



WILDE'S WILDES

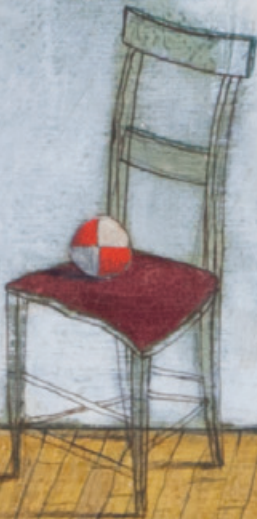
A Very Private Collection







GOD BLESS OUR
HAPPY HOME



BY

1911

WILDE'S WILDES

A Very Private Collection

By Graeme Reid

Published by Museum of Wisconsin Art



FOREWORD

Laurie Winters, Executive Director | CEO

Wilde's Wildes: A Very Private Collection celebrates the private collection of John Wilde (1919–2006), one of the leading artists of the American Surrealism movement. Over seven decades, Wilde created a collection of his own paintings and drawings, works that easily could have found homes in museums or private collections but that he retained instead for his own enjoyment. *Wilde's Wildes* recreates the artist's collection, which includes paintings and drawings from every decade and phase of his long career as well as some of his earliest works from the late 1930s.

The unifying characteristic of the eighty works in the exhibition is that they are all deeply personal. There are a large number of self-portraits and several paintings featuring his first wife Helen Ashman and his second wife Shirley Wilde (née Shirley Gene Miller), both of whom were frequent models and muses. More than a few of the works are personally reflective and introspective in nature. The last great painting of Wilde's career, *Eventide at the Duchess's* (2005), for which there are twenty-two studies and related paintings, closes the exhibition and in many ways offers a telling summation both of recurring themes and of how he constructed his complex narratives.

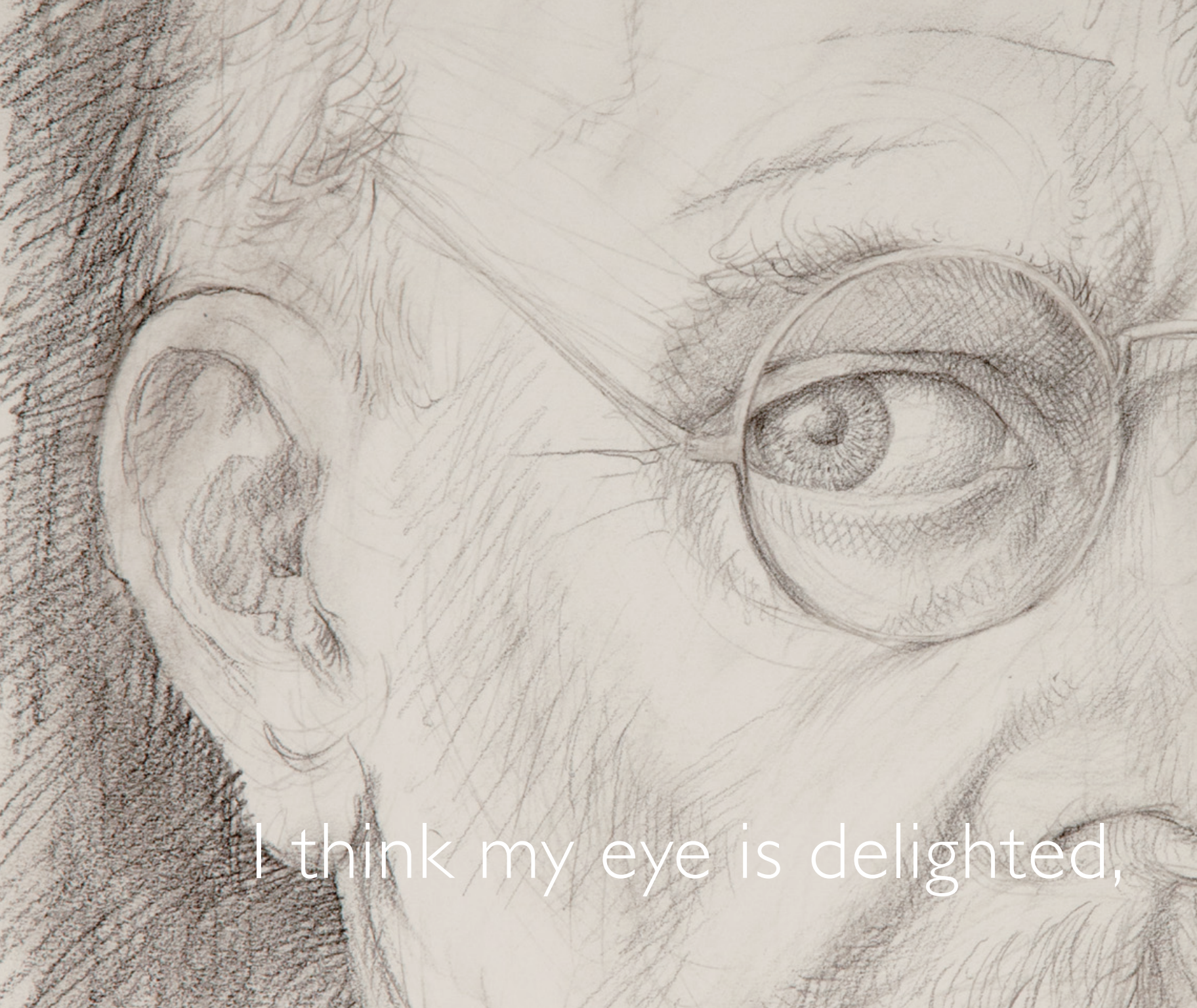
A project of this magnitude would not have been possible without the collaboration of a number of individuals who generously gave their time and talent. Our greatest debt of gratitude is to the families of John and Shirley Wilde, who enthusiastically agreed to the exhibition as a final and very personal commemoration of the artist's life and work. Special thanks go to Shirley's son, Robert

Grilley, who was both involved and supportive, and to Jonathon Wilde who from the outset enthusiastically embraced the concept of the exhibition. We owe special thanks to Tory Folliard who was the critical linchpin for the project; she not only introduced us to the families of John and Shirley but assisted in countless ways that ultimately made the exhibition possible.

Graeme Reid, MOWA's director of exhibitions and collections, deserves special mention as the curator of the exhibition and for his catalogue essay that so compellingly articulates the life and vision of the artist. Thanks also go to our talented book designer Amy Hafemann and editor Terry A. Neff, and to the many staff members who made it possible for this project to come to fruition.

This catalogue is the third in an ongoing series of museum publications that are offered as free downloads on the museum's website (wisconsinart.org), a reflection of the institution's commitment to making Wisconsin art accessible around the world. Printed softcover versions are available for purchase from blurb.com.

For their generous support of this exhibition I would like to extend my gratitude to the Demmer Charitable Trust, lead sponsor of the exhibition, and to additional sponsors James and Karen Hyde, Joseph and Helen Lai, Pick Heaters Inc., Quarles & Brady LLP, Horicon Bank, and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. We are genuinely grateful to the sponsors for helping us share the truly magical vision of John Wilde.



I think my eye is delighted,



varyingly, by whatever I see.



I like wit and humor, which

An abstract painting featuring a large, textured green shape in the center, possibly representing a landscape feature like a hill or a body of water. The green is composed of many small, overlapping brushstrokes. To the right, there are patches of light blue and tan. The bottom of the image has a tan background with a pattern of small, light-colored dots. The overall style is painterly and textured.

qualify the human condition.

A VERY PRIVATE COLLECTION

Graeme Reid, Director of Collections | Exhibitions

In 1943, when Alfred H. Barr, Jr. of the Museum of Modern Art surveyed the national art scene, he highlighted a particular group he dubbed “magic realists.” These were artists “who by means of an exact realistic technique try to make plausible and convincing their improbable, dreamlike or fantastic vision.”¹ John Wilde was one of these artists. From his home base in Wisconsin, he would become a leading light in American Surrealism throughout the United States.

During a career that spanned more than seven decades, Wilde saw more than a hundred of his works find homes in museum permanent collections; approximately fourteen hundred more went to private collections. Solo gallery and museum exhibitions numbered over sixty; national and international group exhibitions over 140. Even so, *Wilde’s Wildes: A Very Private Collection* is unique: it is composed exclusively of paintings and drawings Wilde and his beloved wife Shirley, whom he married in 1969, chose to keep for themselves. Most of these works could easily have found ready buyers, but the couple enjoyed living with them in their home. As a group, they offer not only a marvelous overview of Wilde’s remarkable ability, but also an insight into how he worked and what he cherished.

