



N.C. Wyeth

Title

Still Life with Tray

Medium

Oil on canvas

Date

ca. 1919

Dimensions

32 1/4 × 40 in. (81.9 × 101.6 cm)

Catalogue Number

80.3.35

Credit Line

Gift of Amanda K. Berls, 1980

Web Description

The importance of this still life may be gauged by the artist's decision to include a reproduction of it in his article "For Better Illustration," a polemic published in the November 1919 issue of Scribner's Magazine. Wyeth warned would-be illustrators to study from nature and objects, rather than adopt new "stunts," his term for the superficial effects devoid of substance and inspiration that he perceived in much illustrative work of the period. He kept still-life painting in his practice throughout his career and recommended it to other artists as an exercise to hone a sense of composition and color. Wyeth kept an array of still-life objects in his studio, and the cream pitcher depicted here remains in the collection (Brandywine River Museum of Art, NCWS.95.80.3.35). Although the painting has always been called Still Life with Tray, the tray is really a Wedgewood ceramic platter (Brandywine River Museum of Art, NCWS.95.6633) that was found in Carolyn Wyeth's studio on the Wyeth property.