

The Wyeths: America's Artists

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Kalamazoo Institute of Arts

See 80 quintessentially American works of art by three generations of this famous family.

- N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945), recognized as one of the great American golden age illustrators of children's classics. Along with original oil paintings for his dramatic book illustrations are N.C.'s paintings of his summer home and the seacoast of Maine.
- Andrew Wyeth (1917-2009), known by many as "America's Painter." Watercolors, drawings, and tempera paintings reflect Andrew Wyeth's emotional connections to rural America and the small circle of close friends and family he chose to focus upon.
- James Browning Wyeth (b. 1946), son and grandson, whose art often depicts non-human subjects. A sensitive observer of his rural surroundings, Jamie paints livestock and other animals with the same care and intensity he devotes to portraits of people.

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NEWELL CONVERS (N. C.) WYETH (1882-1945), the patriarch of three generations of artists, is best known for his outstanding book illustrations in Scribner's Illustrated Classics such as *Treasure Island*, *The Boy's King Arthur* and *Robinson Crusoe*. His rich, robust paintings have charmed children and adults alike for generations. However, his success as an illustrator, perhaps overshadowed the fact that N. C. Wyeth was, indeed, a very good artist. In his studio, in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, N. C. taught three of his five children and two sons-in-law to paint. He instilled in his students a tradition of hard work and relentless dedication.

The scope of N. C. Wyeth's talent is tremendous - from his classic illustrative art, to his exploration of the land and people of the Brandywine Valley, the coast of Maine, or the American West. He left a body of work that has become a national treasure and a pinnacle of American illustration. Tragically, N. C. Wyeth and a grandson were killed by a freight train at a railroad crossing near his home in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania on October 19, 1945.

ANDREW NEWELL WYETH (1917-2009), the youngest son of N. C. Wyeth, is the best known artist in the family, recognized internationally as America's foremost realist. Andrew was particularly close to his father and began studying with him at an early age. He never attended school, although he had tutors. His father felt that a child's school years were the most critical time for an artist to perfect his craft, to absorb and learn, to "see" as an artist. As a child, Andy spent a great deal of time alone in the woods surrounding his family's home in Chadds Ford, wandering and exploring.

The essence of Andrew Wyeth's art is best expressed in his own words, *"I search for the realness, the real feeling of a subject, all the texture around it...I always want to see the third dimension of something...I want to come alive with the object."*

JAMES BROWNING WYETH (1946-) has attracted considerable attention since adolescence as a third-generation American artist: son of Andrew Wyeth, among the country's most popular painters, and the grandson of Newell Convers Wyeth. He showed remarkable talent and gained great recognition very early in life. Jamie began his formal training with his aunt, Carolyn Wyeth.

Non-human subjects were common themes throughout his paintings. A sensitive observer of his rural surroundings, he painted livestock and other animals with the same care and intensity he devoted to portraits of people.