In the Wildes’ modest home outside of Cooksville, Wisconsin, the living room was dominated by *An American Interior*, 1942 (p. 27). Complementing it were dozens of works by Wilde and by friends and colleagues from over the years. Floor to ceiling windows on the west side of the house revealed a porch that offered wonderful views of the surrounding fifteen acres of woods, fields, and streams. Past two bedrooms at the end of a hallway festooned with plants and artwork on the east side of the home was Wilde’s studio, a small room with windows facing north and west. The artist would sit between them facing east to get maximum natural light. For Wilde, this country haven of peace and inspiration offered comfort and seclusion for him, Shirley, and their dogs, well away from the hurly-burly of teaching and administrative duties at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

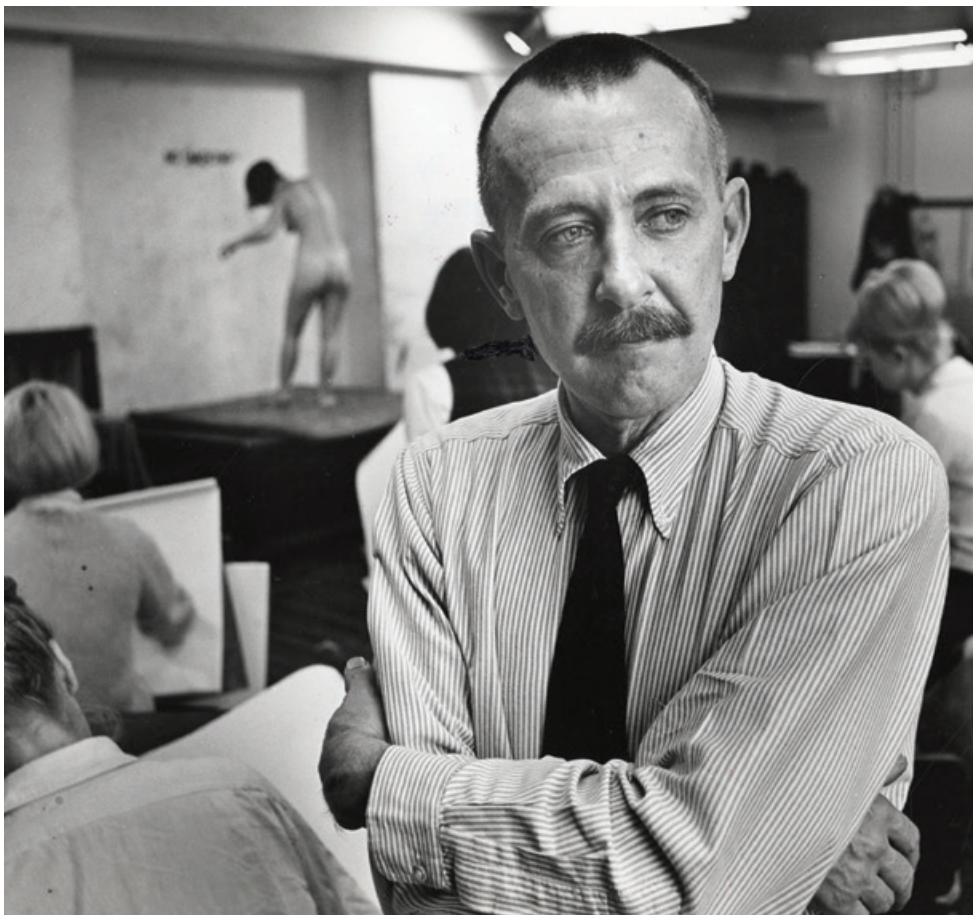
Born in Milwaukee in 1919, John Wilde engaged with established artists such as Paul Clemens, Santos Zingale, and Alfred Sessler while still in high school; the seed of his future career took root. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 1938 to 1942, Wilde took classes in philosophy, history, sociology, geography, and, critically, art history.² Art history teachers such

as James Watrous (with whom he would later share a campus studio) and John Kienitz introduced him to the work of old masters such as Sandro Botticelli, Pisanello, Fra Angelico, Lucas Cranach, and Albrecht Dürer, and others such as Jan van Eyck, Hieronymus Bosch, Giuseppe Arcimboldo, and Pieter Bruegel. Wilde was taken by the intimacy and detail in the work of these artists, where attention was required to appreciate not just the subject but also their technique and the subtle use of color. His response was direct, as is clearly evident in such drawings as *Myself Age, 19 with Long Hair*, 1939 (p. 22), in which Wilde channeled a Dürer self-portrait from 1500. But Wilde also learned about more contemporary artists such as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Max Ernst, who applied additional materials such as pieces of newsprint to their early paintings, creating collages that blurred the distinction between reality and artistic creation. Wilde followed suit in early works such as *Still Life: The Bathers*, 1940 (p. 24), *Myself as a Reader*, 1941 (p. 23), and *An American Interior*, 1942 (p. 27).

An American Interior, painted right before Wilde was drafted into the Army, is a seminal work. First, at 36 x 50 inches, it remains one of the largest works he produced. Second, while it looks

backwards to Europe and specifically Braque with its layered pictorial planes and addition of collage, Wilde's title asserts its Americanness, perhaps as a declaration of his own identity. The white wall in the foreground appears to be an outer wall, yet pictures hang upon it and a chair, table, and umbrella stand create the atmosphere of a room. Interior and exterior elements are combined in a way that Wilde would subsequently adapt to rendering innermost thoughts and feelings as pictorial realities. It is classic Wilde: a blend of seemingly incompatible, decontextualized elements with an enigmatic narrative. The drama is staged like a play whose set's components are simultaneously real and false—a description that applies to much of his work.

The painting decisively marks the birth of Wilde's true voice. It is also notable because of what he had painted on its reverse in 1941: a scene titled *Helen Ashman with Sylvia Fein* (p. 26), featuring his soon-to-be wife Helen (they married in 1943; she died in 1966) and one of his closest friends. The two stand in a desolate rocky landscape dealing cards. Helen wears quasi-renaissance clothing; Sylvia's clothing is more contemporary. Time is compressed into past, present, and



John Wilde in a life drawing class, ca. 1965

future. The fact that Wilde painted on the other side of what would have been a major work speaks volumes to the greater value he saw in *An American Interior*.

As Wilde was absorbing and revealing influences from earlier art, he was making the transition to a more unique, individual style. In addition to his class studies, Wilde's artistic and intellectual development was molded and honed by other sources. From 1936 to 1946, John Steuart Curry was the University of Wisconsin-Madison's artist-in-residence in the College of Agriculture. Curry painted the farms, people, and landscapes he saw around the state. Wilde rebelled against this formally: he abhorred Curry's loose painting style and his tendency to romanticize the landscape. Another pictorial approach that Wilde failed to appreciate was the abstract expressionist scene that emerged after the war, likely because of its resolute rejection of both drawing and readily identifiable subject

matter. In short, his personal style developed not just from what he liked, but also from what he disliked. In addition to fellow students Helen Ashman and Sylvia Fein, he befriended a wide circle of artists such as Gertrude Abercrombie, Marshall Glasier, Dudley Huppler, and Karl Priebe, who all shared his interest in an art that relied more on imagination than depicting reality. Together, this small coterie championed an artistic genre that eschewed the stylistic tendency toward realism that had been the norm in the United States during the 1930s and early 1940s. They preferred a more personal—and imaginative—vision.

Together, Wilde and his friends formed the Wisconsin contingent of what Alfred Barr termed “magic realism” and that today falls under the larger umbrella of Surrealism, which sought to mine dreams and the unconscious rather than the outside world for their subject matter. They were part of a larger, national milieu that included artists such as Paul Cadmus, Honore Sharrer, Priscilla Roberts, and George Tooker, and Europeans such as René Magritte (evident in Wilde’s *Naked Girl with a Pipe*, 2000) and Max Ernst (the focus of Wilde’s master’s thesis in 1947, “A Survey of the Development of Surrealism in Painting and Its Chief Innovations with Special Emphasis on the Life and Work of Max Ernst”).

Following Wilde’s graduation from college in 1942, the twenty-three-year-old draftee entered the Army. Initially, he was assigned to a medical corps in Louisiana where his duties involved venereal disease inspections and producing propaganda warnings against such afflictions. Less than enthralled by his duties, in 1944 Private Wilde sought a transfer to the Office of Strategic Services (a forerunner of the CIA) in Washington, DC, where he hoped his artistic skills might be employed more effectively. His application was backed by recommendations that praised his experience “as a camofleur and model maker,” noting “his rather unusual mentality.”³ Wilde welcomed the transfer, but it failed to lessen his hatred of war, killing, and the comprehensive loss of liberty he felt being in the military entailed.

Temperamentally unsuited for Army life, Wilde, like Ernst, kept copious notes and sketchbooks in which he alleviated his distaste for his assignments and his frustration at being kept from making art. His work became more satirical. “I realized then,” Wilde reflected, “that what I had done before was merely highly skilled and facile.”⁴ These drawings would prove a bountiful treasury of ideas for many years to come, even as late as 2004 when he painted *Myself in 1944 Contemplating the Following 60 Years* (pp. 56–57).

