



N.C. Wyeth

Title

Walden Pond Revisited

Medium

Oil on canvas

Date

1932/1933

Dimensions

58 1/8 × 70 in. (147.6 × 177.8 cm)

Catalogue Number

96.1.34

Credit Line

Bequest of Carolyn Wyeth, 1996

Web Description

N. C. Wyeth was a great admirer of philosopher/naturalist Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), finding in the writer's works artistic inspiration and a remarkably sympathetic guide to Wyeth's quest for meaning in life and art. The many visits Wyeth made to Walden Pond inspired him to create this fanciful view of Thoreau's world. Its imagery is drawn from Thoreau's books, principally *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854), in which Thoreau chronicled the twenty-six months and two days that he spent living in a rustic cabin on the shores of the pond. Thoreau's bean field, his boat, a fox, a pair of blue birds, the nearby railroad, and the village of Concord, Massachusetts, are all referenced in Wyeth's painting. The meticulously rendered botanical specimens in the foreground speak to Thoreau's reputation as a naturalist. Looming over the pond, the spectral figure of Thoreau suggests the artist's own experience of pilgrimage to the site. The painting's impact derives from skewed perspectives, changing scale, heightened color and the fantasy cloudscape lit with shafts of light. Through the use of these modern stylistic conventions, Wyeth hoped to signal the relevance of Thoreau's writings to contemporary life.