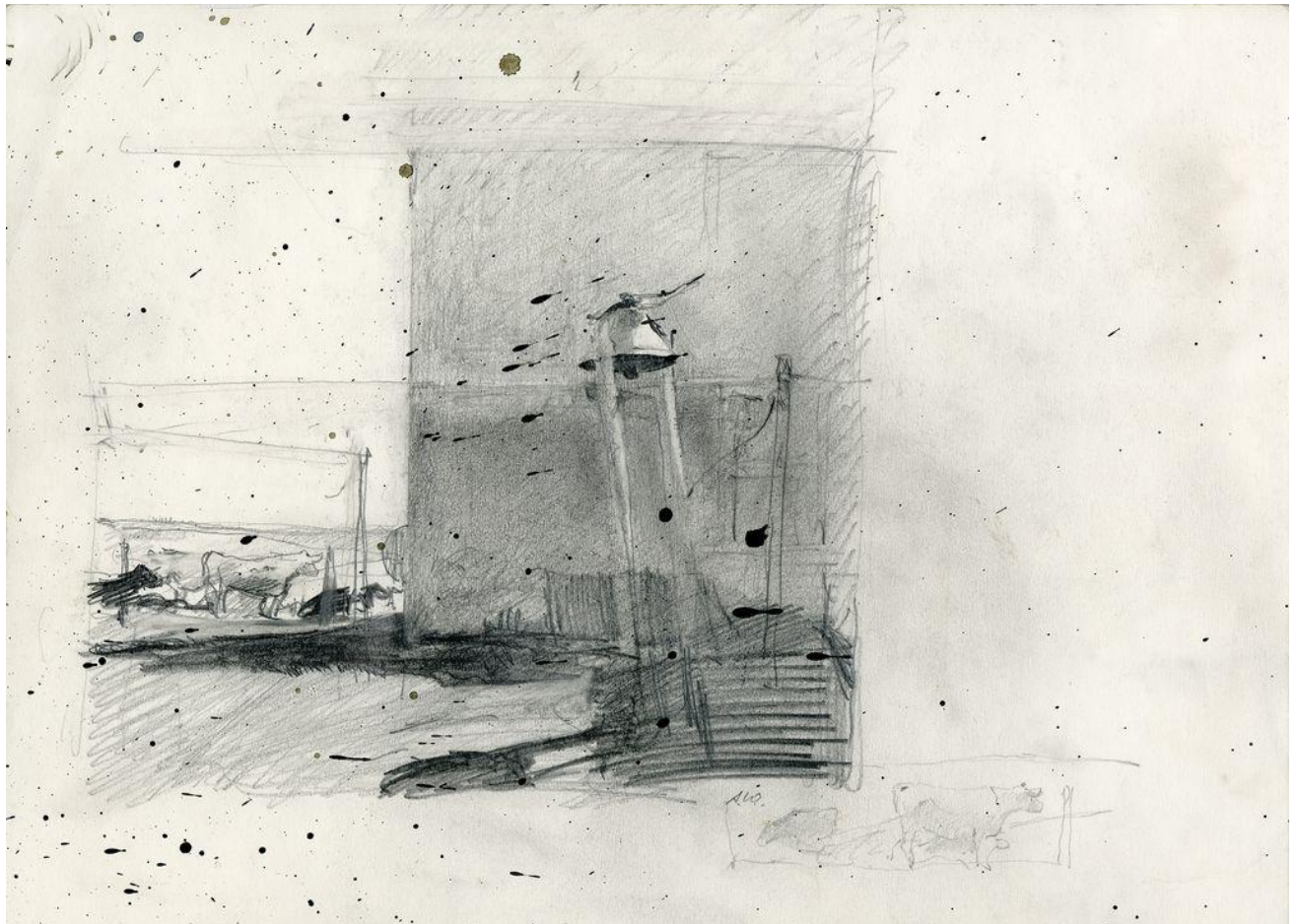


*Slight Breeze Study, 1968*

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P18053



*Slight Breeze Study, 1968*

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P2033

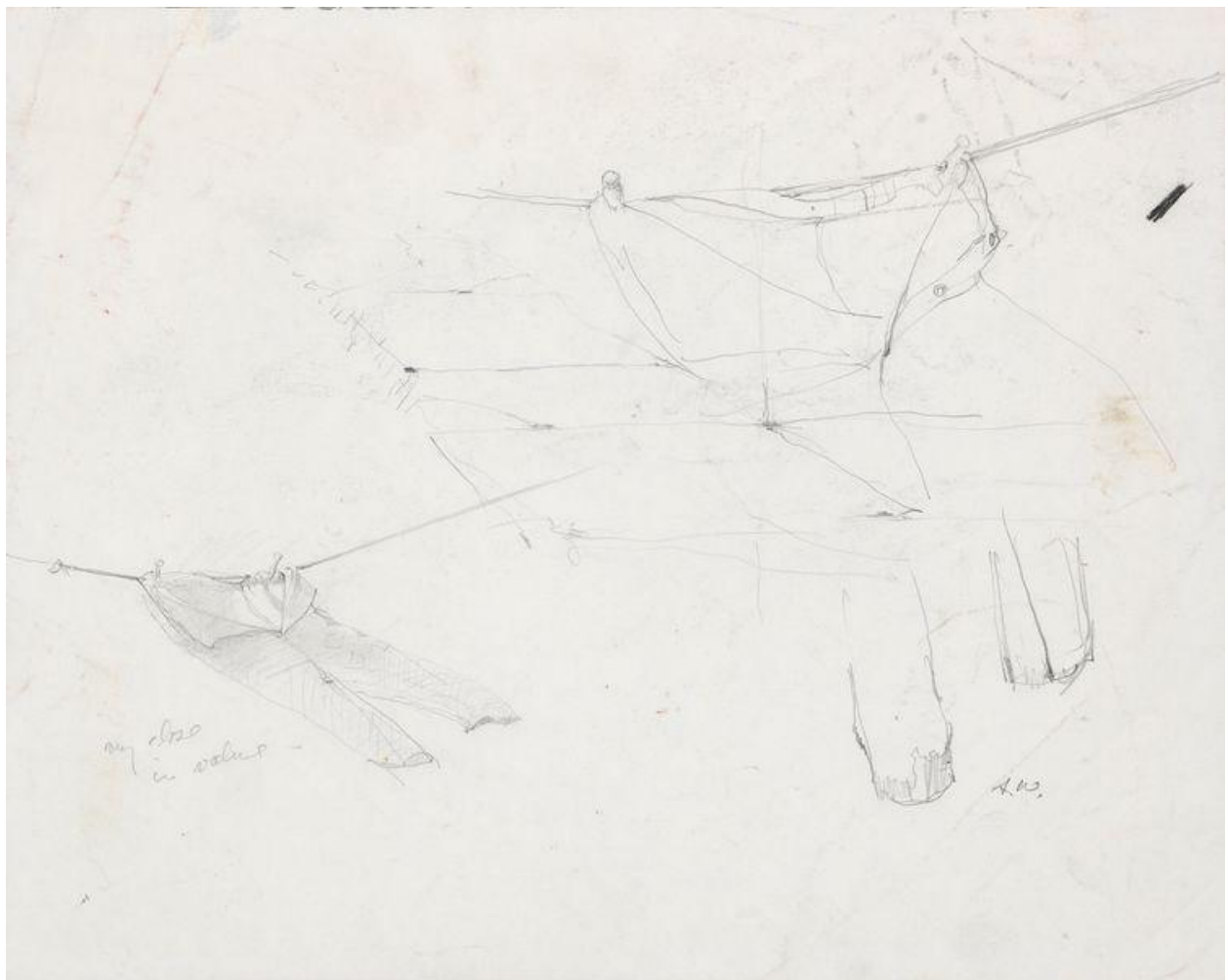


*Slight Breeze Study, 1968*

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P2609



*Slight Breeze Study*, 1991

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P1807



*Slight Breeze*, 1968

Egg tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P5082



The final scene offers several possible interpretations. The dry quality of tempera more realistically captures sunlight on a white stone wall, the ultimate artistic challenge for both Wyeth and fellow American artist Edward Hopper. The balance achieved by considering each visual element speaks to the acute awareness Wyeth had in the abstract arrangements of the shapes and tones of his artwork. Finally, the artist once said that the bell reminded him of a hat worn by his daughter-in-law Phyllis Mills Wyeth. The bell's tilting supports may also have recalled Phyllis' tenuous gait which was affected by injuries from a serious car accident. Considered in that

aspect, this composition becomes another portrait “in absentia.” Despite any narratives, Wyeth emphasized that the viewer must be able to bring their own perspective to a composition for an artwork to be truly successful.

