Narcissus

Primary Maker
Richard James Wyatt

Date
1829 - 1846

Medium
Carved marble

Dimensions
Overall: 27 × 22 × 15 in. (68.6 × 55.9 × 38.1 cm)
Weight: 151 lbs

Credit Line
Purchase, The Eloise W. Martin Purchase Fund

Object number
1982.7

Type
Sculpture

The son of a carver and gilder, Wyatt was in his twenties when he was invited to work in Rome at the studio of Antonio Canova, a celebrated neoclassical sculptor. He permanently settled in Rome but continued creating sculptures for the English royal family. He became known for his female figures; John Gibson, a friend as well as competitor, said, "No sculptor in England had produces female statues to be compared to those of Wyatt." Though Wyatt here strays from the female form, this work still retains the delicacy and subtle poetism typical of his work. Depicting a reflection in water seems like a nearly impossible proposition for a sculptor. This artwork relies on the figure's unusual pose to suggest the moment when the vain young man, Narcissus, holding his long hair out of his eyes, catches sight of his beautiful reflection and begins to pitch forward into the glassy pool.