Here, Wilde depicted himself with an expanded head, his left hand covering his right eye. He oversees a tabletop tableau featuring what look like multiple self-portraits, including one in which he appears to shoot himself in the head while standing next to a German soldier. Wilde commented about the work, “when you reach the age that I have, you don’t know how much longer you have left. There are times in which I like to bring everything together as a sort of finale, a summation.”⁵

After the war, Wilde returned to the refreshing normalcy of Madison and completed his master’s degree in Applied Art in 1948. Despite numerous offers to teach elsewhere, Wilde chose to stay in the city where he was comfortable, welcomed the proximity of family and friends, and relished the chance to teach at the school that had given him so much. Teaching also provided him with a steady income beyond what his art might earn. Best of all was the opportunity to teach his true passion: drawing.

Throughout his long career at Madison, Wilde was a staunch advocate of drawing classes; he taught the subject at all levels from freshman to graduate. He was a dedicated and excellent teacher. One student recalled, “It’s not that it’s a thrill to be

taught by one of the real masters, it’s that he’s always there. Even if the class is at 8:15 in the morning, Wilde’s there. Always. If you sign up for a Wilde class you always get Wilde.”⁶ Even so, he strove to find a balance between the requirements of the university and his need to make his own art. He had a rule of “never appearing here [campus] in summer.”⁷ He regularly sought semesters off from teaching (as much as one in six) in order to prepare for numerous invitational exhibitions—something that he believed also made him a better teacher.

With regard to painting, Wilde commented that it was “intriguing and a wonderful process. But I don’t feel passion. Drawing, on the other hand, is so natural, and I get so involved in it, that I don’t think of it as an effort at all. I look at paintings on a more intellectual level. It’s a little like appreciating a novel, where I consciously examine its structure and everything that’s gone into its making. But drawing totally absorbs me. It’s much more liberated, much less conscious, and much more automatic.”⁸ This attitude is clearly evident in *Eventide at the Duchess’s*, 2005 (pp. 60–61), a painting that is exhibited as an ensemble together with twenty-two preparatory drawings and paintings that act like chapters for the full novel. It also reveals Wilde’s modus operandi for large, complex works: they are

essentially compendiums of many smaller paintings brought together to greater a grander, more dynamic narrative.

It was his passion for drawing, particularly in the exquisite but unforgiving medium of silverpoint that formed the basis of much of Wilde's work. He approached drawing from an evolutionary point of view, feeling that each mark led to another then to another until the inevitable conclusion was attained. Even if the initial drawing disappeared under paint, it was the fundamental and necessary structure upon which everything else rested.⁹ *Female Nude Standing on a Black-and-White Square Tile Floor*, 1986 (p. 36) and *Lady-Bird Series #10 Flora Flicker* (1982) demonstrate how Wilde used silverpoint not just in his traditional figure drawings, but also in his fanciful work with self-portraiture.



John Wilde at his easel, ca. 1960

Self-portraits are a common thread throughout Wilde's long career. "My main concern is simply myself: I am the actor on the stage being depicted," he said. "Most of my painting is scene painting. I paint a proscenium arch and depict activities happening on that stage. And, very often, I am one of the actors in whatever the event happens to be. To me, there is very little difference between being in the painting and the act of painting—it is the same thing. It's almost impossible for me to separate myself from the things I am doing and, therefore, very often, I include myself."¹⁰ Wilde's self-portraits, particularly double ones such as *Myself, Jan. 9, 1944 & May 6, 1993*, 1993 (p. 54) and *Myself Twice AE 80 YRS, 10 M*, 2000 (p. 55) are savagely introspective and honest besides being, to all intents and purposes, memento mori and a commentary on the universality of aging and its inevitable conclusion. Moreover, these two works exemplify a fascinating duality in Wilde's art: he produced surreal fantasy scenes set in timeless, other-worldly landscapes, while simultaneously marking the passage of real time through harsh self-examinations.

While Wilde's self-portraits could be scathingly honest to the point of caricature and self-deprecation, portraits of Shirley are unfailingly warm and affectionate. For more than thirty-seven

years, she was not only his wife but his model and muse, featuring in numerous works that were sold but also some that were kept as tokens of his affection. The strength and duration of their love, as well as Wilde's penchant for combining the personal with the somewhat bizarre, is exemplified in three small works. In 1971, just two years after marrying Shirley, he painted *A Family Portrait No. 1 Inside* (pp. 38–39). Shirley sits peacefully with a cat in her lap in the living room of their home with *An American Interior* clearly displayed. A naked woman runs through the scene, ducks fly, a chicken struts, and a couple birdwatch outside. Painted four years later, *Shirley on a Spotted Pig* (p. 33) humorously and tenderly depicts a nude Shirley sitting on said pig. *Our Wedding Night* (p. 48) painted thirty-one years after the event, shares the same bizarre mix of fantasy and real relationships. Wilde is shown as slender and naked; Shirley's face is obscured by purple hair. This narrative is written on the back of the painting: "Our first act was to undress—and I put a crimson robe over her shoulders because of the brilliance of her white skin. Then I pointed out to her the importance, magnitude and utter beauty of her feet. She pointed her left leg and foot out as I talked, and, half smiling, listened. Then I gently bound her two feet together. Removed her robe and carried her to our bed and laid her thereon. I placed 8 red roses between her toes."

This attention to self and personal experience indicates that for Wilde, art was a form of psychological self-analysis—a vehicle for the resolution of internal personal issues. Nonetheless, the issues in question are also universal and ubiquitous: sex, nature, vanity, and the inevitability of death infuse his work. To express them, Wilde often drew inspiration from the land and its animal inhabitants that surrounded his and Shirley's rural property next to Badfish Creek. In a letter to his friend and colleague Gerald Purdy, Wilde wrote, "at the moment I'm gardening, walking in the woods (trying to maintain sanity) and working in the studio from 8am to 1pm on the five days I don't teach."¹¹ The Cooksville property had been purchased by John and Helen in 1962 and they built not just the house but a private arboretum. In 1974 on a faculty information questionnaire, Wilde listed memberships in the Audubon Society, Friends of the Arboretum, Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation, etc, etc.¹²

In his home studio were dozens of tiny, fragile animal skulls and bodies of dead mice or birds that he picked up on his walks. He often gave them new life in his paintings, representing not just life but what endures beyond death. In *With Old Friends and Affrights in a DaVincian Landscape*,

2004 (pp. 58–59), the skulls are like metaphors for Wilde's drawings—the fundamental structure that exists beneath whatever external appearances convey.

Wilde's drawings and paintings are complex in both construction and subject matter. As he put it, "I like to do what I do with what is called fastidious craftsmanship, but I sometimes like to play tricks with that fastidiousness. I pay little attention to the machinations of contemporary art. I like good drawing best of all and I believe that without it there is nothing."¹³ As serious as his "fastidiousness" was—and he often painted with a brush in his right hand and a magnifying glass in the left—Wilde's work is also playful. "I like wit and humor, which qualify the human condition. I think my eye is delighted, varyingly, by whatever I see."¹⁴

His sense of humor could take a slyly mischievous turn. Wilde once drafted a memo (presumably never sent) to his colleagues proposing a course in "Art and the Vegetable Garden," which he firmly believed he was qualified to teach. Other course suggestions for his colleagues were "Art and the Wood Burning Stove" (to be taught by Skip Johnson), "Art and Bird Hunting" (to be taught by Warrington Colescott), and "Art and the Bicycle" (to be taught by Dean Meeker).

As fun as these courses sound, the memo was a serious and sardonic response to the Art Department's having sanctioned a course called "Art and the Law." Wilde was, artistically, a strict fundamentalist. He saw such courses as the beginning of doing "away with the teaching of art altogether."¹⁵

And herein lies the wonderful paradox that was John Wilde. For all his resolute determination to defend, promote, and teach perhaps the most basic and traditional element of art—drawing—his work often contains nudity, sex, and violence, straying into territory that some found uncomfortable. There is an undeniable whiff of kinkiness to many of his works that seems at odds with the conservatively dressed college professor. Wilde was well aware of the dichotomy between public and private behaviors and mankind's tendency toward self-gratification by whatever means available. In 1999, he rather pessimistically told *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* journalist James Auer, "Mankind is creating real problems for itself through the devouring of the environment and the population explosion. I take a kind of sad view—of human avarice and of the media, especially now that its power has been multiplied by the internet."¹⁶ This sensitivity to the outside world and the exasperation it reflects arguably explains Wilde's retreat into his own head and imagination. If the real world isn't what you want, why not create your own?

