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✦ **SUMMER EXPLORING**
Kezar Lake, Boothbay, and the wild woods

JAMIE WYETH

While often referenced as part of the prolific and talented Wyeth family trio, Jamie Wyeth deserves celebration and praise in his own right. “Jamie Wyeth works in his own version of realism, which is hard to pin down,” says Elliot Davis, a curator at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. “His most dynamic and energized work comes his ability to connect the world of contemporary art to his long understanding of both American art and art from around the world.” Davis should know—as the curator for the upcoming retrospective of Wyeth’s work at the MFA Boston, she has had the unique opportunity to examine six decades of his artistic output as a cohesive whole, something that has never been done before in a single exhibition. However, Wyeth’s work has been shown frequently at the Farnsworth Art Museum and the Portland Museum of Art, among other locales. Having spent summers at his family home off the coast, Wyeth feels a strong affinity for the landscape and people of Maine. “What I love about Maine is the edginess. The danger of Maine is that it can be emblematic, pretty lobster buoys and seagulls that look like pigeons, but if you actually tune in, there’s a lot of angst and anxiety and it’s not all pretty,” he says. “Visitors see it in the summer, but the winters are the bare bones of Maine, when it’s brutal and the winds howl.” Monhegan Island, in particular, has long been a source of inspiration. Yet Wyeth doesn’t simply paint the islands—he also seeks to preserve and protect them. Wyeth and his wife, Phyllis, have been involved in philanthropic efforts to provide affordable housing for the working families of Monhegan Island and they both continue to support the kids educational program, Herring Gut Learning Center, which Phyllis Wyeth founded. “Having grown up here, I’ve seen how fishing is the main industry,” he says. “Any way to encourage and enhance it, we do.” When he speaks of the Maine islands, a reverence creeps into his voice. “I’m drawn to the sea and the islands and the light and the isolation. That’s what I relish.” He continues, “There is something about how the light is reflected from the water—it gives things a remarkable clarity. It intrigues the hell out of me.”

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