



N.C. Wyeth

Title

In a Dream I Meet General Washington

Medium

Oil on canvas

Date

1930

Dimensions

72 3/8 × 79 in. (183.8 × 200.7 cm)

Catalogue Number

91.9

Credit Line

Purchased with funds given in memory of George T. Weymouth, 1991

Web Description

In 1930, atop scaffolding to complete a mural of George Washington for a bank in Trenton, New Jersey, N. C. Wyeth lost his balance and almost fell 30 feet to the marble floor. The shock resulted in a dream that haunted him until he committed his vision to canvas. In that dream, Wyeth watched the Battle of Brandywine unfold before him as Washington narrated. The site of the battle is not far from Wyeth's studio, and with his lifelong love of history he was familiar with details of the encounter. To dispel the dream which he described as "amazingly vivid," Wyeth painted himself on shaky scaffolding in the foreground, palette and brushes in hand, speaking to Washington. British and American troops march across an autumnal colored landscape, and Major General Lafayette appears in the woods on the left. In the lower left corner, young Andrew Wyeth, accompanied by his dog, sits sketching as he often did in his father's studio. Wyeth wrote to his brother, "This is the painting that I am certain excels anything done to date." Although the painting was based on a dream, Wyeth felt, "this fact in no way interferes with its abstract attraction as a painting to be engaged for color, pattern, technique and intriguing interest." His palette of complementary colors, the sinuous forms of the hills and clouds, and the incorporation of the black lines of the preparatory drawing into the final composition are all typical of Wyeth's exploration with modernist painting techniques in the years 1925 to 1935.