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Spring Comes to the Brandywine River Valley

BY KELLY COMPTON



Normally, a gallery exhibition titled *American Masters: Art of the 19th-21st Centuries* is a catch-all for whatever happens to be in stock that season. At Somerville Manning Gallery, however, it's actually all about context, given this firm's unique expertise and ideal location on the outskirts of Wilmington, Delaware.

On view through June 8, *American Masters* is the fourth in a series of annual exhibitions organized by principals Sadie Somerville and Victoria Manning. This year's edition features works by such stars as Mary Cassatt, Maurice Prendergast, Robert Henri, Dennis Miller Bunker, George Bellows, Thomas Pollock Anshutz, John Marin, Charles Burchfield, Hans Hofmann, Helen Frankenthaler, and Milton Avery.

So why do all these diverse talents make sense here? Working from a historic mill overlooking the Brandywine River, Somerville and Manning have, since 1981, specialized in handling paintings by America's most famous artistic dynasty: N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945), his son Andrew (1917-2009), and Andrew's son Jamie (b. 1946) have all lived and worked in the Brandywine River Valley. Over the years, the dealers have broadened their focus to consider other talented members of the family, including N.C.'s daughters Henriette Wyeth, Carolyn Wyeth,

N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)

Hazy Afternoon

1908/1911, Oil on canvas, 24 7/8 x 29 7/8 in.





Andrew Wyeth (1917-2009)
Deserted Light
 1977 Watercolor and pencil on paper, 30 1/2 x 22 in.
 © Andrew Wyeth

and Ann Wyeth McCoy, as well as Ann's husband (John W. McCoy) and daughter (Anna B. McCoy).

Four years ago, Somerville and Manning knew it was time to set the Wyeth clan in the context of their times more thoroughly, and thus their *American Masters* series has shown collectors what else was being made then, and also how the Brandywine tradition lives on today. All of the works illustrated here will hang in the gallery's sunlit rooms this spring, so do consider spending a weekend in this charming region, which also features the Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford, by-appointment tours of Andrew Wyeth's studio, and the magnificent Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library. ■

Information: Breck's Mill, 2nd Floor, 101 Stone Block Row, Greenville, DE 19807, 302.652.0271, somervillemanning.com

KELLY COMPTON is a contributing writer to *Fine Art Connoisseur*.



John Marin (1870-1953)
Fell Plummer's Wharf, Cape Split
 1933, Watercolor on paper, 14 3/4 x 20 1/2 in.