



N.C. Wyeth, John McGinley

Title

Nightfall

Medium

Tempera on hardboard

Date

1945

Dimensions

32 1/16 × 40 1/16 in. (81.4 × 101.8 cm)

Accession number

2019.3

Credit Line

Bequest of Helen and John Kenefick, 2019

Web Description

Nightfall is the last of the monumental tempera paintings that occupied Wyeth in the 1940s before his unexpected death. It is a dark painting, literally and figuratively. It suggests the emotional strain of a tragedy experienced by a local farmer, but beneath this narrative is the artist's own dark mood at the time, fueled, as his letters indicate, by anxiety related to the ongoing war and deep-rooted concern for his own artistic legacy. Painted with masterful control (look, for example, at the slouch of the farmer's hat over his ear, or the rendering of the farmer's shirt), Nightfall may also represent a form of competition with his son Andrew, whose reputation by the early 1940s was increasingly firmly established.