

BY DESIGN: THE WORLDS OF BETSY JAMES WYETH

Betsy James Wyeth (1921–2020) was an innovative designer of complex environments whose lasting legacy in visual art and landscape this exhibition explores for the first time. Her practice extended to the restoration and adaptive reuse of dozens of historical buildings; the architectural design of new structures; an eclectic collecting practice that shaped distinctive spaces; and the transformation of surrounding lands and views on a monumental scale, all with a consistent vision that spanned decades. *By*

Design tells the story of this built legacy across hundreds of acres in Pennsylvania and Maine, with immersive media that offer the sights and sounds of even the most remote sites she crafted. In dialogue with key loans from across the country, the newly available, largely unseen collections of the Wyeth Foundation for American Art offer fresh insights into the way her work impacted that of her husband, the artist Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009), clarifying the workings of their remarkable creative partnership.

Betsy Wyeth's first major immersive environment was Brinton's Mill, a group of decaying eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings on the banks of the Brandywine Creek that she began transforming into the domestic complex the Wyeths would simply call "The Mill" in 1958. This project, the primary focus of this exhibition, established some key principles that she would carry with her to other far-flung sites. Her overarching vision proclaimed its own descent from an imagined Revolutionary and industrial past while also employing modern styles and materials as her taste dictated. The resulting austere Yankee minimalism is

characterized by cleared landscapes, minimally ornamented fieldstone or frame structures that efface the marks of their modernity, and stark interiors with arrangements of country furniture and ceramics amidst muted earthtones. That these are also characteristic features of her husband's paintings is not a coincidence; in many ways, Betsy Wyeth shaped the worlds that Andrew Wyeth painted.

This exhibition is co-organized by and presented simultaneously at the Brandywine Museum of Art, Colby College Museum of Art and the Farnsworth Art Museum. Major support for this exhibition, its publication, and programming provided by the Wyeth Foundation for American Art.

Merle D. James (1890–1963)

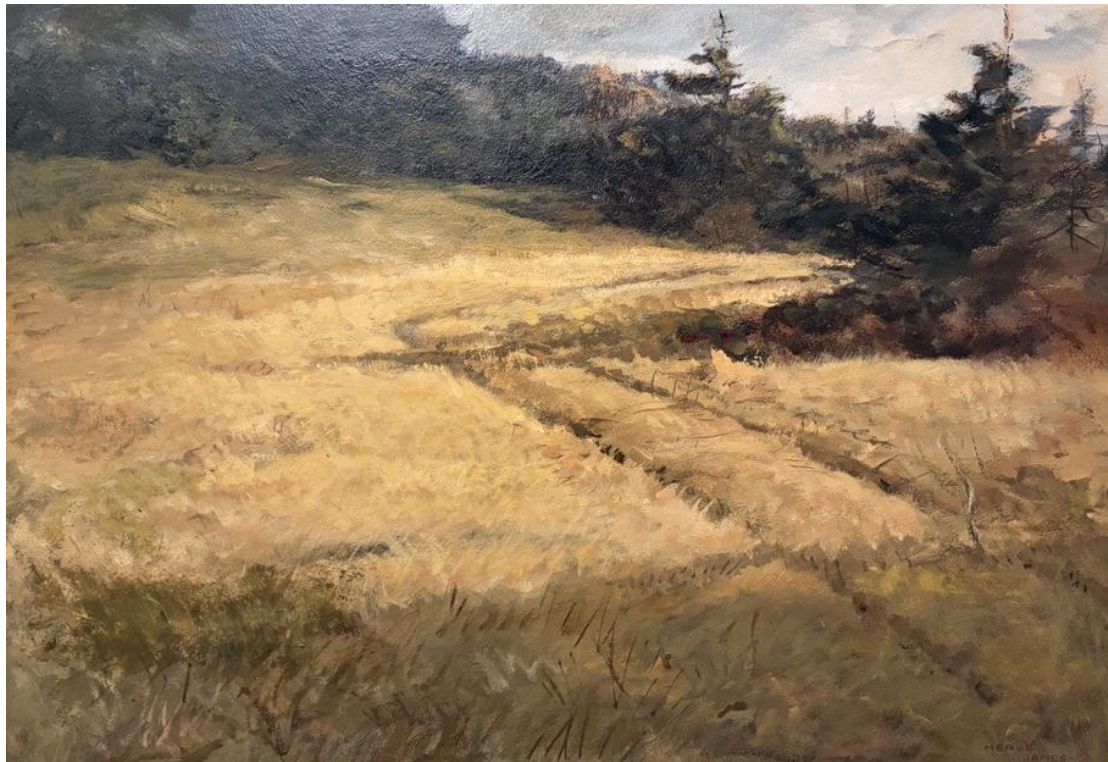
Logging Road, c. 1960

Oil on board

Gift of Anna B. McCoy in honor of Betsy

James Wyeth, 2020

2020.7



Betsy Wyeth's father has often been called a
"Sunday painter," but this label belies his

considerable ability

as *Logging Road* demonstrates. While he did sell a number of paintings in his lifetime, his primary employment in midcareer was not painting but overseeing the image reproduction technology known as rotogravure for the Buffalo *Courier-Express*. This painting is thought to come from a period in which the James family had moved full-time to the Cushing, Maine, property known as Broad Cove Farm. It was here that Betsy executed her first independent architectural design, Shore House, in 1947, one year before Andrew Wyeth painted *Christina's World* nearby.

BEGINNINGS

The upbringing Betsy Wyeth enjoyed in a vibrant creative household and community equipped her with a sensitivity to design and craftsmanship. She was raised in East Aurora, New York, and more specifically in Roycroft—beginning in the 1890s the physical and philosophical center of the American Arts and Crafts movement.

Inspired by the medieval guild system, the members of the Roycroft community sought a return to hand-crafted objects, creating exquisitely printed books with fine bindings, furniture, leatherwork, and metalwork, examples of which are on view nearby. Her

father, Merle James, headed Roycroft's art department and contributed to the design of many of the group's publications. He later served as the image editor for a Buffalo newspaper and was an accomplished amateur painter.

The James family began spending summers in Cushing, Maine in 1931 and, in 1937, acquired the property known as Broad Cove Farm. Though Betsy had intended to study archaeology in college, that plan was set aside when she met, and soon became engaged to, Andrew Wyeth in 1939. Shortly after their wedding in 1940, young couple moved into a renovated nineteenth-century

schoolhouse in Chadds Ford, now known simply as the Andrew Wyeth Studio. This building that was almost literally in the shadow of Betsy Wyeth's father-in-law, the artist-illustrator N.C. Wyeth (1882–1945), was the site of her first experiments with interior design as she studied an unfamiliar region's historic craft traditions.

CASE 1

W.W. Denslow (1856–1915)

Roycroft andirons, c. 1915

Iron

Wyeth Foundation for American Art Historic
Properties Collection



Betsy Wyeth's upbringing at the home her family called Harmony Castle, a short walk from the heart of the Roycroft Arts and Crafts colony, immersed her in a world of artisans and artists from an early age. The community was founded by the charismatic and entrepreneurial Elbert Hubbard, who was inspired by the fine book design and printing of William Morris in England.

The Wyeths lived with the Roycroft legacy in the form of books from and about the colony and examples of its metalwork tradition. These Roycroft andirons were in the Wyeths' home on Benner Island, Maine.

Photographer unknown

Merle James in his office at the Buffalo
Courier Express, n.d.

Wyeth Study Center Archives



James Family Christmas card featuring
Harmony Castle, 1925
Wyeth Study Center Archives