Wilde's Wildes encompasses every facet of John Wilde's career. A painting such as *With Old Friends and Affrights in a DaVincian Landscape* shows that Wilde's power to create major works that tapped into his most dystopian imaginings never wavered. Still lifes such as *November Kiefer's Keepers*, *Celebrations of the Months Series #1*, 1979 (p. 40) exemplify his ability to imbue something as simple as six golden pears with grace and an almost humanistic individualism. More directly autobiographic are *Shirley with Banjo, Bugs and Beans*, 1991 (p. 64) and *S with Bugs and Bryn*, 2005 (p. 63). Sweet, straightforward, and charmingly domestic, they playfully depict his wife and their corgi dogs. Four walnut ink on paper drawings from the "My Place Series" tenderly and precisely capture the lush vegetation and trees around the Wilde home, yet still slip in an amusing little nude figure.

Wilde's career eclipsed those of his mentors Clemens, Zingale, Sessler, and Watrous. Among his Wisconsin peers, he is perhaps unequaled in the number of exhibitions and collections that have featured his work. But, most important of all, John Wilde is himself a testament to the fact that one can choose to live and work locally, yet achieve lasting national recognition and stature. Everything he needed was in two places: all around him in the fertile Wisconsin landscape and in his equally fecund imagination, which knew no boundaries.



Myself AE 70, 1990
Oil on panel, 7½ x 6½ in.

- 1 Alfred H. Barr, Jr. quoted in Dorothy Miller, foreword, in *American Realists and Magic Realists*, ed. Dorothy Miller and Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1943), p. 5.
- 2 Interestingly, he was admitted on a restricted basis as he lacked "plane geometry." Freshman Admissions Office, University of Wisconsin-Madison, letter to John Wilde, July 9, 1938.
- 3 Letter from William H. Varnun, Chairman, Department of Art Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, "To Whom it May Concern," May 1, 1944.
- 4 John Wilde quoted in Will Sumner, "Artist Looks beyond Nature's Beauty," *Capital Times*, September 13, 1978, p. 57.
- 5 Robert Cozzolini, interview with John Wilde, *Isthmus*, March 17, 2006.
- 6 John Wilde quoted in Sumner, p.57.
- 7 John Wilde, letter to Don Turner, September 21, 1970.
- 8 John Wilde, interview with Russell Panczenko, September 1998, in *Wildeworld: The Art of John Wilde* (Hudson Hills Press, New York in Association with the Elvejem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999), p. 32.
- 9 Ibid., p. 33.
- 10 Ibid., p. 28.
- 11 John Wilde, letter to Gerald Purdy, May 14, 1981.
- 12 John Wilde, Faculty Information Sheet, August 20, 1974.
- 13 John Wilde, memo to Paul Shaw, University of Wisconsin-Madison University News Service, undated [ca. 1967].
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 John Wilde, draft of memo to University of Wisconsin-Madison Art Department colleagues, undated.
- 16 John Wilde, quoted by James Auer, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, November 16, 1999, p. 4.

It would be inconceivable for me to

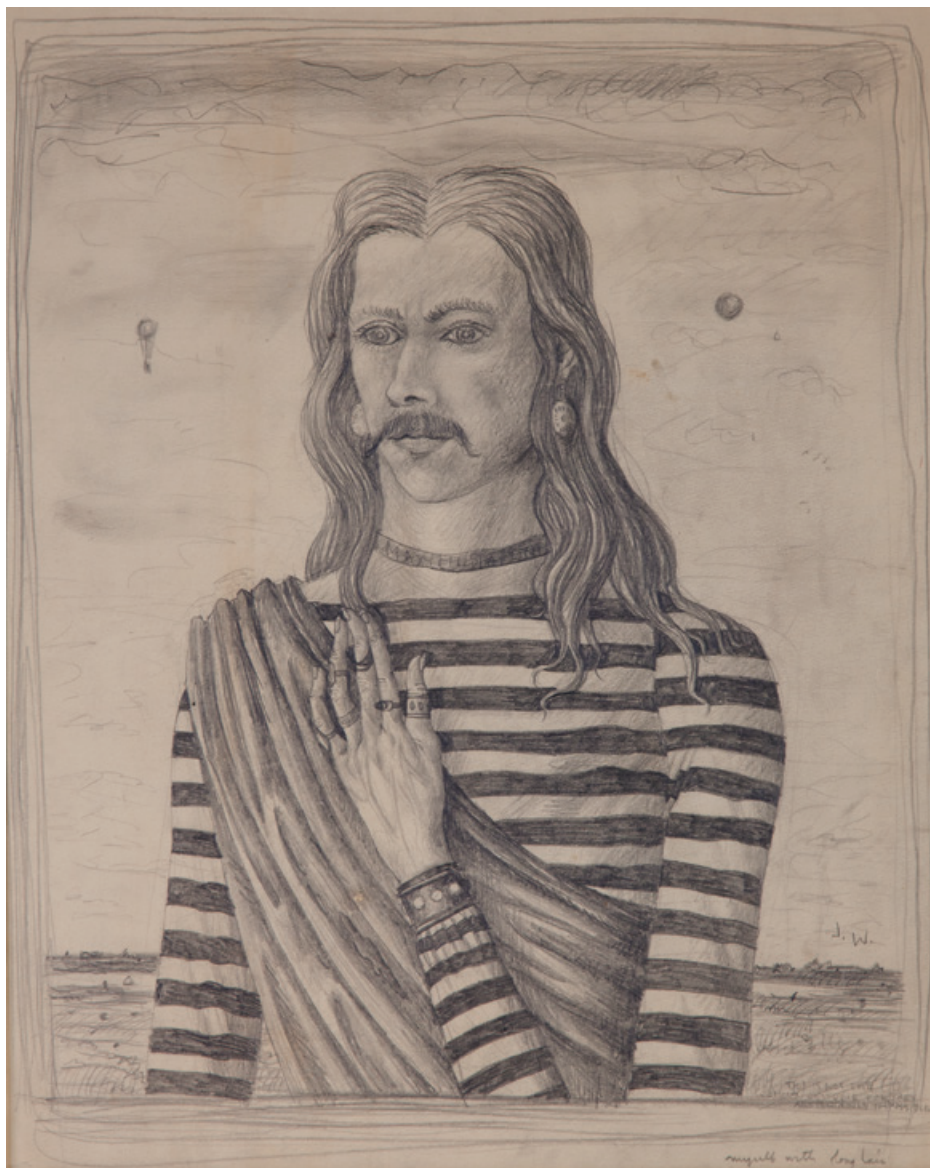


paint or draw other than what I like.



The plates are organized chronologically except where it seemed more logical to create groupings of similar subjects. All dimensions are in inches with height followed by width.

All works are lent from the collection of John and Shirley Wilde,
courtesy of Tory Folliard Gallery, unless otherwise indicated.



Myself, Age 19 with Long Hair, 1939
Graphite on paper, 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 18 in.



Myself as a Reader, 1941
Oil on panel with collage, 32 x 29 in.



Still Life: The Bathers, 1940

Gouache and collage on cardboard, 11½ x 23½ in.



*The U.S. is at War with Japan
(Invasion by Land, Sea and Air), 1941*
Graphite on paper, 11¼ x 17½ in.



Landscape with a Good Policeman, 1942
Graphite on paper, 12 x 12¾ in.



Helen Ashman with Sylvia Fein, ca. 1941
Oil on panel, 50 x 36 in. (back panel of *An American Interior*)



Study for An American Interior, 1942
Ink on matboard, 16½ x 20¼ in.

An American Interior, 1942
Oil on panel with collage, 36 x 50 in.







The Cotton House, 1948
Oil on masonite, 8 x 10 in.



Game of Balls, 1949
Oil on panel, 8¼ x 9¹⁵/₁₆ in.



Still Life with Summer Squash, 1950
Oil on panel, 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 15 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.



Kumquats, 1960

Oil on panel, 4 x 6³/₁₆ in.

Lent by Donna and Donald Baumgartner



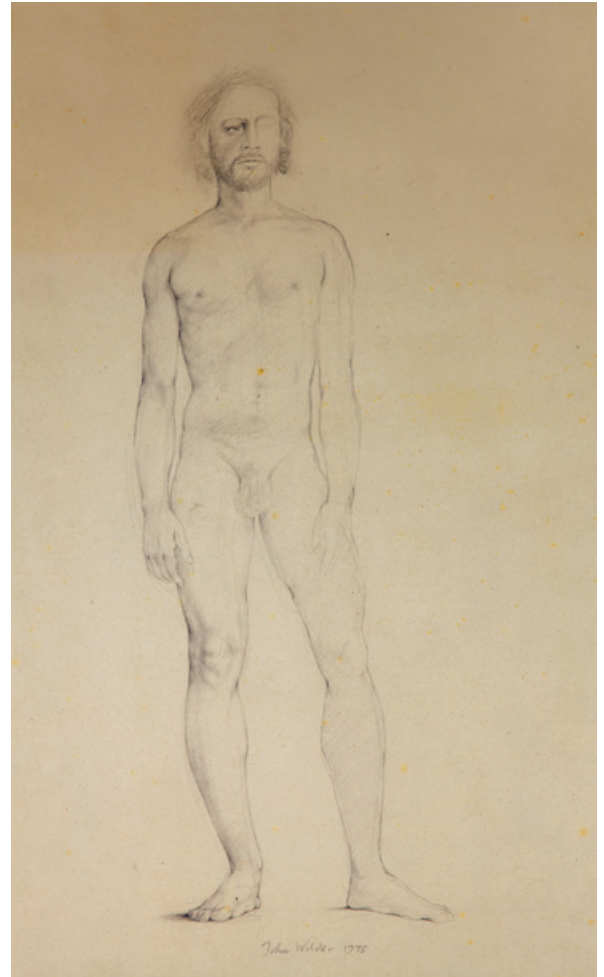
Suggestion for Hot Weather Entertainment, 1964
Oil on panel, 7 x 8¼ in.



