

The Wyeths

America Reflected

At Heritage Museums & Gardens

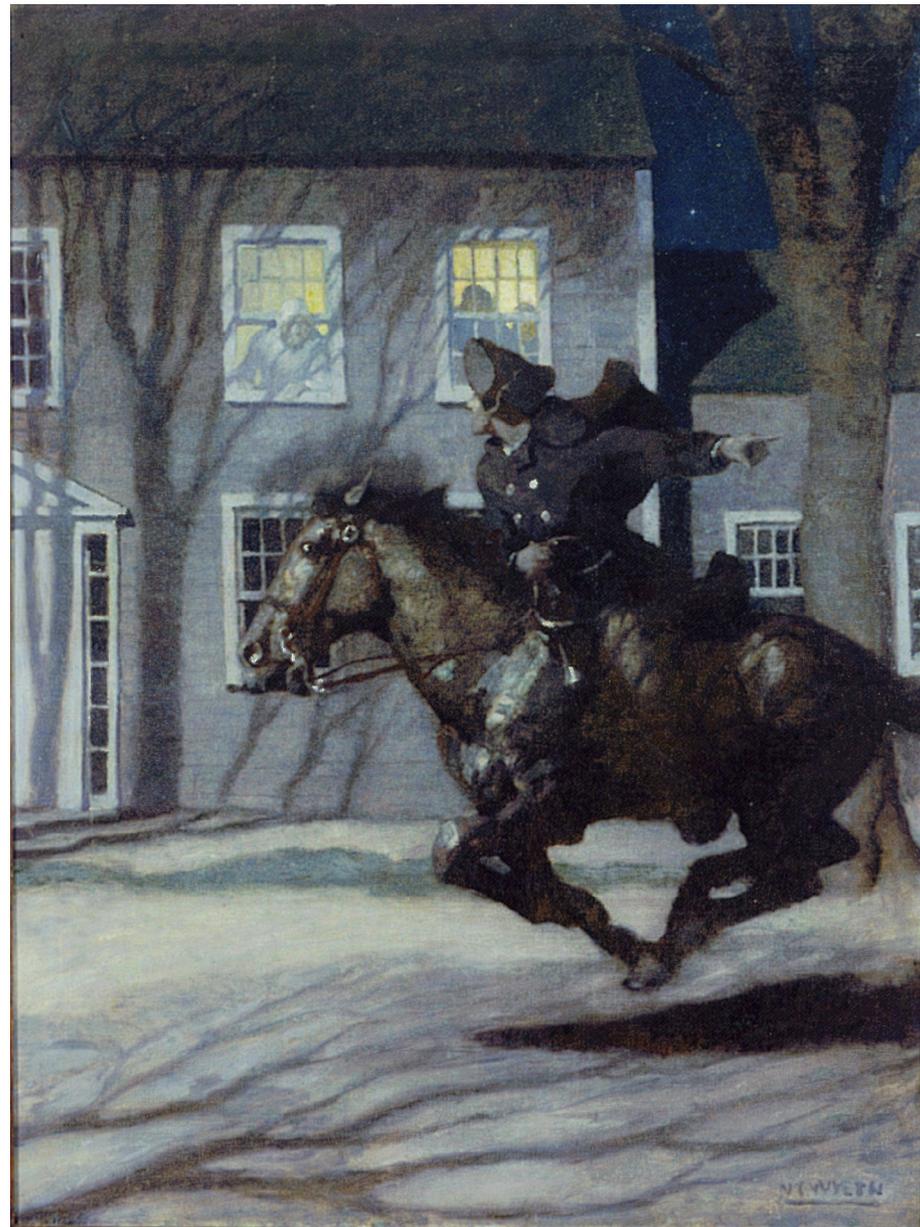


By Stephen May

SANDWICH, MASS. — Exhibitions of works by three generations of Wyeth artists are invariably intriguing and rewarding. Intriguing because visitors can spot similarities and differences among the three: N.C. Wyeth (1882–1945), the great master of the Golden Age of American Illustration; his son Andrew (1917–2009), an icon of Twentieth Century American art; and Andrew’s son Jamie (b 1946), adventurous and his own man, an artist who has created works on a wide variety of subjects. Wyeth exhibitions are rewarding because each artist, in his own way and in his own time, produced work that speaks to how we see ourselves, to our history and traditions, and to the importance of family and place.