Harmony Castle on the Hill beams a welcome to You

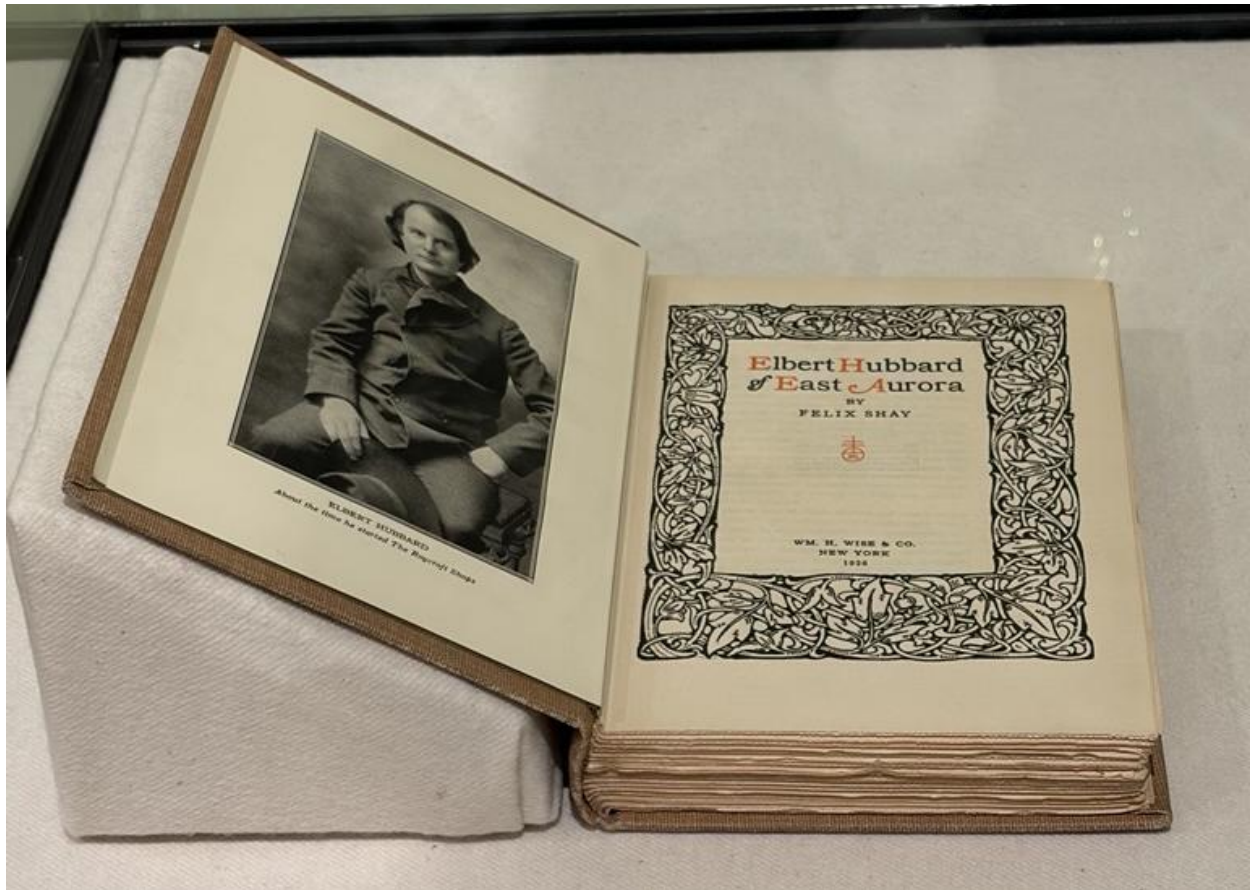
The JAMES'
extend to you Best Wishes for
a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year

ELIZABETH
JIM
LOUISE
GWENDOLYN
BETSEY

Felix Shay

Elbert Hubbard of East Aurora, (New York,
1926)

Wyeth Study Center Archives



END OF CASE 1

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Untitled, 1942

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P0168



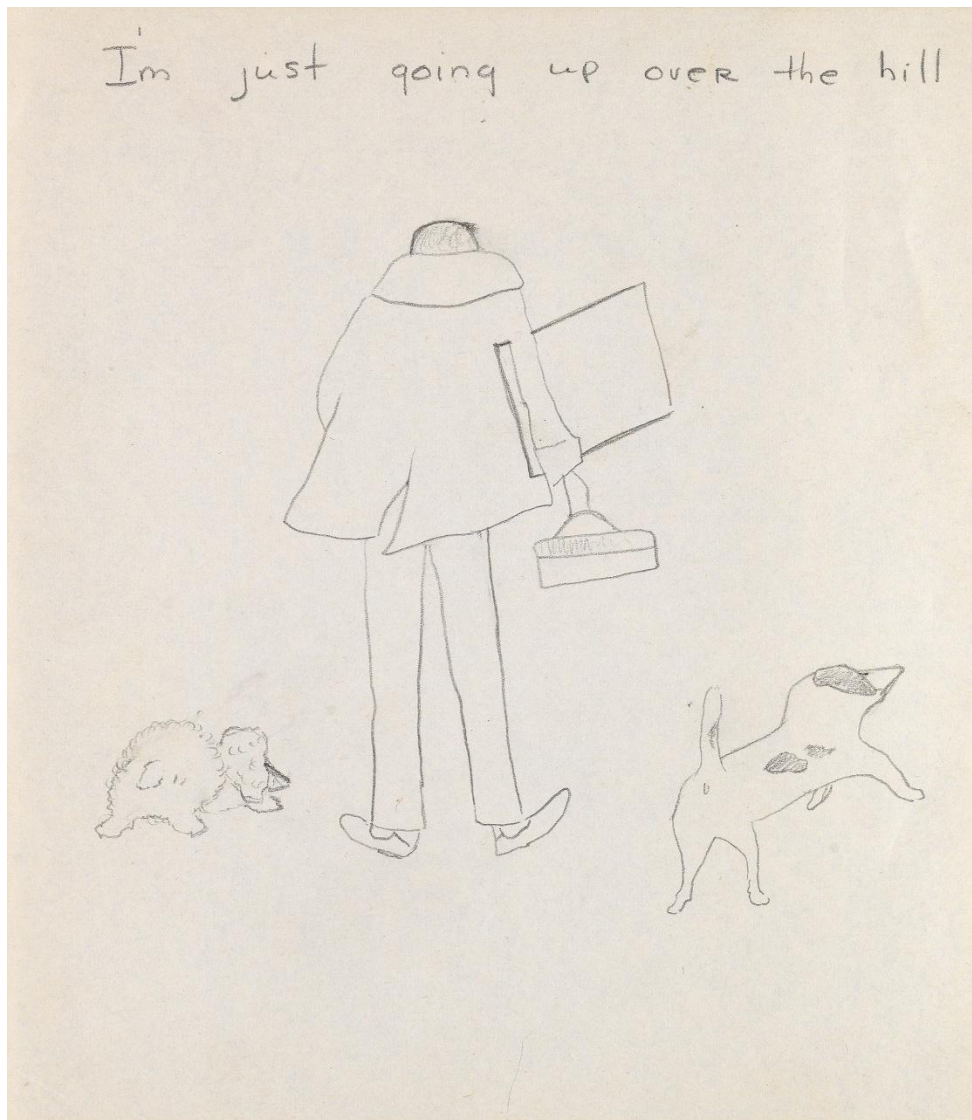
Two years after their marriage, this watercolor depicts Betsy Wyeth recovering from illness in her childhood bedroom at Harmony Castle in East Aurora, New York.

Betsy James Wyeth (1921–2020)

I'm Just Going Up Over The Hill, c. 1952

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Study Center Archives

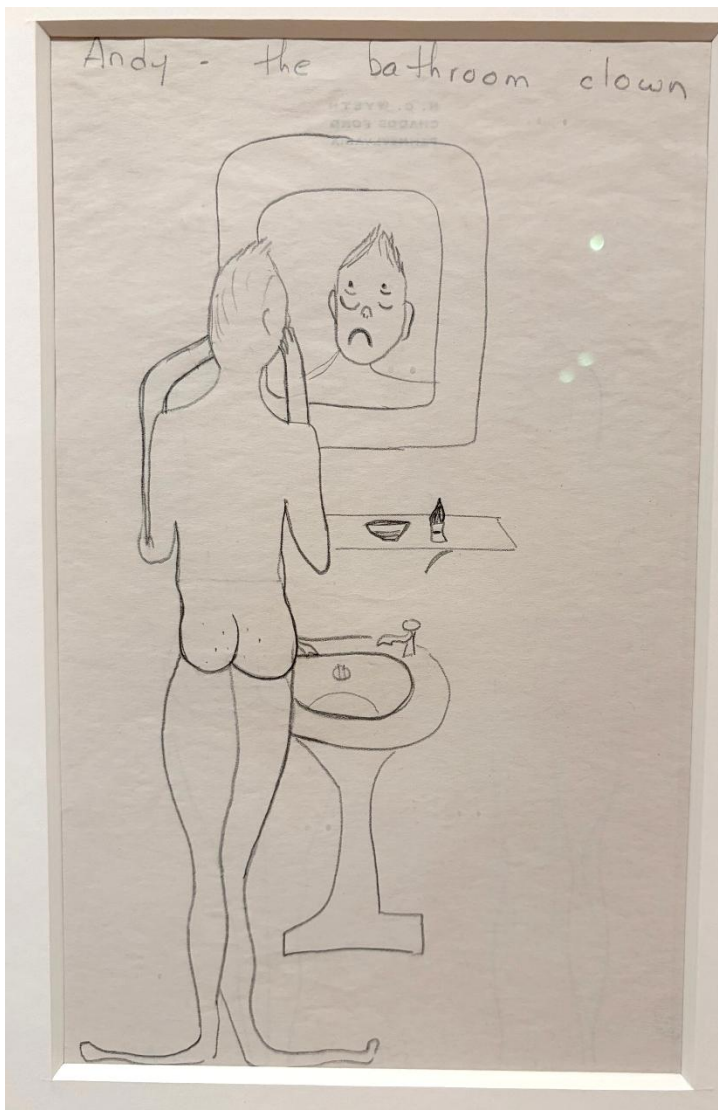


Betsy James Wyeth (1921–2020)

