



Jamie Wyeth, Rudolf Nureyev

Title

Nureyev - Don Quixote - Yellow Background

Medium

Combined mediums on brown cardboard

Date

2001

Dimensions

47 3/4 × 36 in. (121.3 × 91.4 cm)

Accession number

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Web Description

Beginning in 1976, the artist Jamie Wyeth and the dancer Rudolf Nureyev partnered in an artistic conversation that resulted in a series of portrait studies. Always one to know his subject well, Wyeth measured Nureyev's muscled frame with calipers, a method of the Old Masters, taking down detailed notes for the dancer's anatomy in his sketchbooks. The studies from 1976 and 1977 came into service for a second series of portraits Wyeth embarked upon well after the dancer's death in 1993. From the dancer's estate, Wyeth acquired a number of Nureyev's costumes worn in his famous classical ballet roles, such as *Don Quixote* and *Swan Lake*. With the return of the costumes to Wyeth's consciousness, the dancer's form returned to Wyeth's work. While the 1970s studies are exacting and careful renderings, the twenty-first century works are colorful, daring, and vivacious. Some of the 1970s works were even repurposed and revised, combining Wyeth's first-hand observations of Nureyev with an expressionistic memorial to the man now gone.