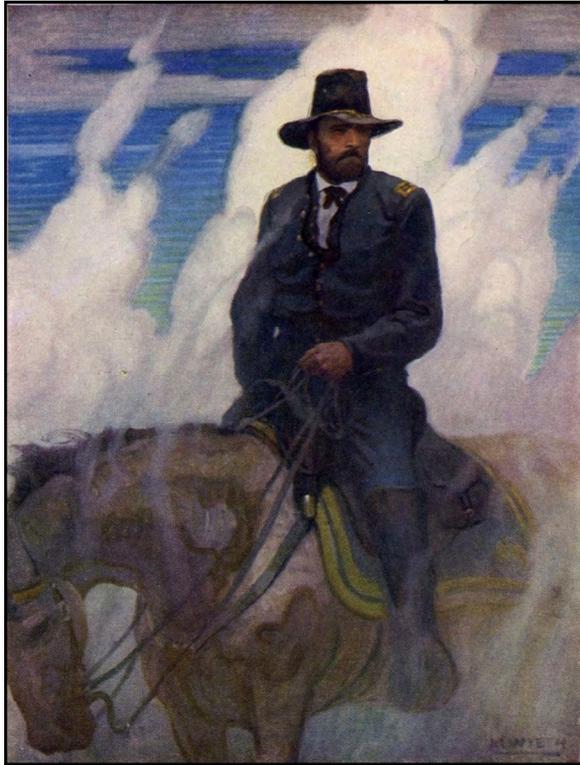
**“Paul Revere,” 1922, by N.C. Wyeth.
Courtesy of the Hill School.**

Above: “Gull Rising” by Jamie Wyeth. Private Collection.



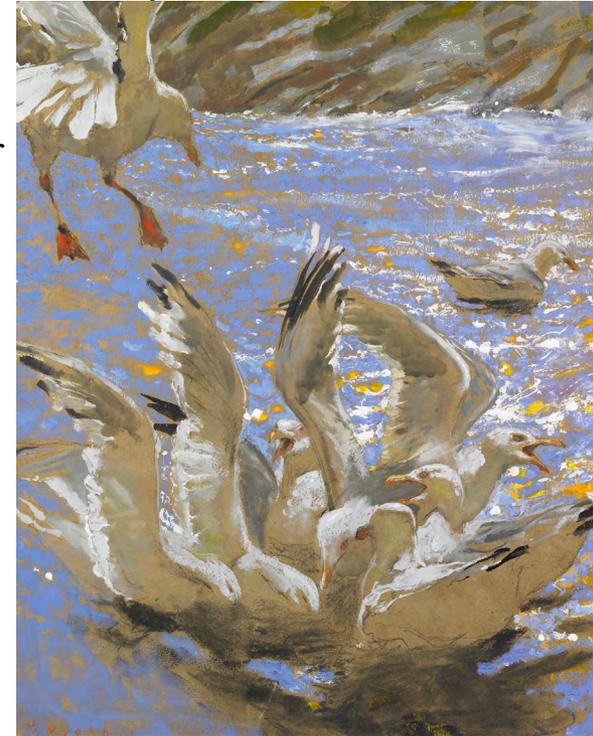
These qualities are showcased in “The Wyeths: America Reflected,” on view at the Heritage Museums & Gardens through September 27. The exhibition comprises 45 diverse paintings and numerous watercolors organized by artist, offering insights into each and into the relationships among the three generations.

“Feeding Gulls,” 1999, by Jamie Wyeth. Mixed media on paper, 41 by 35 inches. Leigh Yawkey Woodson Museum.



N.C. Wyeth's depiction of Union commander-in-chief Ulysses S. Grant, 1922. Collection of the Hill School.

“There are several common threads that weave their ways through the work of N.C., Andrew and Jamie Wyeth,” observes Martha Severens, former curator at the Greenville County Museum of Art and curatorial consultant to the Heritage Museums. “First and foremost is their commitment to their art and their creative imaginations. N.C. was guided, of course, by the texts he was illustrating, but within those parameters he used his considerable talents to bring stories alive.”





