



American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States 1820-1880

By Andrew Wilton, Tim Barringer

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The painters who came to be known as the Hudson River School--Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, Frederic Edwin Church, Jasper Cropsey, Sanford Robinson Gifford, and others--found inspiration in our young country's natural wonders and were the first to paint many of its still-wild vistas. As America was settled and the wilderness receded, their successors--most notably Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran--carried their quest for the sublime to the Far West, communicating its breathtaking grandeur in brilliant views of Rocky Mountain peaks, roaring waterfalls, and vast canyons. Within a single generation these artists established the dramatic approach to American landscape painting that is celebrated in this stirringly beautiful book. The freshness of their vision, the intensity of their invention, and the energy of their execution were all born of the urgency these artists sensed in the life of America itself.

Published to accompany a major transatlantic exhibition, *American Sublime* rejoices in America the Beautiful as seen in some of the country's most glorious landscape paintings. It contains a fully illustrated catalogue of all the paintings in the exhibition, with more than one hundred color plates, including three gatefolds. Biographies of the artists are included, and thoughtful and elegantly written essays cast new light on their ambitions and achievements. The lucid text places American landscape painting in the context of the international art world and of the European landscape tradition. And it explores ideas of national identity and empire in America, looking in particular at how these landscapes, whether real or imagined, reflect Americans' hopes and fears for their country.

As a tribute to some of our most important American artists and the land that inspired them, this stunningly illustrated book will have a deep and wide appeal.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

The Hudson River School and their successors were the first American artists to create a specifically "American" type of artwork an artwork that celebrated the awe-inspiring panoramas of the untamed American landscape and incorporated deep feelings of national identity. This catalog accompanies an exhibition that travels both to Great Britain and to the United States and includes over 113 stunningly dramatic and truly "sublime" American landscapes. The book is divided into eight thematic sections and includes two scholarly essays. In the first, Barringer (history of art, Yale) compares the tradition of landscape painting in America and Britain, while in the second, Wilton (senior research fellow, Tate Gallery, London) explores the concept of the sublime and the formation of a pictorial language that Americans would come to embrace and identify as uniquely their own. While the essays and catalog entries are well written and informative, providing a geographic and historical context for the artwork, it is the stunning illustrations (including several two-page foldouts) that dazzle the eye and imagination. Recommended for all libraries.

Kraig Binkowski, Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington

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From [Booklist](#)

None of the domestic cleverness of folk art is evident in *American Sublime*, a gorgeously illustrated and learned history of nineteenth-century American landscape painting, a sophisticated school rooted in British romanticism and American transcendence. Wilton, of the Tate Gallery, considers the influence of Edmund Burke's theory of sublimity and the surge in scientific development on American painters, while coauthor Tim Barringer, an art historian at Yale, discusses the profound effect on the painters' imaginations of a pristine land free of Western religious, literary, and historical associations. The American "instinct to find spiritual significance in nature" is manifest in the luminous beauty and high drama of the panoramic paintings of Frederic Edwin Church, Albert Bierstadt, and Jasper Francis Cropsey. But even as these painters and their colleagues, including Fritz Hugh Lane and Martin Johnson Heade, celebrated the glory of America, the frenetic growth of the nation transformed the land before their very eyes. By the time Thomas Moran was painting the Grand Canyon in 1892, the "wilderness aesthetic of the landscape painter" had become instrumental in protecting such sacred places from destruction. Wilton and Barringer's commentary is stimulating and important, and the exceptional plates are bliss unadulterated. *Donna Seaman*

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Review

Winner of the Art Exhibition Catalogue Award, Art Newspaper/AXA

Winner of the Henry-Russell Hitchcock Award

"A gorgeously illustrated and learned history of nineteenth-century American landscape painting. . . . Wilton and Barringer's commentary is stimulating and important, and the exceptional plates are bliss unadulterated."--*Booklist*

"Splendid. . . Andrew Wilton and Tim Barringer have written a book to treasure. . . A valuable contribution to the study of American art history."--**Phyllis Tuchman, *ArtNet Magazine***

"The essays and catalog entries are well written and informative, providing a geographic and historical context for the artwork, [but] it is the stunning illustrations (including several two-page foldouts) that dazzle the eye and imagination."--***Library Journal***

"What glorious images these are!"--***National Geographic Adventure***

"Highly and enthusiastically recommended."--***Choice***

"The spectacular paintings that record [the] search for sublimity, handsomely printed here, retain their power to entice and overwhelm."--***New York Times Book Review***

"At first glance, the color plates reproduced in *American Sublime* seem to be nothing more than pretty pictures. Only when the authors put them back into the political and cultural context in which they were created do the images take on new meanings, and only then do we begin to see the sometimes grandiose intentions of the artists who painted them and the art collectors who displayed them."--**Jonathan Kirsch, *Los Angeles Times***

"The catalog is far more than a souvenir of this astonishing [exhibition]. There are two well-contrasted essays by the exhibition's organizers Andrew Wilton and Tim Barringer, and reproductions of each work are accompanied by very ample notes. . . . [B]oth authors emphasize the religious and ethical themes portrayed, or more often symbolized, in many of the works."--**Geoffrey Newman, *The Art Book***

"Wilton and Barringer no doubt convinced their British readers and exhibition patrons that these Americans do indeed fit into an aesthetic continuum, engaging in the discourse of the Sublime (as well as the Beautiful). They move American readers to a less parochial appreciation of our local heroes."--**Nancy J. D. Hazelton, *The Bloomsbury Review***

"The term Hudson River School was once an insult. . . . But as the paintings included in this lavishly illustrated exhibition catalog demonstrate, the landscape of the North American continent made for strong local color. . . . The drama of American space gave artists a new subject matter, and they conveyed the news

of craggy mountain ranges and impossibly deep canyons with striking detail."--**Carly Berwick, *ArtNews***

Users Review

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opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition of information. Even you love American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States 1820-1880, you can enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout folks. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

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