Andy – The Bathroom Clown, c. 1950

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Study Center Archives



These never-before-seen drawings by Betsy Wyeth herself are rare traces of her own hand at work, and charming evidence of their creative partnership.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

The Mill at Brinton's Bridge, 1937

Pen and ink on paper

Purchased with Museum funds, 2008

2008.4



One of Andrew Wyeth's earliest depictions of the site that would become Betsy Wyeth's first designed environment, *The Mill at Brinton's Bridge* records the property before her interventions. Note the protruding structure atop the mill building, a remainder of the site's nineteenth- and twentieth-century industrial uses and one of many features that would be pruned away to suit her perfected vision of an imagined past.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Monday Morning, 1955

Egg tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P5007



Monday Morning is a depiction of Betsy Wyeth's first home in Chadds Ford, the former schoolhouse that is now known as the Andrew Wyeth Studio. The Wyeths lived in this small building from 1940 until their move to the Mill was complete in 1961. In addition to catching the light and textures of a space that Betsy Wyeth made their own with regional antiques, the painting is a kind of portrait of her through an object with which she was associated, a wicker wash basket.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Untitled, 1953

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P0342



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Untitled, 1963

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection, P1053



Exhibited for the first time, these watercolors depict the mill building before and after Betsy Wyeth's work on this imposing structure at the heart of the property. In the 1963 work, one of her defining changes is in evidence: the slash of light at right comes from the distinctive, elongated dormers she added to the mill building and nearby house in emulation of those at the Ephrata Cloister in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, an eighteenth-century religious site.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Untitled, 1958

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P0377



This never-before-exhibited work shows how different Brinton's Mill was before Betsy started her project. The rusted metal silo and structure atop the roof of the mill would be removed, and the proportions of the mill building and foreground granary substantially altered.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

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



Raccoon is the classic image of the mill before Betsy's interventions: a shadowy place of filth and animal cruelty where the ancient textures of the building and associations of the site with the Battle of Brandywine nevertheless spoke to Andrew Wyeth.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

The Mill, 1959

Drybrush watercolor on paper

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection

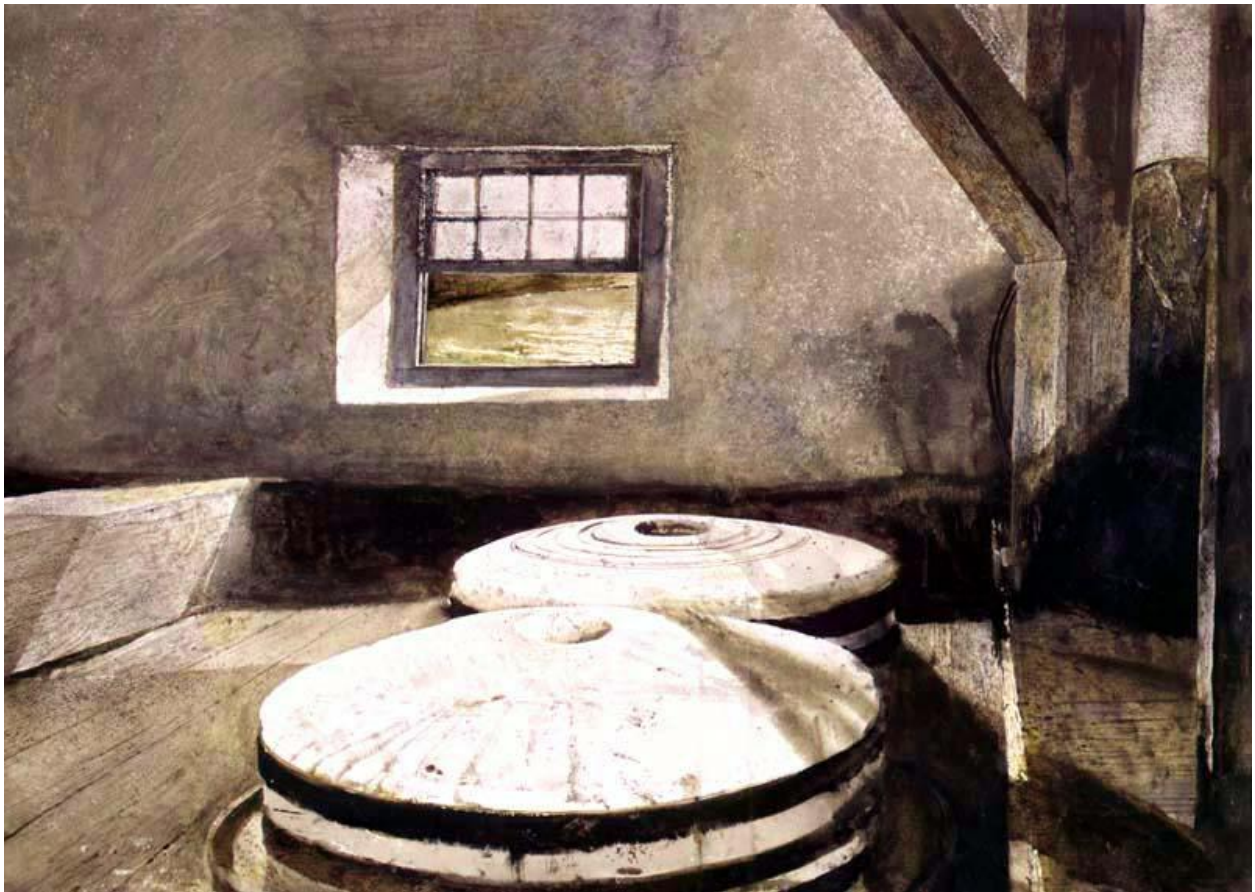


Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Water Mill, 1976

Watercolor on paper

Private Collection



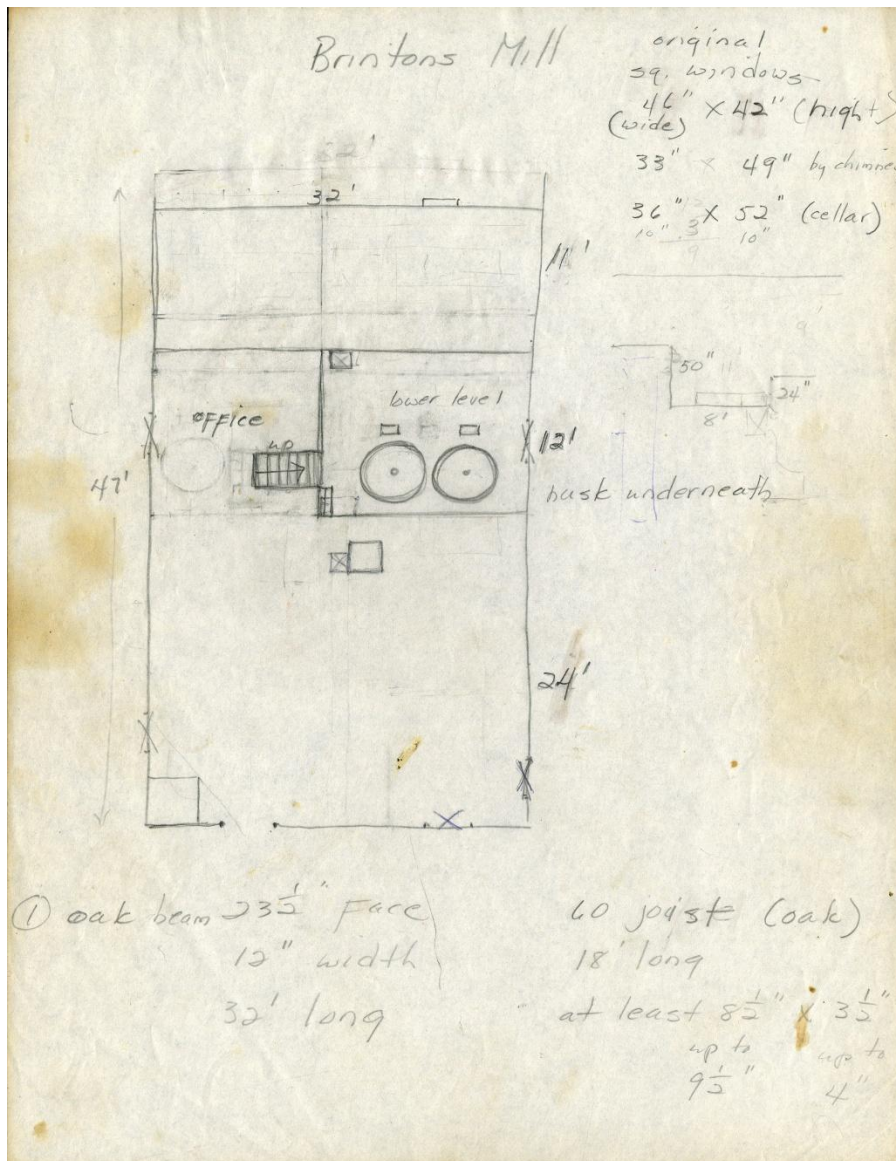
Betsy Wyeth's major work on the Mill was underway by 1959 and, in the classic balance of their creative partnership, Andrew Wyeth in turn responded to the environment she was shaping. *The Mill* serves as a before image, showing the rusting silo that still looms over all. While making inspiring subjects for her husband to paint was an expressed goal of Betsy Wyeth's environmental designs, she insisted on making the Mill not just beautiful but operational. As such, the millstones depicted in *Water Mill* are traces of this effort to get the mechanics right.