S. with Raccoon (Shirley with "Leonard"), 1969
Oil on panel, 8¾ x 4¾ in.

Shirley on a Spotted Pig, 1975
Oil on panel, 4¾ x 4¾ in.





Female Nude [from a life drawing class], 1967/75
Graphite on peach paper, 16 x 23¾ in.

Male Nude [from a life drawing class], 1967/75
Graphite on paper, 24 x 18 in.



Female Nude Standing on a Black-and-White Square Tile Floor, 1986
Silverpoint on pink-tinted paper, 20 x 17 in.



Portrait of S. G. W., 1971
Graphite and chalk on paper, 22½ x 18¾ in.





A Family Portrait
No. 1 Inside, 1971
Oil on panel, 10 x 19¾ in.



November Kiefer's Keepers, Celebrations of the Months Series #1, 1979
Oil on panel, 16 x 20 in.



Homage to Piero Di Cosimo, 1986
Oil on canvas, 15 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 20 in.



Homage to Utamuro Shoen, 1987
Oil on canvas, 16¼ x 20 in.



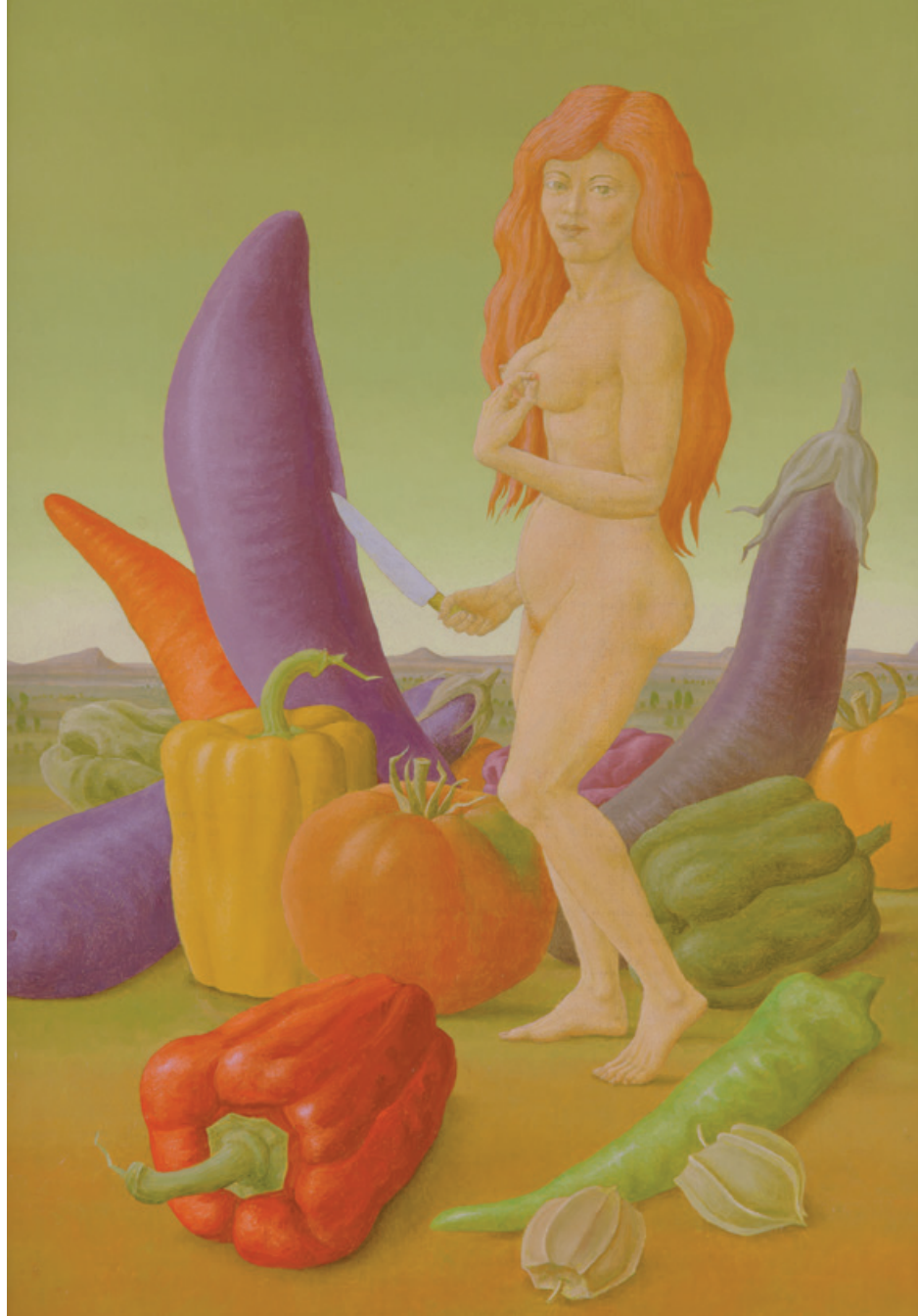
A Cat, A Dagger, and an Open Door, 1992
Oil on panel, 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.



Cucurbitaceae, 1999
Oil on canvas mounted on panel, 14 x 38 in.

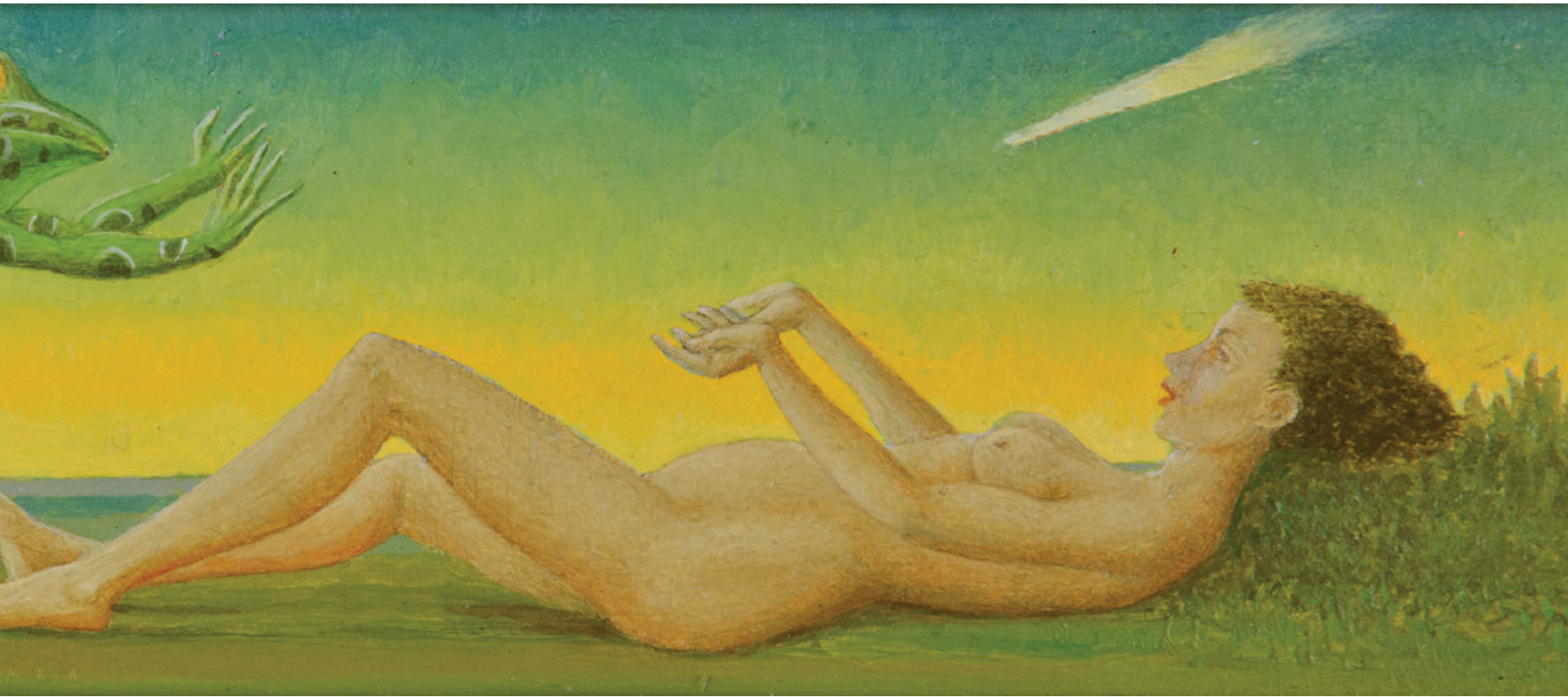


Nightshade #4, 1998, 1998
Oil on canvas mounted on panel, 19¼ x 13¼ in.





