



Andrew Wyeth: In Retrospect

June 24 through September 17, 2017

Chadds Ford, PA—April 3, 2017—On June 24, the Brandywine River Museum of Art will open *Andrew Wyeth: In Retrospect*, the first major survey of the artist’s work in more than 40 years. The exhibition will feature over 100 works, spanning the entirety of the artist’s career: from the early watercolors that established his reputation to his final painting, *Goodbye*, completed just a few months before his death in 2009. The show also will include many of Wyeth’s studies, which were rarely exhibited in the artist’s lifetime and offer new insights into his creative process and approach. Co-organized by the Brandywine and the Seattle Art Museum, *Andrew Wyeth: In Retrospect* commemorates the centennial of the artist’s birth—in July—and provides the most in-depth presentation of the renowned artist’s diverse and prolific practice to date.

Wyeth’s life extended from World War I—a period that sparked the imagination of the artist as a young boy—to the new millennium. This comprehensive retrospective examines four major periods in Wyeth’s career, taking inspiration from the artist’s own words likening his painting to “following a long thread leading like time to change and evolution.” The exhibition offers new interpretations of his work, including the lesser explored influences of popular film and images of war, and looks more closely at the relatively unstudied but numerous portrayals of African Americans from the Chadds Ford community. *Andrew Wyeth: In Retrospect* also provides a thorough comparison of his widely divergent approaches to watercolor—which inspired him to paint quickly and at times with abandon—and to his use of tempera, a more controlled medium, in which he slowly and deliberately built up layers of paint on panels.

The Brandywine will serve as the only East Coast venue for the exhibition, and the only location at which visitors will be able to immerse themselves in both Wyeth’s work and life. The Museum campus is home to the artist’s studio, which served as his principal Pennsylvania workspace from 1940 through 2008, and also Kuerner Farm, a major source of inspiration across Wyeth’s career. Tours to these sites, all National Historic Landmarks, add an intimacy to the experience and understanding of his work, and give audiences a dynamic view into Wyeth’s very private world—his approach, technique, and the landscapes and scenes that informed his painting throughout his life. The exhibition will remain on view at the Brandywine through September 17, 2017, and then travel to Seattle Art Museum, where it will open in October.

Further information about the show’s organization and installation follows:

1935-1949: This section looks at Wyeth's emerging presence in the art world—from the colorful, expressive watercolors of the Maine coast that reveal a debt to Winslow Homer and brought him to the attention of the art world in the late 1930s, to his early forays into the medium of tempera, and to the powerful, dramatic works of the mid to late 1940s. Highlights include *Lobsterman* (1937), painted the summer before his first, momentous New York show; his early temperas, such as *Frog Hunters* (1941)—which was featured in the landmark Museum of Modern Art show, *Americans 1943: Realists and Magic Realists*; and iconic works such as *Winter 1946* (1946), which was created after October 1945, when the death of his father caused a profound shift in Andrew Wyeth's outlook on his art.

1950-1967: By 1950, Wyeth's attention was focused on his own visceral responses to the landscape around his home in Chadds Ford, and Maine, both the coastline and the Olson property in Cushing. Wyeth divided his time between these places. In Chadds Ford, he painted the Kuerner Farm (now part of the Brandywine River Museum of Art), which was long at the center of Wyeth's world there and forever linked in his mind to the nearby railroad crossing where his father, N. C. Wyeth, had met a tragic death. He also painted those he knew in the Black community that had been established in Chadds Ford during the Civil War. In Maine, Wyeth expressed his compelling emotional connection to the siblings Christina and Alvaro Olson and their eighteenth-century house, which sits on a hill and below which is the graveyard where Wyeth and the Olson family are buried. Significant works from this period include *Northern Point* (1950); *Miss Olson* (1952); and *Spring Fed* (1967). Examples of Wyeth's extensive studies in pencil and watercolor of his African American subjects Tom Clark, Adam Johnson, and Willard Snowden (*The Drifter*, 1967), are also included.

1968-1988: By now one of America's most famous artists, in 1968 Wyeth began to explore the realm of erotic art. This is the period that saw his first extended series of nudes, of the adolescent Siri Erickson in Maine and of Helga Testorf in Chadds Ford. The paintings of Helga, famously kept secret by the artist until the mid-1980s, when their revelation created a national sensation, have occupied an outsize place in the narrative of Wyeth's multi-decade career. The exhibition will reveal that while he was working on these nude subjects, he also painted for public view some of his most psychologically complex, symbolically rich, and compositionally ambitious works. Highlights include the now iconic paintings focusing on his Chadds Ford neighbors, the Kuerners: examples are *Evening at Kuerners* (1970); *The Kuerners* (1971); and *Spring* (1979).

1989-2009: Beginning in 1989, Wyeth's work became particularly self-reflective as he looked to prior works and explorations—partly in response to the critical backlash he experienced from the revelation of the Helga paintings. His late works are often enigmatic, infused with a surreal quality that recalls his earliest paintings and at times, in fact, directly references them. Highlights include the large tempera *Snow Hill* (1989), filled with autobiographical allusions, and *Goodbye* (2008), a painting completed just months before his death that has not been widely seen or published.

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition will be co-published by Yale University Press, the Brandywine River Museum of Art and the Seattle Art Museum. It will provide a full visual document of the works in the exhibition, as well as lay out the first detailed timeline of Wyeth's career. In addition to Patricia Junker's insightful contextual analysis of the four periods described above, the catalogue will include seven provocative essays on key aspects of Wyeth's work by scholars from both the United States and Japan. The catalogue is intended to be a foundation for subsequent Wyeth studies.

The co-curators for the exhibition are Audrey Lewis, Curator, Brandywine River Museum of Art, and Patricia Junker, the Ann M. Barwick Curator of American Art at the Seattle Art Museum. The exhibition will be on view at the Seattle Art Museum from October 19, 2017 through January 15, 2018.

The Brandywine River Museum of Art features an outstanding collection of American art housed in a 19th-century mill building with a dramatic steel and glass addition overlooking the banks of the Brandywine. The Museum is open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., daily (except Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day) and is located on Route 1 in Chadds Ford, PA. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors ages 65 and over, \$6 for students and children ages 6; free for children 5 and younger and Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art members. Guided tours of the Andrew Wyeth Studio, N.C. Wyeth House & Studio, and the Kuerner Farm, are available daily for an additional fee; reservations are recommended. For more information, call 610.388.2700 or visit brandywinemuseum.org.

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