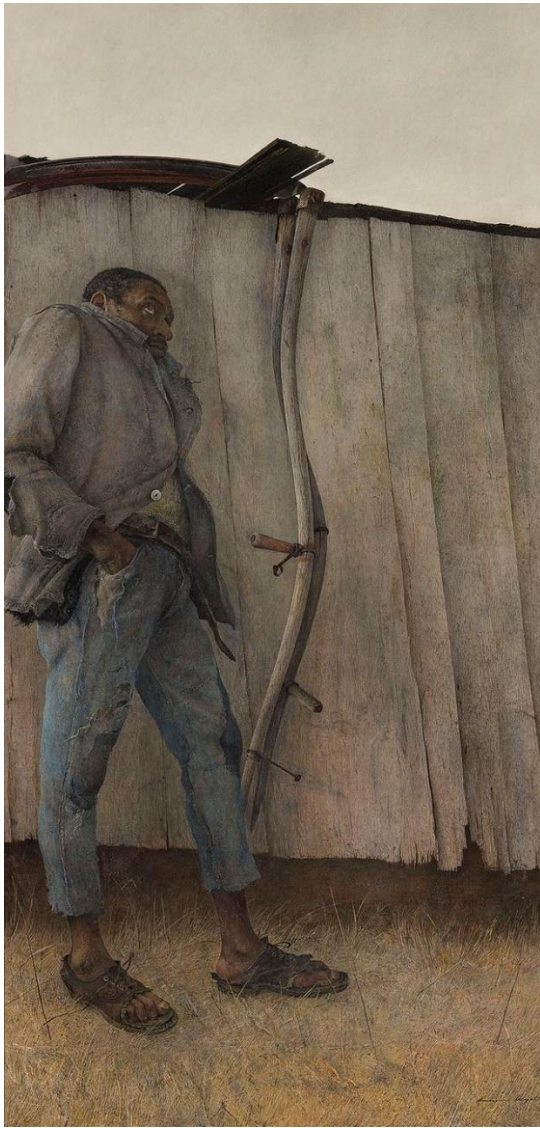
*James Loper, 1952*

Egg tempera on panel

Brandywine Museum of Art

Gift of Harry G. Haskell, Jr., 1971

71.52.5



*Anna Christina*, 1967

Egg tempera on panel

Brandywine Museum of Art and the Museum  
of Fine Arts, Boston, Anonymous Gifts,

2002

2002.13



Anna Christina Olson is depicted here late in her life. Betsy had introduced the two in 1939 and the Olson family and farm became one of the artist's most significant subjects. Olson is the model for the artist's best-known work *Christina's World* (1948 egg tempera, Museum of Modern Art, NY). This frank portrait reveals a woman who directly confronts the viewer, revealing a more specific and formidable person than the earlier depiction's faceless figure in a field. Recently returned from Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, co-owner of the painting, this is the first time the work has been exhibited in Chadds Ford since 2017.

*Big Room*, 1988

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P5032r



At the time Wyeth painted this watercolor, his sister Carolyn and her dogs were the only inhabitants of this living room in the N. C. Wyeth house. Her lifetime of residency is not apparent here as the bare floors and carefully chosen objects more closely represent an interior that echoes the decorative restraint of Betsy Wyeth.

*Midnight Stable Study, 1991*

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P3055

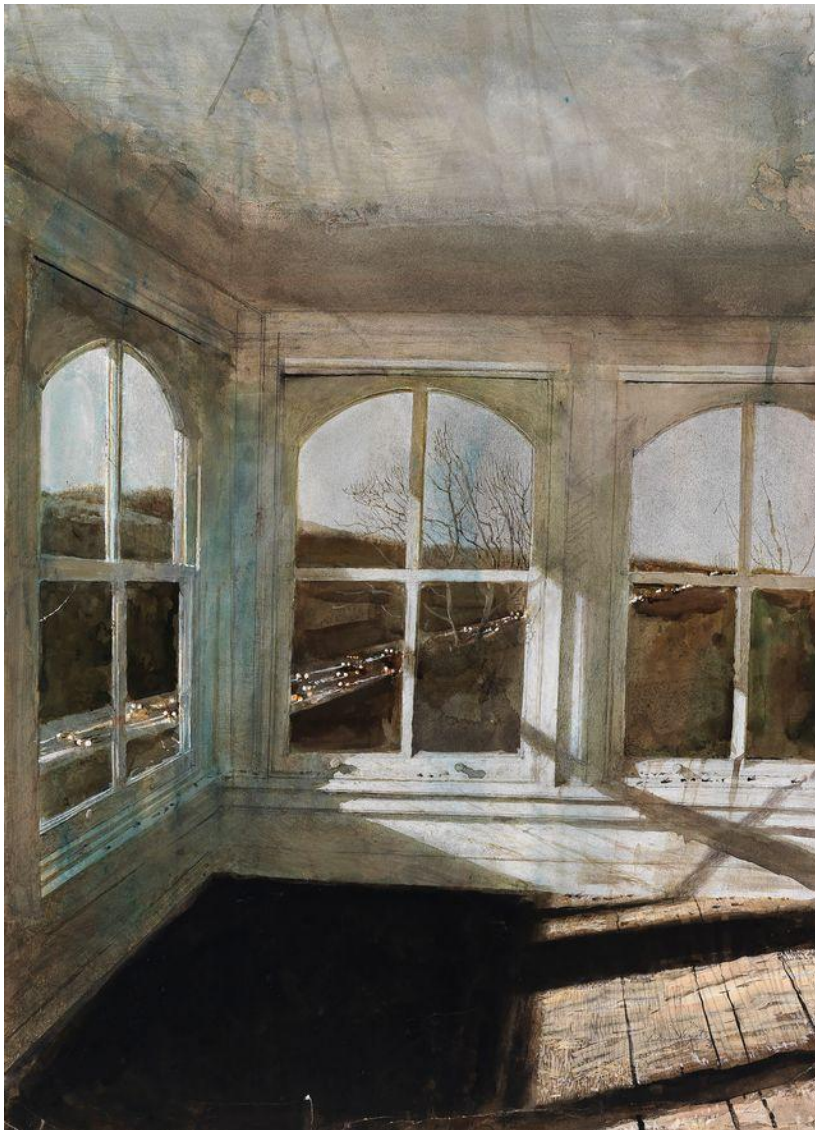


*Renfield Study*, 1995

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P3354



*Untitled*, 1962

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P0967



*N.C. Wyeth Orchard, 1961*

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P0929



*Untitled*, 1978

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection P2428

