



## N.C. Wyeth

### Title

The Sirens

### Medium

Oil on canvas

### Date

1929

### Dimensions

48 1/2 × 38 1/4 in. (123.2 × 97.2 cm)

### Catalogue Number

91.2

### Copyright

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### Credit Line

Purchased with Museum funds, 1991

### Web Description

To create the illustrations for *The Odyssey of Homer*, Wyeth used many of the modernist conventions that he began exploring in the late 1920s in his personal painting. The tension between the modernist style and an older—in this case, ancient—narrative was a dynamic Wyeth often set up in both his commissioned and personal work during this period. Documented at the Brandywine River Museum of Art is a copy of *The Odyssey of Homer* with the following notation in N. C. Wyeth's hand underneath the illustration of *The Sirens*: "This illustration gives me more satisfaction than any one of the others of this series from the standpoint of design, execution and dramatic expression (signed) N. C. WYETH." The Brandywine River Museum of Art holds archival photographs of this canvas in a preliminary stage, with the charcoal design drawn in but before the addition of color (# 3367). The Andrew and Betsy Wyeth collection includes a page of preliminary composition studies (NCW 2176) annotated in the artist's hand, "Trial composition sketches / for The Sirens (underlined)/ N. C. W." The Wyeth Family Archives includes the copy of the book that N. C. Wyeth read and annotated in preparation for the commission, *The Odyssey of Homer*, translated by George Herbert Palmer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1891). The book has notes about the commission and for "The Illustrator's Preface" in NCW's hand.