Betsy James Wyeth (1921–2020)

Brinton's Mill floor plan, c. 1960

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Study Center Archives



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Chain Hoist, 1965

Watercolor on paper

Collection of Stephen G. Stein



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Untitled, 1972

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P3377



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Untitled, 1972

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P3376



1706

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

The Granary, 1961

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P2652



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Untitled, 1960

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P3024r



This array of works on paper documents the Mill's transformation through stages of Betsy Wyeth's process. A plan in Betsy Wyeth's hand maps out the grinding apparatus that was central to her concept, while the drawings by Andrew envision the likely appearance of her distinctive dormers before completion and imagine what the structure might have looked like in its earliest days. *Chain Hoist* depicts the ongoing work of managing the mill race, which brought water to the water wheel that powered the grinding of grain. It also shows her major change to the height of the structure with a row of marks where the building used to end. Her addition of a full-

height upper floor provided sufficient space for a gallery, office, and art storage. *The Granary* depicts the finished structure, including the raised roofline of the mill building and its added dormers, which result in a refined composition that is transformed again through Andrew Wyeth's visionary watercolor practice.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF BRINTON'S MILL

When Betsy Wyeth came to Chadds Ford, the historic Brinton's Mill was falling into disrepair: an evocative old industrial site that continued to be used for processing grain into the early twentieth century, with unsightly rusted metal additions to prove it. Fire damage and time had taken their toll on the buildings, but the land still bore romantic associations with the Revolutionary War's 1777 Battle of Brandywine, during which a major detachment of British-allied troops crossed

the Brandywine Creek nearby en route to victory in that conflict.

While Andrew Wyeth was at work in 1957 on the tempera *Raccoon*, on view nearby, Betsy Wyeth learned that the property was for sale and set about acquiring it. She was the primary driver and visionary of what became a remarkable, even quixotic, project not only to create a new home but to make the mill building capable of grinding grain again using water power.

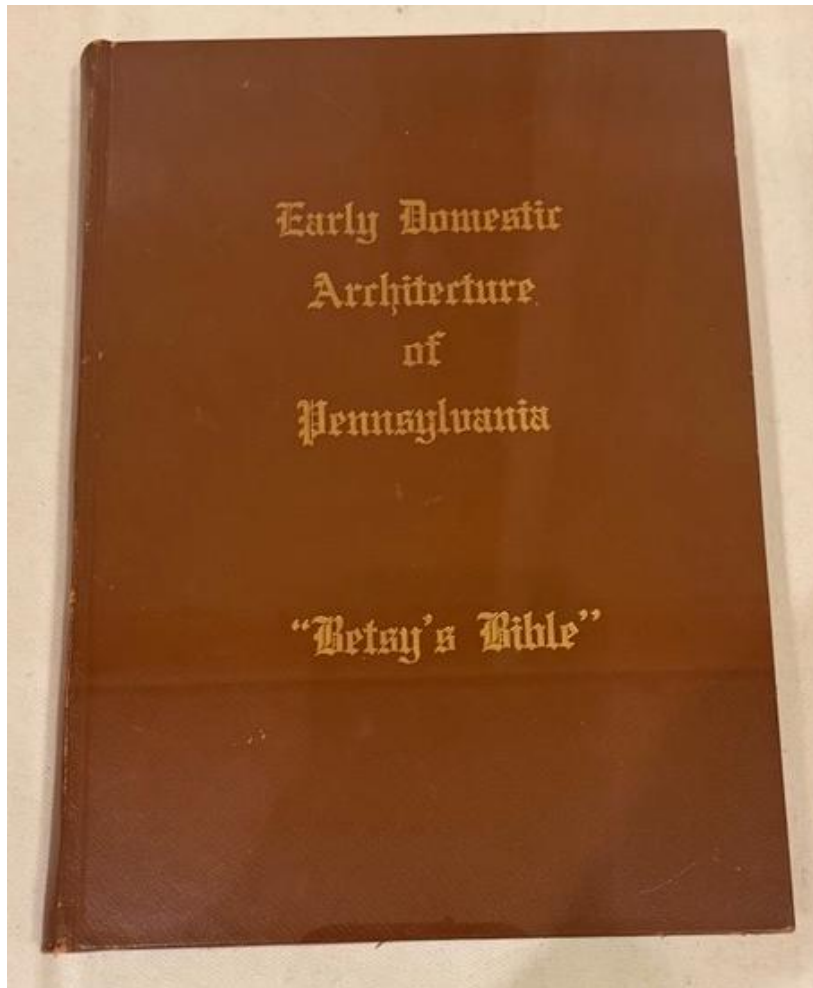
With subtle additions of regional vernacular motifs, she made something

altogether new from the raw material she found there. Supported by local Renaissance man George Heebner, she studied historic and contemporary hydraulics, area architectural traditions, and the latest building materials, creating a unique composite of colonial revival and mid-century modern motifs. The stylized, austere environment Betsy Wyeth crafted at the Mill was very different from the traditional one in which Andrew Wyeth had grown up but quickly became one of his most depicted subjects. Interiors and exteriors she designed inspired hundreds of paintings, in which his creative partner's vision melded with his own. As their son,

the artist Jamie Wyeth, reflected, “she could have co-signed the paintings.”

CASE 2

Custom bound edition of Eleanor Raymond,
Early Domestic Architecture of Pennsylvania,
New York, 1931



Alice Winchester and Vincent Lisanti, "The Pennsylvania Home of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Wyeth" *The Magazine Antiques*, November 1964



Vintage postcard, Brinton 1704 House of
Dilworth, PA – first floor bedroom



Christian C. Sanderson (1882-1966)

