



Andrew Wyeth: A Secret Life

Richard Meryman

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"A revelation. No one will ever view Andrew Wyeth's apparently tranquil works the same way again after reading this vivid and astonishing portrait of the turbulent, driven man who paints them. Richard Meryman has written a wonderful book."

- Geoffrey C. Ward

At its most fundamental level, this stunning and unique biography describes a distinguished painter's enterprise of transmitting emotion onto a flat surface. It explores all the factors that have combined to create Andrew Wyeth -- his childhood in a hothouse of creativity; his hypersensitivity; his formidable wife; his identification with people marginalized and misunderstood -- all which have made him an American icon. In the process, his realist works in watercolor and tempera, including the famous "Christina's World," have gained him a special and secure niche in the history of American art.

The book is a portrait of obsession -- how single-mindedness has affected Wyeth's relationships and transformed his world into a realm of secrecy and fervid imagination. Those who read this book will never look at Wyeth's work as they did before. It reveals the artist's dark depths, as well as the ruthless, angry, child/man fantasist who paints the basic brutalities of existence -- death and madness --that vibrate eerily beneath his pictures' calm surfaces.

Richard Meryman's narrative is almost novelistic, with its larger-than-life characters and subplots: the tragedy of C.C. Wyeth; Betsy Wyeth's campaign for independence and individuality; the byzantine 15-year-long drama of the Helga paintings; the eccentric and creative Wyeth clan; and the idiosyncratic land and people of Maine and Pennsylvania.

Based on 30 years of research, frequent visits and countless conversations with the artist, his family, friends, admirers and critics, *Andrew Wyeth: A Secret Life* is the only book about the man and the artist that gets behind his carefully guarded screen, tells the full story of his life and reveals his complex personality and the motivations for his paintings.

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