The Moon, a Frog, a Naked Lady and a Comet, 1998
Oil on panel, 2 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.





The Woman was a Stranger, But She Came to Live, 2000
Oil on panel, 10 x 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.



Our Wedding Night, 2000
Oil on panel, 9 $\frac{13}{16}$ x 8 in.



The Blinding of Sampson within View of his Castle, 2000
Oil on canvas, 7 x 9¾ in.

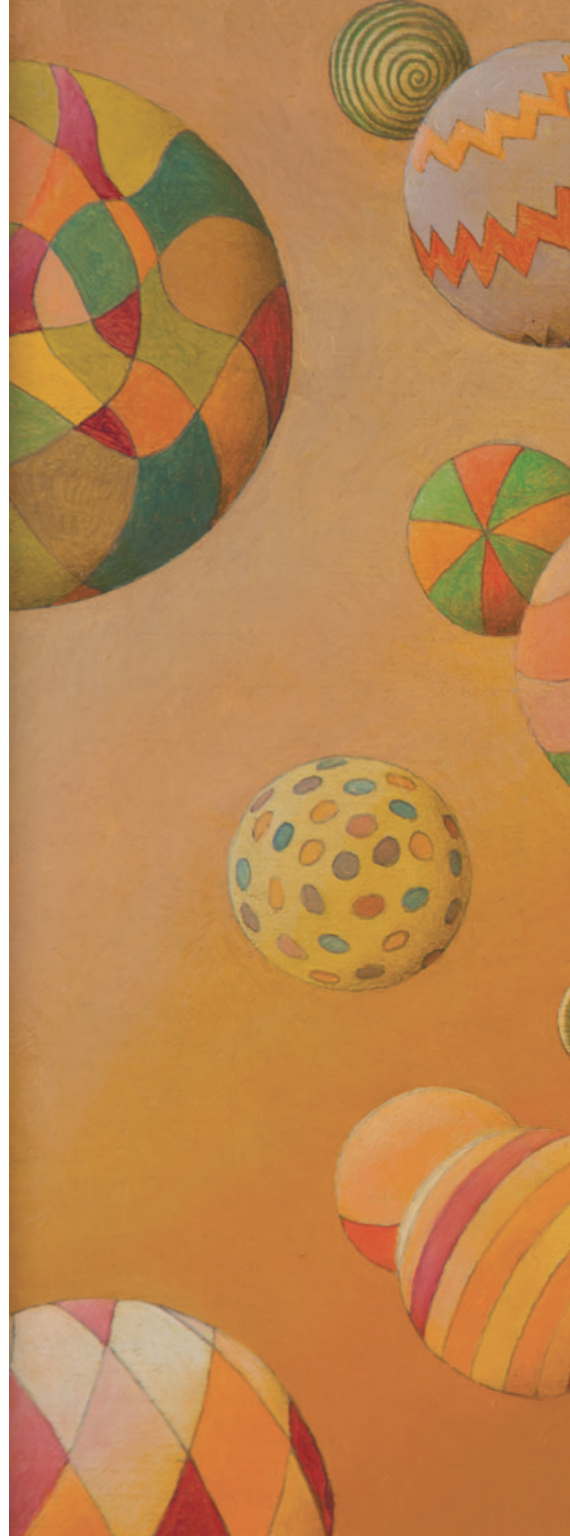


Naked Girl with a Pipe, 2000
Oil on panel, 8 x 11¾ in.



Jane and Joan Enter the Kingdom of Heaven, 1997
Color etching, 22 x 29½ in.

Jane and Joan Enter the Kingdom of Heaven, 2002
Oil on panel, 11½ x 18 in.



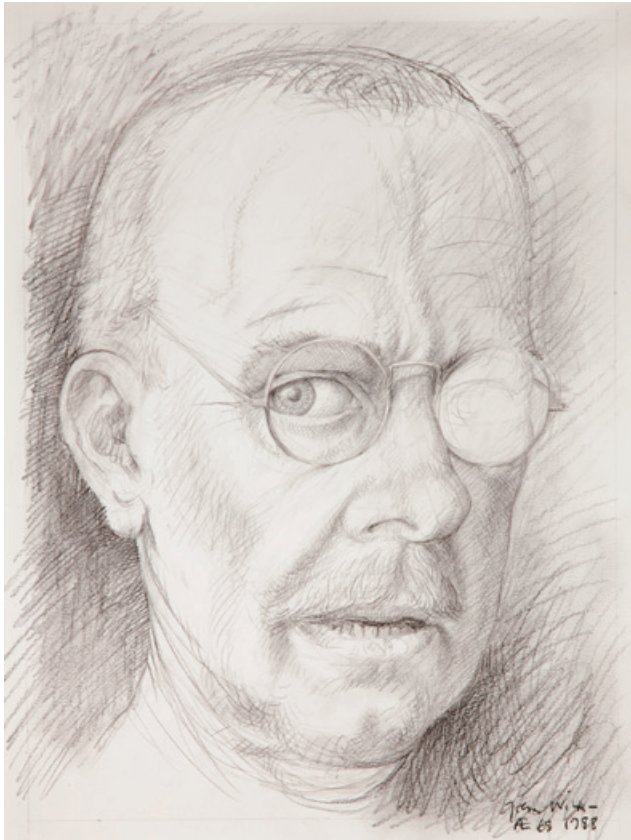




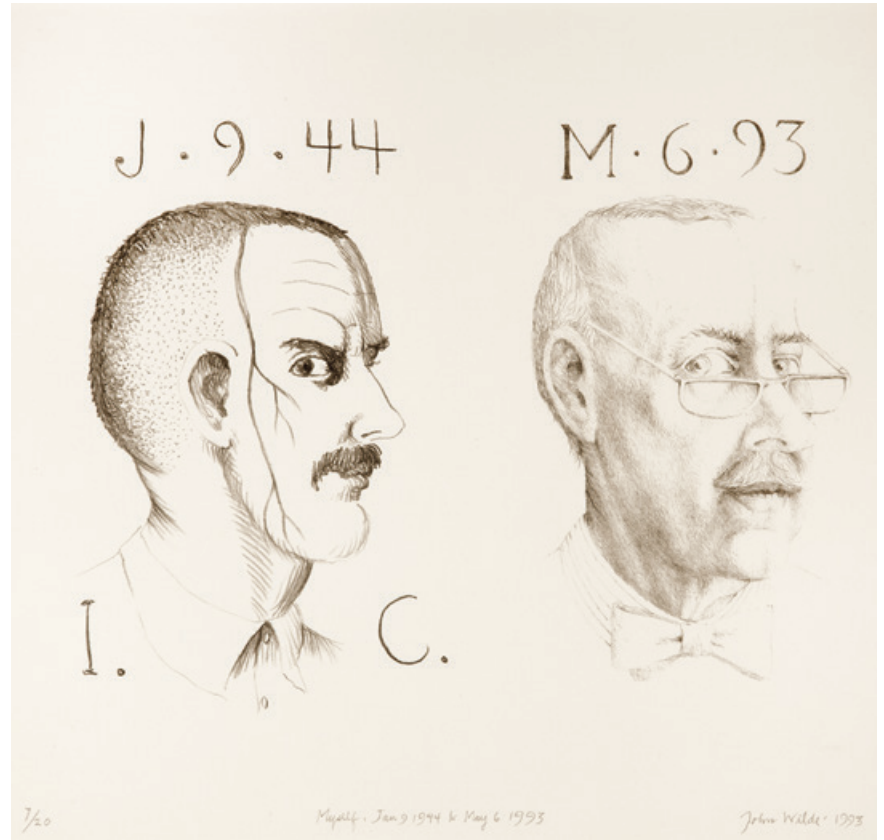
Crow on Pumpkin, 2002
Oil on panel, 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.