Betsy James Wyeth at Caleb Pusey House,
1957

Photograph



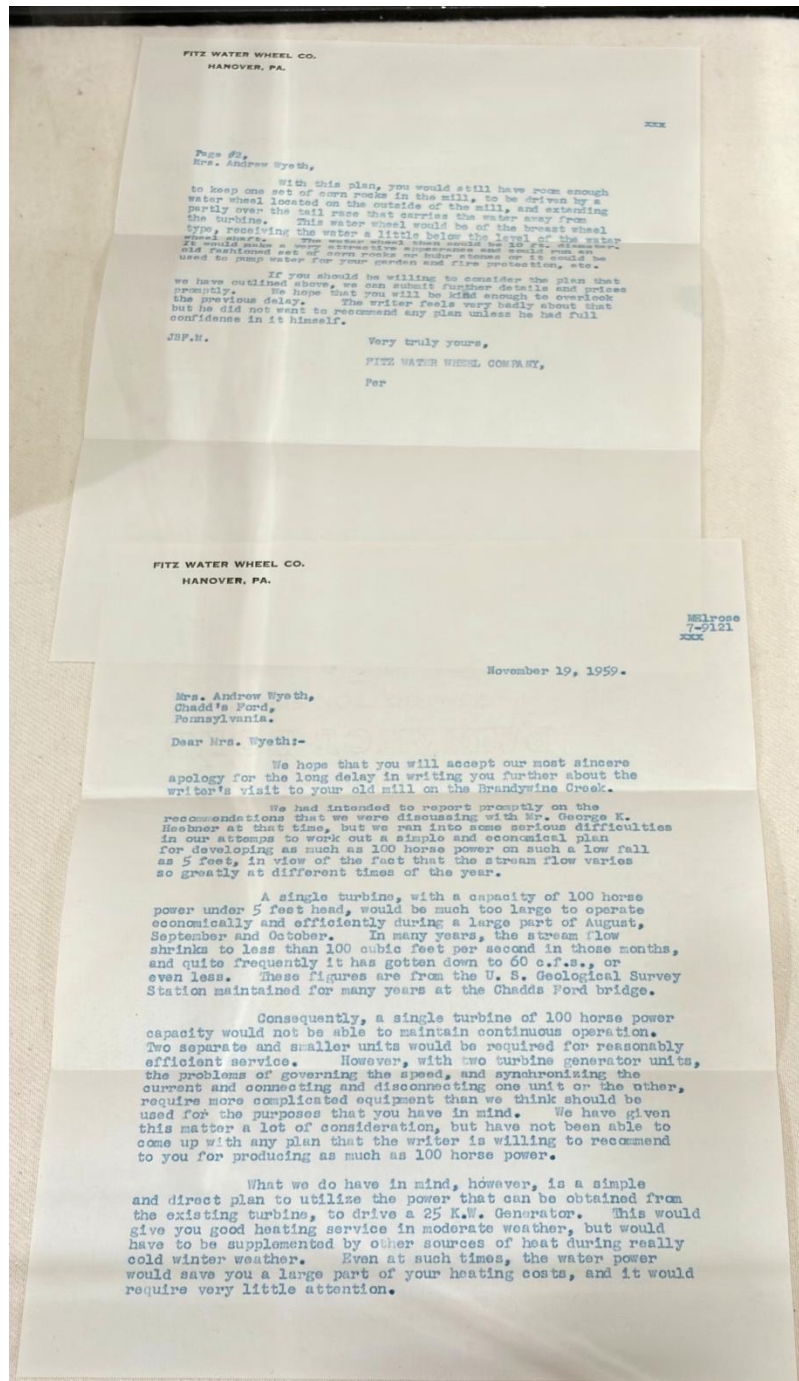
Oliver Evans

The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide

(Philadelphia, 1795)



Letter to Betsy James Wyeth from Fitz Water Wheel Company, November 15, 1959

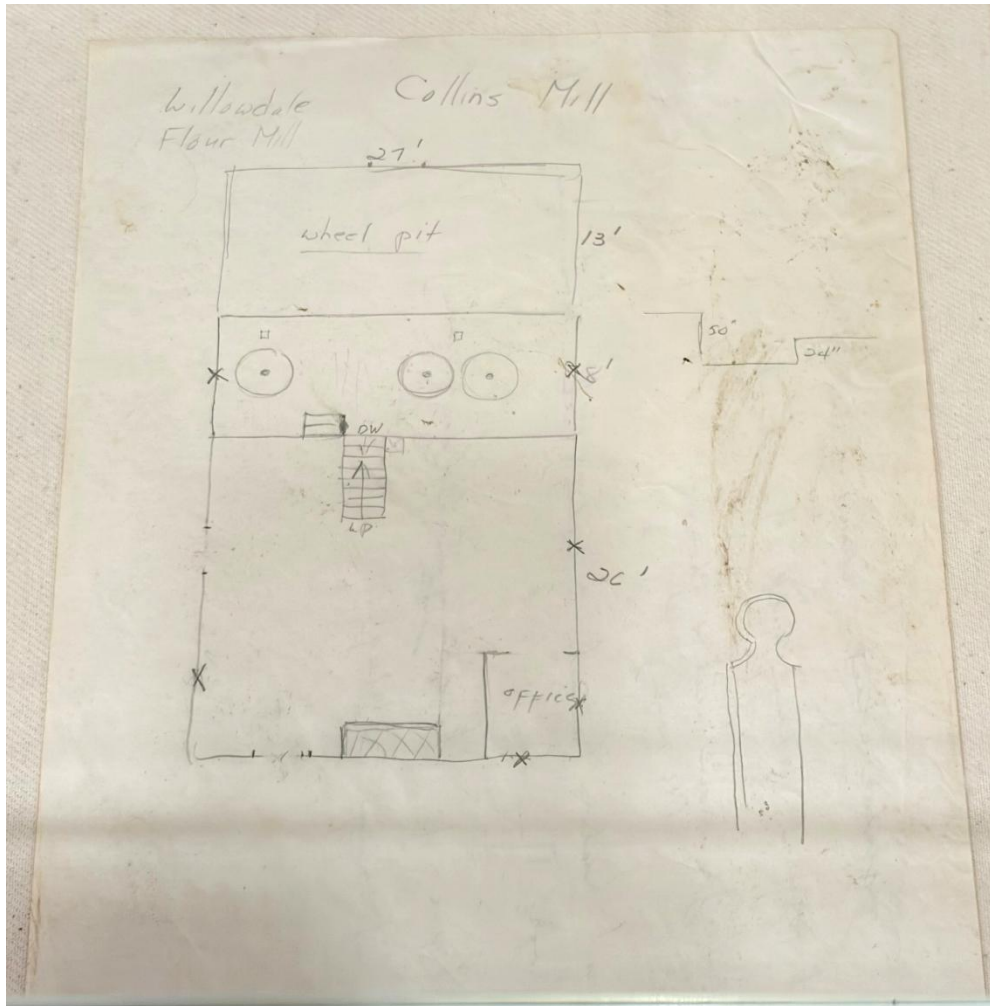


Betsy James Wyeth (1921-2020)

Floor plan of Collins Mill, n.d.

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Study Center Archives



END OF CASE 2

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Outpost, 1968

Egg tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P5010



These works by Andrew Wyeth and from
a *Vogue* magazine photoshoot by

renowned photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson depict Betsy Wyeth in the stages of transforming the house at Brinton's Mill. Working with Andrew Wyeth as her draftsman, even as all evidence indicates the design work was her purview alone, she explored possible orientations of her addition to the ruined house. Cartier-Bresson's image shows the construction in progress, while in *The Country Study*, for which the related tempera is on view nearby, she confronts the viewer from inside the new building. Finally, *Outpost* depicts Betsy at the heart of the world she had created.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

The Country Study, 1965

Watercolor and pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P1322

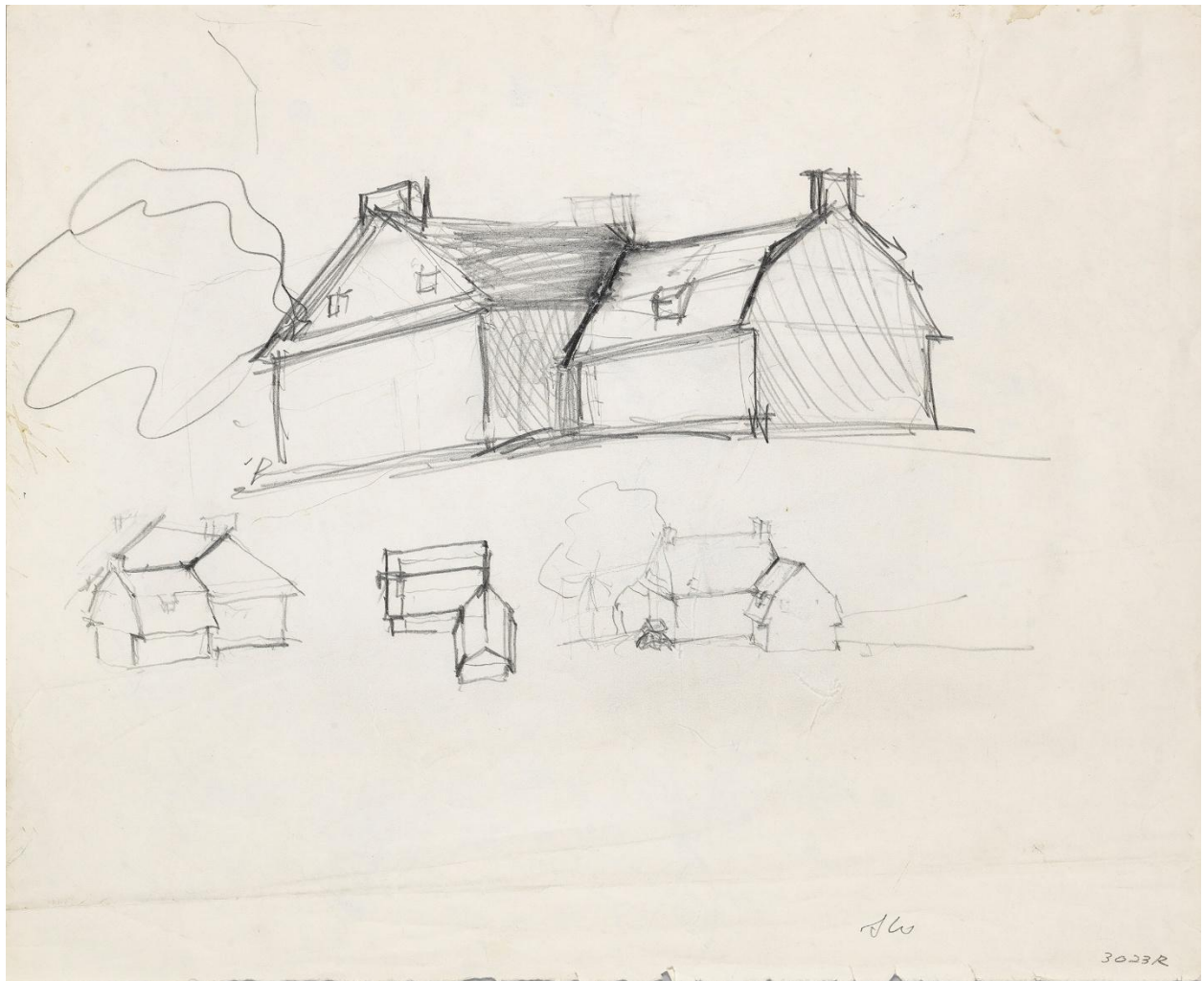


Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Untitled, 1960

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P3023v



Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908–2004)

