



N.C. Wyeth

Title

The Dusty Bottle

Medium

Oil on canvas

Date

1924

Dimensions

37 1/4 × 39 7/8 in. (94.6 × 101.3 cm)

Accession number

73.10

Credit Line

Gift of Miss Mary M. R. Phelps, 1973

Web Description

Wyeth's studio collection includes many objects that the artist used to assemble still-life compositions. A master technician and exacting teacher, Wyeth believed that the first responsibility of a young artist is to "love an object for its own sake... simply because it is an object of form and substance revealed by the wonder of light..." The Wyeth children, Henriette, Carolyn, and Andrew, started their training with their father by drawing still lifes. Wyeth himself turned to still life throughout his career to hone his skills in composition and color. Reflected in the bottle is the large, multi-paned window that is the centerpiece of his studio. All three objects depicted remain in N. C. Wyeth's studio today. In the upper right corner, Wyeth noted that he spent only three hours on this painting, yet this was no sketch or quick study. Wyeth sent the piece to the Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts fall exhibition in 1926 and no doubt enjoyed the success of his little artistic joke in this trompe l'oeil painting. The newspaper Every Evening noted, "Realism supreme features the still life of a fat green bottle by N. C. Wyeth. He calls his canvas "The Dusty Bottle," and it was amusing yesterday afternoon to watch various ones approach the picture with intentions of dusting the canvas and then discover the "dust" had been painted."