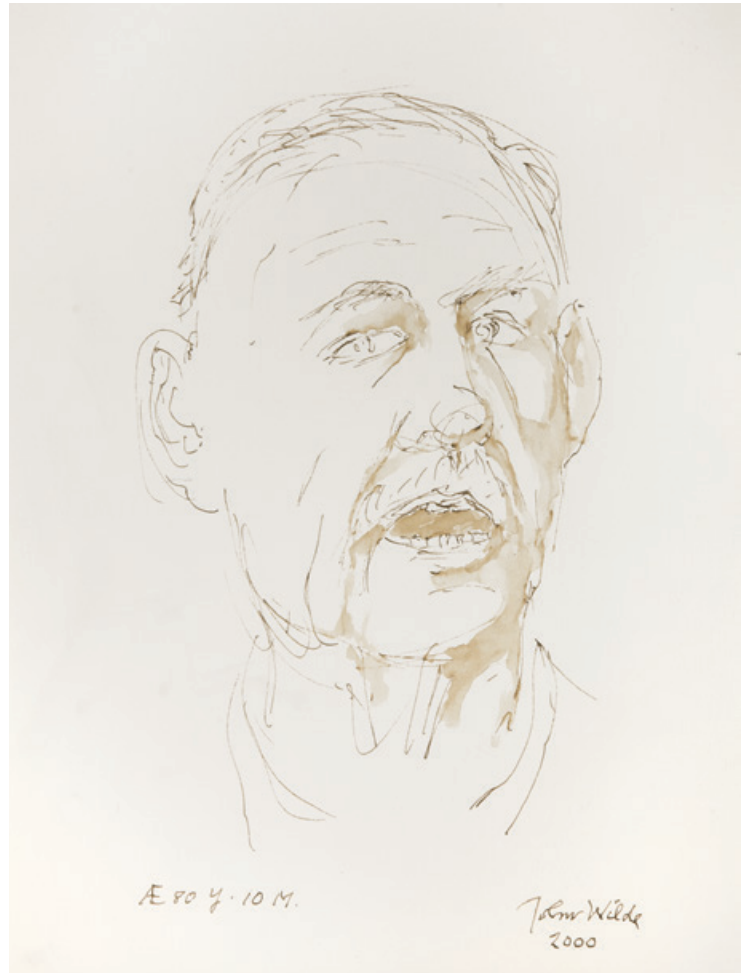
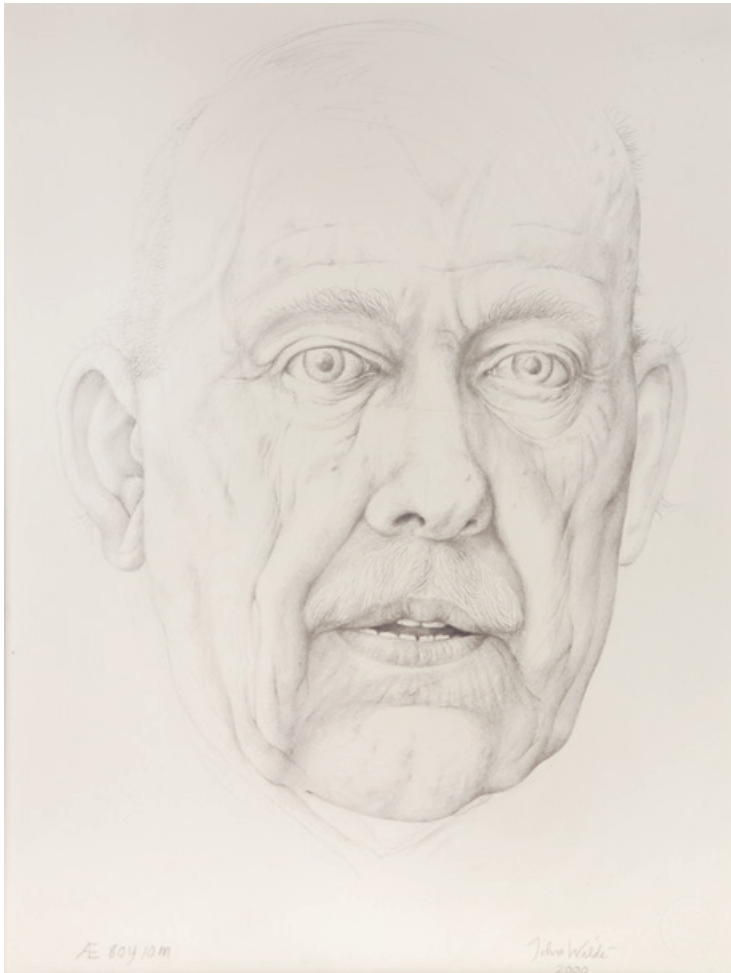
Microtus [Dried Mouse], 2003
Oil on panel, 6½ x 7¼ in.



Myself, Age 68, 1988
Pencil with touches of chalk on paper, 20 x 16 in.



Myself, Jan. 9, 1944 and May 6, 1993, 1993
Lithograph on paper, 14 x 16½ in.



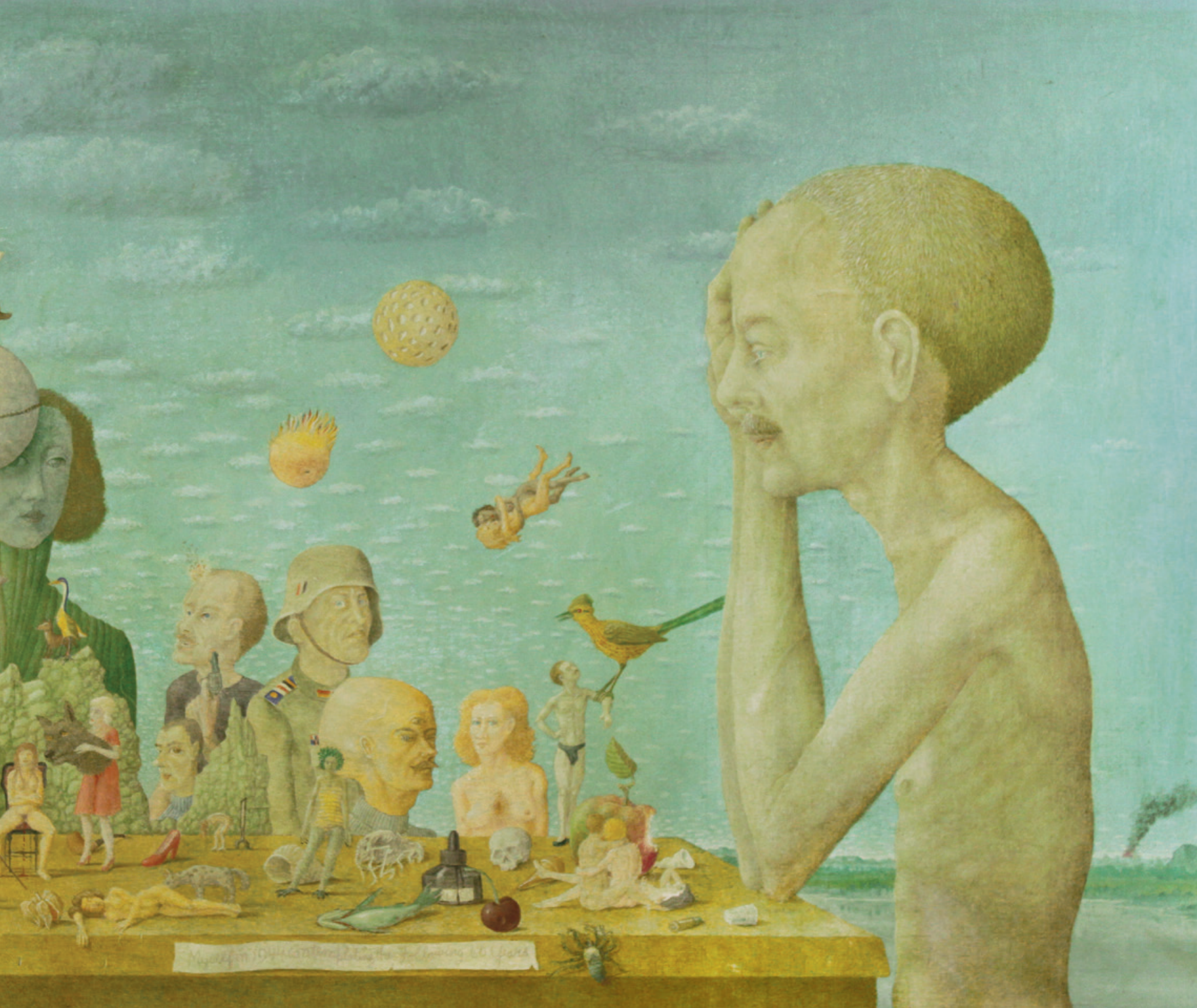
Myself Twice AE 80 YRS, 10 M, 2000

Two sheets: Silverpoint on paper, 14½ x 11½ in.; Ink and wash on paper, 14½ x 11½ in.