Andrew and Betsy Wyeth in the Millhouse
Addition, 1962

Photograph on paper

Wyeth Study Center Archives



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

The Country, 1965

Egg tempera on panel

Private Collection, Courtesy of Adelson
Galleries New York



Andrew Wyeth's depictions of Betsy Wyeth along this wall range across 53 years of their life together. While his watercolors and temperas of her designed environments range well into the hundreds, dozens more portraits clarify that her own image was also one of the artist's primary inspirations. Andrew depicts her as the master of her domain, both deep in work and in the completed parts of the Mill project where her impact is most visible.

Andrew Wyeth (1917-2009)

747, 1980

Egg tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P5021



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Betsy at Work, 1941

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P0521r



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Untitled, 1954

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P4038



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Maga's Daughter, 1966

Egg tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P5008



French Twist depicts Betsy Wyeth in the charismatic dining room space in the Millhouse that is recreated in the gallery nearby. In *Maga's Daughter*, which uses a family nickname for her mother, Elizabeth James, she is shown in an evocation of Quaker "plain dress." This, like her architectural designs, is evidence of the Wyeths' fascination with the Quaker history of the Chadds Ford region. The original broad-brimmed hat she wears in the portrait is on view in this gallery.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Shrew, 1994

Watercolor on paper

Private Collection



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Tundra, 1993

Drybrush watercolor on paper

Greenville County Museum of Art, Gift of
Shirley M. Hipp, Buck and Minor Mickel, and
the Greenville County Museum Association

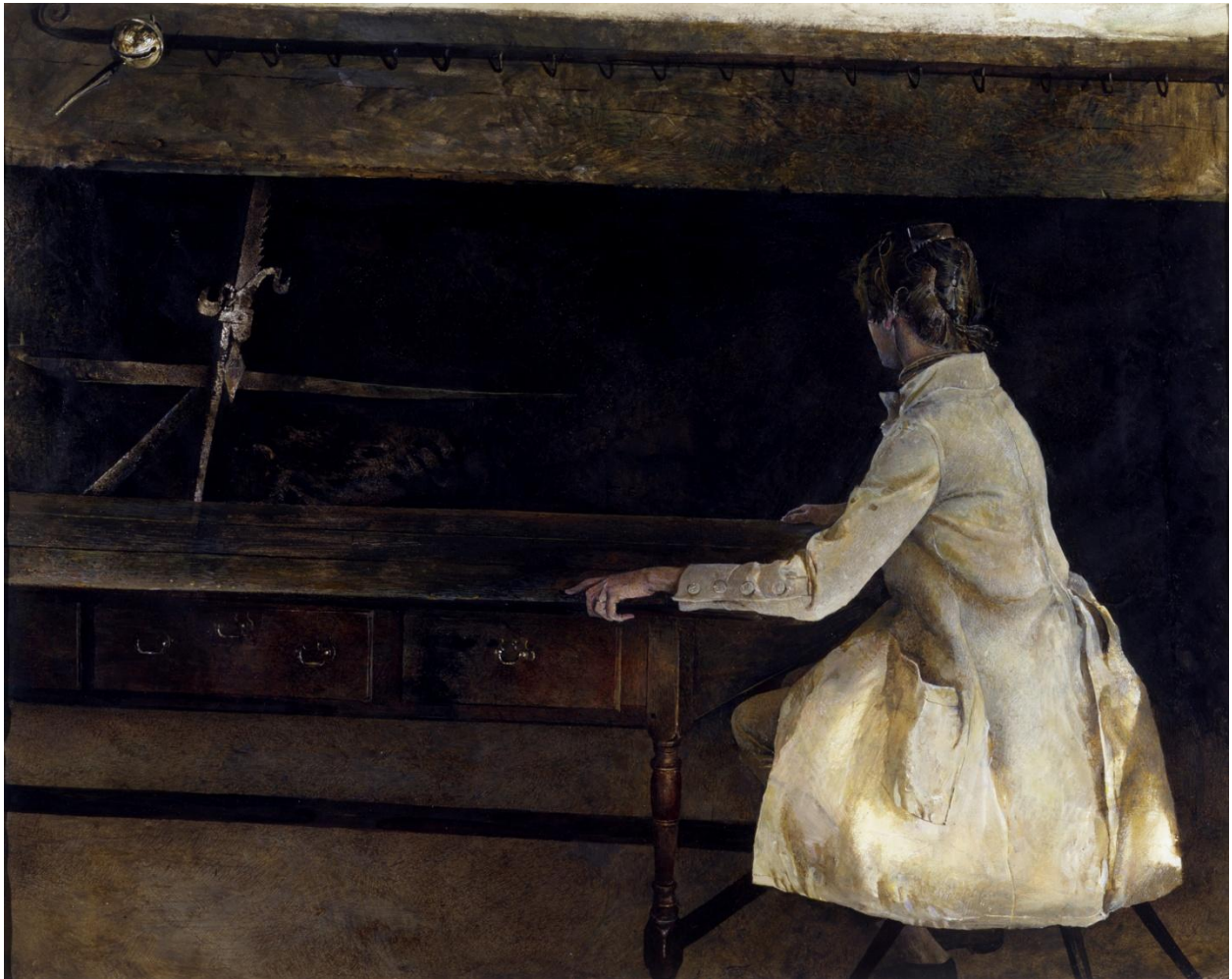


Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

French Twist, 1967

Drybrush watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P5009



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Battleground Study, 1981

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P2584



The artworks in this section reveal how Andrew Wyeth re-imagined the Mill for his own work after the project was complete. This important watercolor and its related tempera at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art depict the completed Brinton's Mill project with Betsy Wyeth's key collaborator: local Renaissance man George Heebner, who carried out her vision down to the smallest detail, including re-shaping modern nails so they would look like historic wrought iron examples.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Swifts, 1991

Watercolor on paper

Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Clay Pigeons, 1980

Watercolor on paper

Private Collection



CASE 3

Unknown maker (likely Russian)

Covered dishes, c. 1900

Ceramic



END OF CASE 3

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Night Sleeper, 1979

Egg tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P5020



In this monumental tempera inspired by the Mill, Andrew Wyeth departs from what Betsy

had created in his own imaginative method. The mill building is shown perfectly illuminated by the moonlight in a view not possible from any single window of the house on the property, and the large openings look closer to those of the titular overnight train than of a home. The features in view to the right are also out of sight from the purported location. Just as Betsy Wyeth's work at first appears merely preservative rather than transformative, so do Andrew Wyeth's paintings often seem to be simple documentation of what the artist saw but reveal visionary operations beneath the surface.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Untitled, 1961

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P0961



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

River Valley, 1966

Watercolor on paper

The Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth Collection



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Barn at Brinton's Mill – First Version, 1962

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Collection, P1048



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Mill Geese, 1970

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P1953



Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Dryad, 2000–07

Egg tempera on panel

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P5020



This late tempera shows how Betsy Wyeth's Mill continued to inspire Andrew Wyeth to the very end of his career. The buildings she shaped are visible in the distance beyond a hollow tree on the property that originally included a nude figure in its void. In just one example of her fundamental role as his key creative adviser, and one who consistently charted a course for her artist away from overt narrative toward more enigmatic material, she urged him to paint out the nude some years after it was first completed.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Doorbell Study, 1990

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, P3712



Across the road from the Mill is a former schoolhouse that Betsy Wyeth converted into an antiques-filled library of regional history and office, where Andrew Wyeth made this watercolor.

