

The Belated Party on Mansfield Mountain (1858)

Thompson earned a reputation for combining the breadth of Hudson River School landscape painting with the anecdotal appeal of contemporary genre painting. This work is one of several in which he used Mount Mansfield, Vermont's highest peak, as a foil for domestic recreation. As half the party of day trippers admire the summit and the vista toward Lake Champlain, another young man holds his watch aloft, warning of the lateness of the hour and the need to descend. But, as people their age are wont to do, the three youths watching the sunset ignore him, enraptured by the beauty of nature.

A Gorge in the Mountains (Kauterskill Clove) 1862

Gifford was the only major Hudson River School painter to have actually grown up in the Catskills region of New York made famous by Thomas Cole, the school's founding figure. Rather than focusing on a central mountain or waterfall, as had most artists in earlier depictions of the landscape, Gifford chose to feature light and atmosphere as viewed from Kauterskill (Kaaterskill) Clove in the eastern Catskill Mountains. The result is a shift from the sublime to the meditative. A hunter and his dog climb the rocks at the left, merging with the terrain as they make their way to the platform overlooking the ravine, which is burnished by an Indian summer haze. From 1845 until his death in 1880, Gifford chose Kauterskill Clove in the Catskill Mountains as one of his favorite subjects. This painting, dated 1862, was called "Kauterskill Falls" in the catalogue of the 1876 New York Centennial Loan Exhibition of Paintings, as well as in the 1881 official catalogue of Gifford's work. The title has since been changed to "Kauterskill Clove," for the view is from the east, looking west to Haine's Falls at the head of the clove.

Alaskan Coast Range (1889)

Albert Bierstadt traveled through western Canada in 1889 on the Canadian Pacific Railway. He headed to Alaska by steamer in search of "wild places in the mountains," but was shipwrecked in Loring Bay. He lived with the other passengers in Native American huts and filled two books with drawings and paintings of his surroundings. This painting of the Alaskan coastline is an oil sketch, probably done on the spot as a study for a later work. The cool colors and thin layers of paint evoke the raw atmosphere of the wilderness where Bierstadt found himself stranded.

A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)

Crawford Notch, a deep valley in New Hampshire's White Mountains, gained notoriety in 1826 when nine lives were lost in a catastrophic avalanche nearby. Cole's painting depicts the site of an earlier landslide whose destruction prompted the victims—Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Willey and their five children, along with two farmhands—to immediately leave their home in Crawford Notch and construct what they thought would be a safe haven close by. Instead, they ran into the very path of disaster—the next night's avalanche struck their temporary refuge. A rescue party arriving the next day searched feverishly for the family. The bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Willey, two children, and the farmhands were eventually located, but no trace of the other three children was ever found.

Crawford Notch is thought to allude to this dramatic and tragic episode as emblematic of man's frailty in the face of the vast and unpredictable forces of nature—a theme Cole often explored in his landscapes. Amid this seemingly idyllic autumnal setting, the painting's diminutive human figures appear oblivious to the possibility of tragedy. A man on a black horse rides along a path zig-zagging through the picture space; two figures and a dog stand outside the well-known Notch House Inn, and in the distance a stagecoach is about to pass through the notch. Yet evidence of

nature's destructive potential is everywhere apparent: the twisted trees of the foreground, the skeletal, gesturing dead trees of the middle distance, the V-shape form of the notch (seemingly riven by some supernatural process), and the dark, sweeping storm clouds at the upper left.

For Cole, ever fascinated by the multiplicity of meanings embedded in landscape, Crawford Notch was a subject rich with possibilities: a family's harrowing misfortune, the power of natural forces, the passing of time. In Crawford Notch the artist successfully integrated these various threads of content into a richly textured whole. At once vibrant, vital, and beautiful, the painting is also provocatively expressive of instability, change, and uncertainty.

Indian On Horse In Mountains - Albert Bierstadt

Albert Bierstadt's grand paintings have the transformative powers to transfix viewers with simple wonder inherent in nature's beauty. Bierstadt (1830 – 1902), a German Luminist painter who relocated to the United States, is acclaimed for his precise and natural rendering of subjects suffused in shimmering light. Overwhelmed by majestic scenery during his travels to the West, Bierstadt strove to convey its beauty to residents from the east. Known for immense, dramatic canvases of the Rocky Mountains and Yosemite, Bierstadt founded the Rocky Mountain School of Landscape Painting.

A Storm in the Rocky Mountains, Mt. Rosalie named after Bierstadt's mistress and, at the time, his friend's wife, Rosalie Osborne Ludlow.

This painting caught my attention mainly because of its enormous size. My first impression of it was that all the colors are what made it so mesmerizing. However, when I took a moment and looked at it again, I realized that I missed out on so many other details. For instance, the painting had a lot of depth and dimension to it. The mountains looked so real that the painting looked

almost like a photograph. I also realized that it was an oil painting which may have contributed to the vivid and realistic view. The length of the mountains was slightly exaggerated to make them the focal point of the painting. The painter also seemed to be paying a lot of attention to the weather. Even though the clouds looked ominous, there was a beam of sunlight shining through the middle almost as if it represented hope or freedom. There were also other details that the artist added to make it more intricate such as tiny trees, ponds, and animals, which really completed the painting as a whole. Overall, my appreciation for this piece along with other paintings increased whenever I took some time to analyze because it allowed me to pinpoint the significant details.