Myself in 1944 Contemplating the Following 60 Years, 2004
Oil on canvas mounted on panel, 24 x 40 in.







With Old Friends and Affrights in a DaVincian Landscape, 2004
Oil on canvas, 24½ x 40 in.

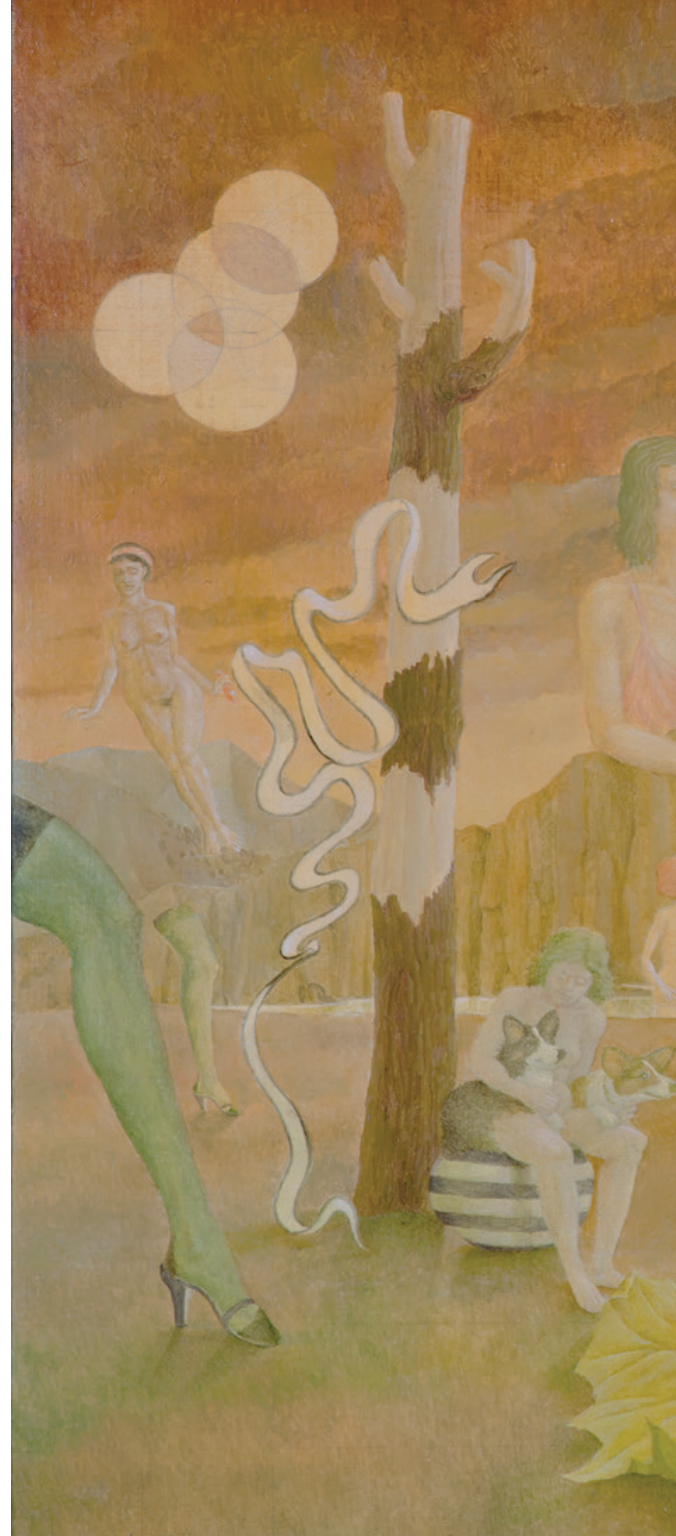




With Old Friends and Affrights in a da Vinci's Imagination



Eventide at the Duchess's, 2005
Oil on canvas, 27¼ x 41¼ in.







Nude Balancing on a Beach Ball [Study for *Eventide at the Duchess's*], 2004
Pencil on toned paper, 15 x 9 in.



Nude Standing Next to a Potato [Study for *Eventide at the Duchess's*], 2004
Pencil on toned paper, 8½ x 6½ in.



Sprouting [Study for *Eventide at the Duchess's*], 2005
Oil on canvas mounted on panel, 9 x 7 in.



S with Bugs and Bryn, 2005

Oil on canvas mounted on panel, 12¼ x 7¾ in.

Friends, 2005

Oil on canvas mounted on panel, 9 x 7 in.

Nude Chasing a Pheasant [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004

Pencil on toned paper, 6½ x 8½ in.



Shirley with Banjo, Bugs and Beans, 1991
Oil on panel, 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.



Banjo for Poohsie, 1985
Oil on panel, 4 x 6 in.

ADDITIONAL WORKS

Still Life with a Dead Starling, 1950, oil on panel, 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.

Portrait of S. G. W., 1967, graphite on paper heightened with white chalk, 14 x 19 in.

Portrait of John and Shirley, 1971, silverpoint on paper, 6 x 8 in.

Male Nude, 1972, graphite on blue paper, 14 x 22 in.

Lady-Bird Series #10—Flora Flicker, Design for a Flicker, 1982, silverpoint on paper, 10 x 14 in.

Shirley Gene Wilde, 1986, silverpoint with wash on paper, 20 x 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Portrait of Joan, Nude Reclining on Floor with Dagger and Two Dogs, One Slit Open, 1996, siligraph (glass litho) on paper, 11 x 14 in.

My Place Series #10—Out Toward the South Field, 1999, walnut ink on paper, 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

My Place Series #8—Looking Down on the Pond, 1999, walnut ink on paper, 14 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

My Place Series #5—Looking Toward My Vegetable Garden, 1999, walnut ink on paper, 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

My Place Series #6—Looking Down Toward Our House, 1999, walnut ink on paper, 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

Reclining Nude with Dead Dog and a Dagger [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2000, pencil on brown paper, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 in.

Microtus (Dried Mouse), 2003, silverpoint on pink prepared paper, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Two Females Embracing [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004, pencil with wash heightened with white chalk on toned paper, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Seated Nude with Dog [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004, pastel and pencil on paper, 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Reclining Nude on a Sycamore Leaf [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004, pencil on brown paper, 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.

Male Nude Standing on a Large Head of a Woman [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004, pencil on toned paper, 12 x 7 in.

Five Figures in and around a Structure [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004, pastel and pencil on paper, 11 x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Woman Looking in and Holding a Mirror [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004, charcoal on blue paper, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Two Nudes Facing Each Other [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004, charcoal on blue paper heightened with white chalk, 9 x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Prone Nude Drawing [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004, charcoal on blue paper heightened with white chalk, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

S with Bugs and Bryn [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004, charcoal on blue paper heightened with white chalk, 12 x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Nude in Lake Holding a Swan by the Neck [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004, charcoal on blue paper heightened with white chalk, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Hanging Nude [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2004, charcoal on paper heightened with white chalk, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 in.

Drawing [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2005, oil on canvas, 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Nude Chasing a Pheasant [Study for Eventide at the Duchess's], 2005, oil on canvas, 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 8 in.

Wilde's Wildes: A Very Private Collection has been published on the occasion of the exhibition *Wilde's Wildes: A Very Private Collection*, organized by the Museum of Wisconsin Art.

The exhibition is on view at the Museum of Wisconsin Art from June 13 to September 6, 2015.

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Front cover: *Homage to Piero Di Cosimo*, 1986, Oil on canvas, 16½ x 20¼ in. (detail)

Back cover: *Homage to Piero Di Cosimo*, 1986, Oil on canvas, 16½ x 20¼ in. (detail)

Page 1: *A Family Portrait No. 1 Inside*, 1971, Oil on panel, 10 x 19¾ in. (detail)

Page 2: *An American Interior*, 1942, Oil on panel with collage, 36 x 50 in. (detail)

Page 4: *November Kiefer's Keepers, Celebrations of the Months Series #1*, 1979, Oil on board, 16 x 20 in. (detail)

Pages 6–7: *Myself, Age 68*, 1988, Pencil with touches of chalk on paper, 20 x 16 in. (detail)

Pages 8–9: *Suggestion for Hot Weather Entertainment*, 1964, Oil on panel, 7 x 8¼ in. (detail)

Page 12: Photograph courtesy of University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives

Page 15: Photograph courtesy of University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives

Pages 20–21: *The Blinding of Sampson within View of his Castle*, 2000, Oil on canvas, 7 x 9¾ in. (detail)



As a leading American Surrealist artist, John Wilde saw more than fifteen hundred of his works acquired by museums and private collections and had over two hundred solo and group exhibitions. Even so, *Wilde's Wilde: A Very Private Collection* is unique because it is composed exclusively of the paintings and drawings Wilde and his wife Shirley chose to keep in their home for decades. *Wilde's Wildes* provides an overview of his career as well as an insight into how he worked and what he and his wife cherished.

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