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VISIONARY'S IMPACT

THE PLACES HE CALLED HOME



Andrew Wyeth, Swifts—First Version, 1991, watercolor on paper. Collection of the Wyeth Foundation for American Art B3200r © Wyeth Foundation for American Art/Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY. PROVIDED BY THE WYETH FOUNDATION

Newly unearthed Andrew Wyeth paintings on display

Matthew Korfhage Delaware News Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

You don't know Andrew Wyeth. You might think you do, but you don't. • At least, that's the impression you get talking to William Coleman, curator of the Brandywine Museum of Art's huge new trove of Andrew Wyeth artworks: a mammoth and revelatory file of nearly 7,000 artworks by the late American master painter. Most have never before been exhibited. • Wyeth is best known for meticulous realist masterpieces like "Christina's World," and his hundreds of long-secret intimate paintings of his Delaware County, Pennsylvania, neighbor Helga Testorf, whose blockbuster revelation landed Wyeth on the covers of Newsweek and Time simultaneously in 1986.

See WYETH, Page 3A

Senior residents fight to stay safe

Form group to halt drug activity in building

Anitra Johnson
Delaware News Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

It sounds like a movie plot, but it's real-life horror for some of the residents of Herring Manor. Residents of the subsidized apartment building for seniors and those with disabilities in Wilmington on the city's northeast section said they are scared to step outside their doors. They cite fear of unabated drug dealing and drug use inside the building. Police acknowledge awareness of issues at Herring Manor. In a statement from their spokesperson, the department said in recent weeks they have received concerns from residents regarding loitering and drug activity.

See RESIDENTS, Page 6A

Black voters demand more action

Mabinty Quarshie
USA TODAY

Black Americans want the Biden administration to address gun violence and declare white supremacist violence a national security threat, according to new polling released Wednesday and shared exclusively with USA TODAY. In the aftermath of last year's mid-term elections cycle, Black to the Future Action Fund and HIT Strategies polled 1,200 Black voters in Georgia, North Carolina and California.

See VOTERS, Page 6A

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What abortion pill ban would mean in Del.

Del. officials: Medication abortion will remain legal

Hannah Edelman
Delaware News Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Even as a federal court case that could force stores to stop selling a major abortion pill is up for debate in Texas, the Delaware Department of Justice assured Delawareans that medication abortion will remain legal in the First State.

Just as surgical abortions remain accessible in Delaware despite the over-

turning of *Roe v. Wade*, medication abortion is protected under state laws. Even if mifepristone, the drug at the center of the Texas case, is banned, the Department of Justice said single-use misoprostol — another commonly used abortion medication — will remain available.

If the Texas judge rules in favor of the conservative legal advocacy organization Alliance Defending Freedom and pulls mifepristone from the market, Delaware Attorney General Kathy Jennings said it would be “a flagrant attack on reproductive freedom, plain and simple.”

“We will continue to fight to ensure

that abortion remains safe, accessible, and legal in Delaware,” she said in an official statement.

A spokesperson for the local Planned Parenthood said the organization will continue to help Delawareans access safe abortions regardless of the court case decision. Both medication and surgical abortions will still be offered to patients, even those from outside of the state. Medication accounts for over half of abortions.

Like with limited access to surgical abortions, studies show that diminished access to medication abortion disproportionately impacts low-income people and people of color.

“Making abortion more difficult to access can have devastating economic consequences and drive people deeper into poverty,” said Helen Salita, campaign manager for the Delaware branch of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Anyone looking for more information about abortions in Delaware and their legal right to get one can call the Department of Justice’s abortion helpline at **877-312-2366** or visit their website at attorneygeneral.delaware.gov/executive/abortionhelpline.

Send story tips or ideas to Hannah Edelman at hedelman@delawareonline.com. For more reporting, follow them on Twitter at [@h_edelman](https://twitter.com/h_edelman).

Wyeth

Continued from Page 1A

But this new cache organized before her death almost three years ago by Wyeth’s wife, Betsy — a potent artistic force in her own right — shows a whole new side of Wyeth, Coleman says. The works can be experimental, immediate, sometimes even abstract.

In Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, about 20 minutes north of Wilmington, the Brandywine Museum of Art has begun revealing these unknown drawings and paintings to the world, one big exhibit at a time.

The first of these, “Home Places,” will be on display at the museum until July 16, with nearly 50 paintings and drawings showing Wyeth’s decades-long devotion to the places he called home: whether Brinton’s Mill in Chester County, or the 19th-century buildings of Kuerner Farm in Chadds Ford. From teenage years left sickly by tuberculosis to his death in 2009 at the age of 91, he returned again and again to the same buildings, seeing them differently each time.

We talked with Coleman about why these new works might change everything you ever thought about one of the 20th century’s greatest American masters.

(This interview has been condensed, rearranged and edited for clarity.)

First of all, why are there still thousands of previously unseen Andrew Wyeth artworks? Why haven’t we seen them before?

Answer: This is the first exhibition of a new era — drawing from what we call the Andrew and Betsy Wyeth Collection of the Wyeth Foundation for American Art. It’s the private collection of the family.

This was an incredibly prolific creative career. The collection includes everything from the most preliminary process drawings, which were never intended to be exhibited, all the way through some of the best-known works in the medium of tempera that made his reputation.

A lot of the unseen material is this precious work on paper, largely watercolors, that are really powerful and free and immediate but were made for personal pleasure, or for early stages of the process of developing some other works.

So a lot of these are studies? Why not just look at the “finished” Andrew Wyeth painting?