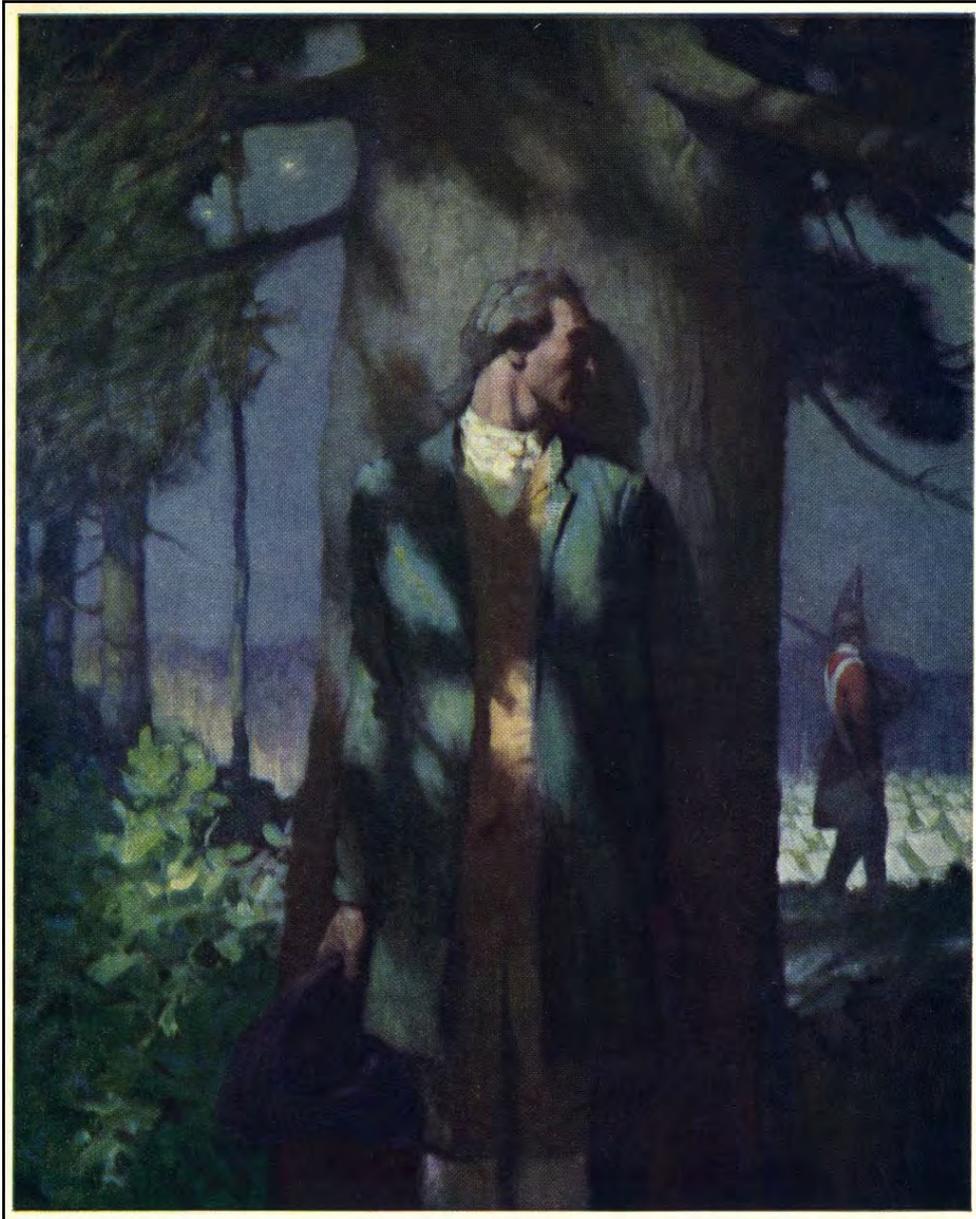
**“Warren’s Address to his Troops at Bunker Hill,” 1922,
by N.C. Wyeth. Courtesy of Hill School.**

**Above: “Master Bedroom,” 1965, by Andrew Wyeth.
Private Collection.**

With regard to Andrew, Severens notes that he “created his own worlds through his fertile imagination, and Jamie has carved out his own path exploring new angles.”

In a recent interview with *Antiques and The Arts Weekly*, Jamie acknowledged that “my work is closer to N.C. than my father.” A sense of place, Chadds Ford, Penn., and Maine; a sense of realism, often incorporating subvisual themes; and, on occasion, a delightful sense of whimsy run through the oeuvre of each artist. As sons of painters, both Andrew and Jamie have distanced themselves from the work of their fathers, in subject matter and materials used.





"Nathan Hale," 1922, N.C. Wyeth. Courtesy of Hill School.

Leading off the exhibition are 16 strong paintings by N.C. that “clearly elucidate the theme of the exhibition,” says Severens, underscoring the dedication of all three artists to the highest of American ideals. N.C.’s love of country animates *Poems of American Patriotism*, published in 1922. Michael F. Sweeney, athletic director at the Hill School in Pottstown, Penn., bought the original illustrations and gave them to the school.

Howard Pyle, the father of American illustration art, was N.C.’s mentor and preached the importance of knowing one’s subject...

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