



Henriette Wyeth, Catharine Skelly

Title

Portrait of Catharine Skelly (Mrs. Joseph A. Wheelock)

Medium

Oil on canvas

Date

1938

Dimensions

45 × 40 in. (114.3 × 101.6 cm)

Accession number

74.12

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Credit Line

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Wheelock, 1974

Web Description

Henriette Wyeth specialized in portraiture and received numerous commissions from prominent residents of Pennsylvania and Delaware before her move to New Mexico. Catharine Skelly (1916–1985) grew up in Wilmington, settling in nearby Greenville after her marriage to Joseph A. Wheelock. She and her two sisters sat for Wyeth in the 1930s. In this portrait, the artist posed her subject against a richly patterned backdrop, whose soft colors of blue and beige are echoed in the tones of Wheelock's skin and clothing. By creating a flat, even effect of light across the canvas, and by using only a limited color palette, Wyeth created a striking tonalist composition that focuses attention on the subject's composed and confident expression.