THE MAINE PROJECTS

Betsy Wyeth's work in Maine began with the 1947 design of a new structure, the Shore House, for her family's Broad Cove Farm in Cushing and expanded with a playful and theatrical modification of existing structures on Southern Island starting with her purchase of the site in 1978. The most ambitious and complete statement of her design principles came on adjacent Allen and Benner Islands, five miles offshore in midcoast Maine, with the transformation of both land and buildings on a monumental scale from 1979 until 2008. Some common values are evident in

all these projects, including a celebration of the utilitarian structures of the Maine coast and the maritime economy that sustains them; a free engagement with regional historical design languages that mirrors her work at Brinton's Mill; and a core principle of effacing the line between what is old and new, and along with it the evidence of her contributions.

The Olson House, iconic from its appearance in Andrew Wyeth's *Christina's World* (1948, Museum of Modern Art) is another Betsy Wyeth legacy. Her longstanding relationship with Christina and Alvaro Olson, the house's sibling

inhabitants, preceded Andrew Wyeth's creative engagement with the property, so it was a natural progression for her to spearhead the house's transformation into a public historic site after the Olsons' deaths. Subtle touches throughout are traces of the effort

Betsy expended to preserve the lived-in aspect of a hard-used structure that spoke to the Wyeths for its honesty.

The unusual tempera *Otherworld* ties Betsy Wyeth's first holistic environmental design, Brinton's Mill, to the last, Benner Island, imagining these sites linked through oversized windows of the corporate jet on

which a friend sometimes let them travel to
Maine.

CASE 4

Paul Theroux, with photographs by Peter Aaron, "Betsy's World—Part I"

Architectural Digest, June 2009

Wyeth Study Center Archives



The novelist Paul Theroux's 2009 account of Betsy Wyeth's wholesale transformation of Allen and Benner Islands in Maine was the

first time *Architectural Digest* had published a feature article in two parts. Peter Aaron's images capture the nautical New England antiques like this model of a dory that characterize her Yankee minimalist interiors. Theroux's text from a visit the year before, just months before Andrew Wyeth's death, recorded some of the rare instances in which Betsy Wyeth accepted credit for her design work. He quotes Betsy calling one of the key structures on Benner "my tempera." In another anecdote within, Andrew Wyeth pushes back on a visitor's description of these spaces as looking "like an Andrew Wyeth." He said "I think it looks like a Betsy Wyeth, myself."

William S. Cook (1920–2006)

Model of a Dory of Friendship, Maine, 1949

Wood

Wyeth Foundation for American Art

Historic Properties Collection



END OF CASE 4

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Flagstones Study, 1986

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, M2485r



Southern Island is depicted in this never-before-exhibited drawing. This small island off of Tenants Harbor, Maine included a picturesque lighthouse and fog bell tower, which Betsy Wyeth restored and modified along with paths like the one depicted. Four years after this drawing was made, she acquired Benner Island and transferred Southern Island to Jamie Wyeth, who has lived there for much of the year ever since and has continued the evolution of the site with his own eclectic taste.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Ship's Door Study, 1992

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, M2808



In this never-before-seen watercolor, the artist seems to have been struck by the light on the stairs and wall of the building on Benner Island, Maine that he used as a studio. He hones in on the spare textures that Betsy Wyeth had shaped and evokes her presence through the binoculars, with which she was strongly associated as a passionate birder.

Kosti Ruohomaa (1913–1961)

Andrew Wyeth and Alvaro Olson at the
Olson House, 1951

Exhibition print

Wyeth Study Center Archives



Betsy Wyeth connected her husband to the people and buildings of the Olson property in Cushing, Maine, resulting in some of the artist's best-known works. In this image by the Finnish-American photographer Kosti Ruohomaa, who became a friend of the Wyeths, Andrew Wyeth talks with Christina Olson's brother, Alvaro. Betsy Wyeth would work to ensure that the building's patina of use and age would be preserved in its transition into a public historic site.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Her Room Study, 1963

Watercolor and pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, M0019



This study for the tempera *Her Room*, which is currently on view in the linked exhibition at the Farnsworth Art Museum, shows the living room Betsy Wyeth had designed at Broad Cove Farm in Cushing, Maine. As the title indicates, it is a portrait through her interior sensibility and objects associated with her.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

The Witching Hour Study, 1977

Pencil on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, M1751



Never before exhibited, this drawing reflects a suite of antique chairs that Betsy Wyeth had collected and used in a former schoolroom that was first moved to their property in Cushing, Maine, and later, out to remote Benner Island. The related tempera is currently on view in the linked exhibition at the Farnsworth Art Museum.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Airborne Study, 1996

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, M3021r



Betsy Wyeth brought lessons learned, and design principles refined, at Brinton's Mill to her ever more ambitious Maine projects.

Her final major project was Benner Island, which included her design and construction of the building depicted here, known as Oar House. The structure honors the parallel vernacular architectural traditions of Maine and, through the eyes of her husband, becomes a place of uncanny energies as a swirl of feathers rises.

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009)

Goodbye Study, 2008

Watercolor on paper

Wyeth Foundation for American Art
Collection, M3418



This previously unexhibited study for Andrew Wyeth's final tempera encapsulates his creative partnership with Betsy Wyeth. The subject is the Sail Loft on Allen Island, a nineteenth-century structure that she had transported five miles out to sea in pieces and reassembled to serve as the focal point of her created maritime village. It is significant that the artist chose this exceptional case study of Betsy Wyeth's ambitious world-shaping as the focus of a work he knew would be his last in this physically demanding medium.

VIDEO INSTALLATIONS

This installation and the screens elsewhere in the gallery offer the next best thing to visiting all of Betsy Wyeth's remote designed environments, most of which are not currently open to the public. With audio recorded at the sites, the projection is a continuously looping five-minute experience that features her key projects in chronological order: the Shore House at Broad Cove Farm; Brinton's Mill; the Olson House; Southern Island; and the linked pair of Allen and Benner Islands.

BETSY'S BOOKS

In addition to her environmental design work, Betsy Wyeth was deeply engaged in research and writing throughout her life. This largely archival and documentary legacy was fundamental to making Andrew Wyeth's one of the best documented creative processes in the history of art but has been largely invisible. Her books are the public evidence of this commitment.

Her most lasting literary contribution is generally considered to be her years-long project of assembling and transcribing

selected correspondence of her father-in-law, N.C. Wyeth (1882–1945). Published in 1971, this book served as the first biography of this complex artist and illustrator, an important contribution to scholarship, and prompted a reassessment of his career.

Through the original letters she referenced, which were recently donated to the Brandywine and examples of which are reproduced at right, her editorial choices and judgments can be traced. Her pair of books about Andrew Wyeth's work, *Wyeth at Kuerners* (1976) and *Christina's World: Paintings and Prestudies of Andrew*

Wyeth (1982) were innovative in sharing the artist's intimate preparatory drawings publicly and clarifying their use in developing major paintings. On a lighter note, she also collaborated with her son, the artist Jamie Wyeth (b. 1946) on *The Stray* (1979) a children's story that makes use of the characters and history of Chadds Ford.

CASE 5

Donald Pywell (1944–2016)

Buttonwood brooch, c. 1982

18k gold and platinum



Donald Pywell (1944–2016)

Breakup necklace and earrings, 1998

18k gold



Donald Pywell (1944–2016)

Mother Archie's necklace and earrings,
2001

24k gold and rubies



Donald Pywell (1944–2016)

Hay Ledge necklace, c. 1995

18k gold



Donald Pywell (1944–2016)

Swifts necklace and earrings, 1985

18k green gold



Donald Pywell (1944–2016)

Buoys necklace, 1983

18k pale yellow gold



Donald Pywell (1944–2016)

Mussel shell brooch, 1984

18k yellow and white gold and diamonds



Donald Pywell (1944–2016)

Christmas Morning ring, 1984

18k pale yellow gold and diamond



Donald Pywell (1944–2016)

Cornstalks ring, 1985

18k white gold and sapphire

Brandywine Museum of Art, the Andrew and
Betsy Wyeth Collection



Betsy Wyeth's designed life also extended to her attire and adornment. Her jewelry shown here was modeled on motifs from her husband's paintings, further evidence of the way she embodied, inspired, and crafted his practice.