This material is really revelatory for people who love this incredible creative story and shows how he got to that finished product that many people know and love.

There’s some incredible material here. “Battleground Study” is one of the works from our largest single case study in the show, which is Andrew Wyeth’s own home place, Brinton’s Mill, this place that came to be the year-round or primary family home when they weren’t in Maine. It gives up so much inspiration.

There’s just an incredible statement of his virtuosity in the medium of watercolor for which he first becomes famous. But somehow it never came out of storage.

So what was your biggest surprise in all these unknown Andrew Wyeth artworks?

I have certainly found a Wyeth I didn’t know. I was most drawn to (my curator role) by the work in watercolor. It was never the precisely painted temperas that grabbed me on an emotional level. But there’s been so much more there than I could have even thought.

It’s been such a joy to see the breadth of accomplishment in that really challenging, really immediate, powerful, quickly painted medium that we all sort of remember from arts and crafts class back in the day. It dries so quickly. You can’t really paint over it. If you do, it just turns to muddy brown and black. You have to get it right the



Andrew Wyeth, Battleground Study, 1981, watercolor on paper, 20.375 x 29.875 in. Collection of the Wyeth Foundation for American Art B2531. © Wyeth Foundation for American Art/Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.



Andrew Wyeth, Widow’s Walk Study, 1990, watercolor and pencil on paper. Collection of the Wyeth Foundation for American Art B3144. © Wyeth Foundation for American Art/Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

IMAGES PROVIDED BY THE WYETH FOUNDATION



Andrew Wyeth, 747, 1980, tempera on panel. Collection of the Wyeth Foundation for American Art © Wyeth Foundation for American Art/Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

first time. You have to think toward the end of the sheet, like a grandmaster of chess thinking a few moves ahead.

I quite literally am today at our storage facility pulling out one sheet after another, and we see this artist on a really personal level working directly with these monumental sheets — some 3 feet wide — often painting on the dashboard of his car when he’s quite

If you go

“Andrew Wyeth: Home Places,” featuring many never-before-seen drawings and paintings by Andrew Wyeth, will be on display until July 16 at the Brandywine Museum of Art, Hoffmans Mill Road, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. Admission is \$18 adults, \$15 seniors, \$6 children ages 6-18 and students with ID. Visit brandywine.org/museum.

literally stopped in his tracks by a subject.

This is the first showing of unknown Andrew Wyeths in a long time. Why’d you start with the art in “Home Places”?

The story that we’re telling in this first show, “Andrew Wyeth: Home Places,” is how he responded to this small group of older houses around Chadds Ford over literally decades.

It’s really a fascinating story of slow looking and being rooted in place, walking and driving around this landscape he inhabited his whole life and coming to notice buildings deeply.

There’s a seven-decade span in this exhibition where you see him returning to the same well of inspiration time and time again and constantly finding some new facet of a weathered old 18th-century building. He finds in these structures geometric abstraction that puts him in dialogue with contemporary art developments.

Many of the things in this exhibition dissolve the house into its constituent parts and you see him thinking about geometry. How a wall becomes just a solid rectangle of color and the shadow of the next opposes it, becomes a kind of a rhombus. You see him just dissolving things. And blurring lines.

People don’t think of abstraction when they think of Andrew Wyeth. He’s this farmhouse realist in the time of Jackson Pollack, right? A throwback? A hick?

I think of him as an artist outside of time. He was certainly deeply interested in history, but he was not an anti-modern artist by any means. He was winding his own novel path to an alternate modernism, for which there was a use for realism alongside abstraction.

He’s certainly an experimental painter. I sometimes think of him as a visionary or an outsider artist. He has this highly original journey that’s all his own, and sometimes has not fit within the received categories of academic art history. He continues to practice realism after abstract expressionism has become all the rage, and he remains resolutely rural his whole life, outside the corridors of cultural

power. He’s rooted deeply in place.

Hopefully, some of the controversies of the 20th century have died down, and we can see all this with fresh eyes. This was an American original.

It sounds like you’re building a case we don’t really know Andrew Wyeth. What’s next?

Our next project is called “Abstract Flash: Unseen Watercolors from the Andrew and Betsy Wyeth Collection.”

“Abstract Flash” is a quote from Andrew Wyeth, in which he says I’m always trying to capture that abstract flash when you catch a subject out of the corner of your eye. That’s a paraphrase, but maybe I got it right. (Editor’s note: He got pretty close.)

It’s a chance to think about how Andrew Wyeth is related to abstraction, which is a thorny issue. This will be a chance to tackle it head-on. There’s this really intriguing letter I held in my hands just recently. Edward Hopper asked Wyeth to sign a petition opposing the drift in the Whitney Biennial toward abstraction, away from realism. And Andrew Wyeth refuses to sign it.

Wyeth was not an anti-modern artist. He was not a conservative artist. He was not a backward-looking artist. He was engaged with his contemporary world. And these glorious unseen watercolors will tell that story.

So what are your personal favorite “new” Andrew Wyeth? What should people beeline to in “Home Places”?

“Battleground Study,” which I mentioned before, might be one of my new favorite paintings.

Another that was shown once back in 1967, but got very little exposure and was practically unseen? “Brick House, Study for Tenant Farmer.” It was just seared into my brain from the first time I saw it.

I hope others will find their new favorites in our exhibitions. Both this one, and the ones to come.

Matthew Korfhage is a Philadelphia-based reporter for USA Today Network. Reach him by email at mkorfhage@gannett.com or follow him on Twitter @mkorfhage.