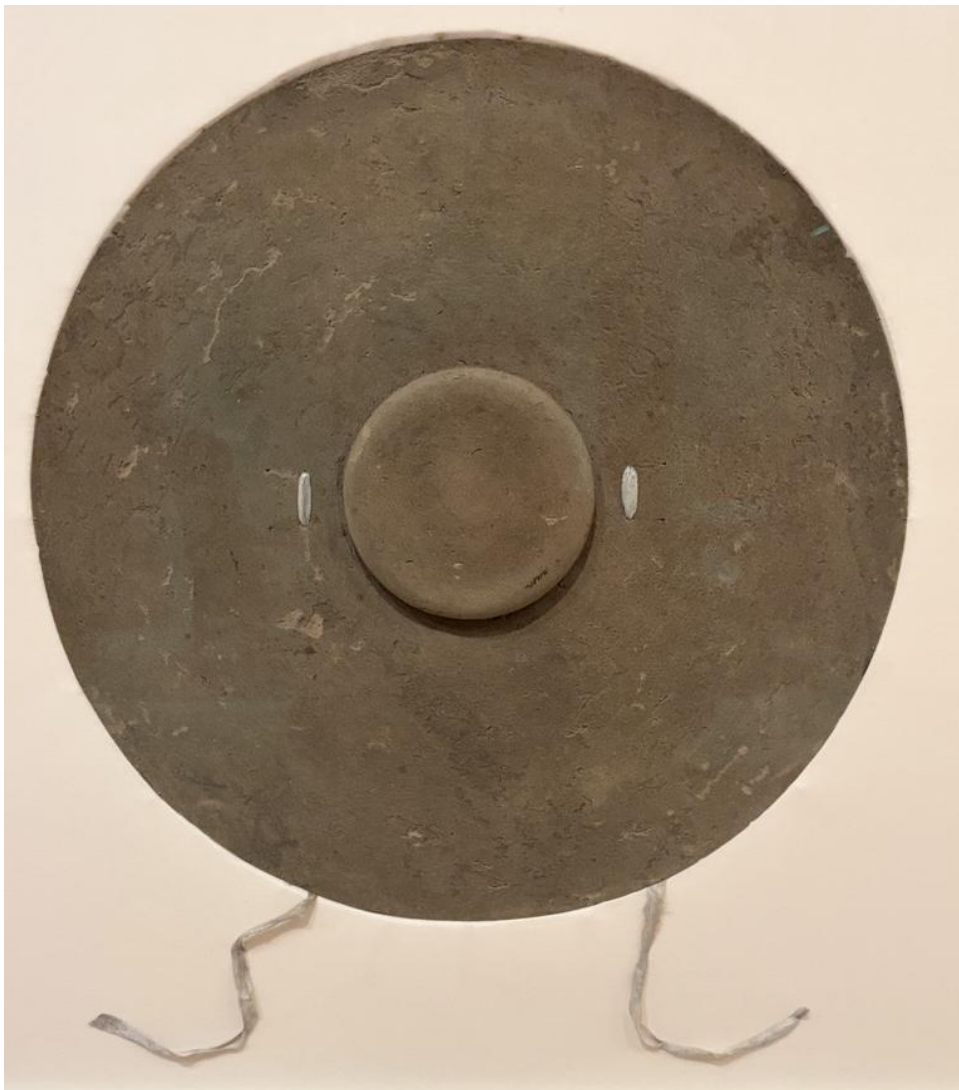
END OF CASE 5

Unknown maker (Probably Religious Society of Friends)

Broad-brimmed hat, 19th century

Wool felt

Collection of Victoria Browning Wyeth



Betsy Wyeth acquired this hat in a local antique store and called it a Quaker riding hat. Its association for the Wyeths with the Religious Society of Friends is further evidence of the inspiration they took from that prominent faith tradition of the Chadds Ford region. She wore it in her portrait *Maga's Daughter*, on view nearby.

Betsy James Wyeth:

"I'm a director and I had the greatest actor in the world ... It's the most wonderful, elegant position in the world to be in. I had these strange viewpoints and he could right away catch on."

In the search for appropriate language to describe Betsy Wyeth's diverse legacy across landscape, architectural and interior design, and her fundamental role in shaping the way an Andrew Wyeth painting looks, metaphors of the theater and set design often come up, even in her own words. The exposed framing in the gallery is meant to

evoke this feeling of being behind the scenes of a designed world that was truly her creation.

CENTRAL DISPLAY

This re-creation of the dining room at the heart of the Wyeths' home at Brinton's Mill gathers together many of the historic objects that gave it the feeling of a place outside of time. Betsy Wyeth collected with an eye to regional, rural craft traditions, including important examples of Pennsylvania furniture, but did not hesitate to add European examples when it suited her overarching design. Andrew Wyeth, in turn, painted the room that Betsy had created in the tempera *Sparks*, displayed here in the evocation of the role this place played as the site where many new

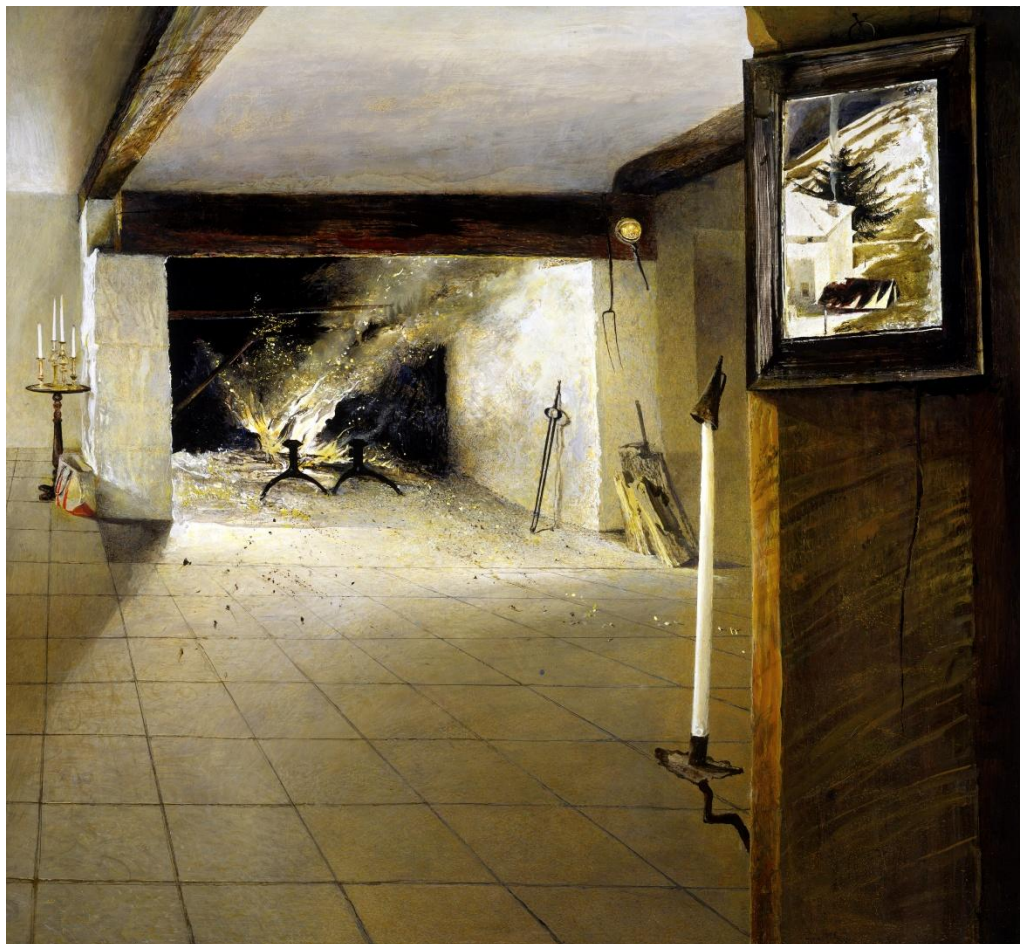
paintings from his easel were first presented to invited guests.

Andrew Wyeth (1917-2009)

Sparks, 2001

Egg tempera on panel

National Arts Program



Unknown maker (Chester County,
Pennsylvania)

Line and verry spice cabinet, c. 1750

Walnut, tulip poplar, ash



Unknown maker (likely Pennsylvania)

Platter, 19th century

Redware with white slip ornament

Unknown maker (English)

Dough tray, 18th century

Earthenware with dark brown glaze and
white slip ornament

Unknown maker (likely Pennsylvania)

Burl bowl, date unknown

Wood



Unknown maker (Lehigh County,
Pennsylvania)

Blanket chest, 1781

Wood and pigment



Unknown maker (likely Pennsylvania)

Highback chair, 18th century

Walnut



Unknown maker (likely Pennsylvania)

Highback chair, c. 1720

Walnut



Unknown maker (French or Swiss)

Refectory table, 18th-19th century

Wood



Unknown maker (French or Swiss)

Refectory benches, 18th-19th century

Wood



Unknown maker (apocryphally signed Paul Revere)

Tankard, 1882/1898

Silver

Thomas Hamersley (New York, 1727-1781)

Tankard, 18th century

Silver

Edward Barton (English, life dates unknown)

Tankard, c. 1830

Silver



Unknown maker

Two-part corner cupboard, 18-19th century

Mahogany



Unless otherwise noted, all Wyeth
Foundation for American Art Historic
Properties Collection.