

Landscape Painting Review

Landscape painting has its origins in Egyptian wall and papyrus paintings and in Roman frescoes. As a prime subject for painting, however, its earliest appearance was in China, during the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD).

The introduction of perspective led to an order in the perception and rendering of landscape subjects, which lasted until the 18th century. The practice of painting in the open outdoors really began in the 17th century, with Dutch painters. Then, artists did not have the convenience of paint contained in tubes. Instead, they would make 'field drawings' or renderings which they would cart back to the studio in order to create a painting.

The revolution in landscape painting came with the impressionists and post-impressionists, who have perhaps had the greatest impact on the way that we approach landscape painting today. The Impressionists- Monet, Pissarro, Van Gogh and others, tried to capture in their paintings the many moods and qualities of light and color. One of the most influential of these theories was that any object casts a shadow in its complementary color.

John Frederick Kensett

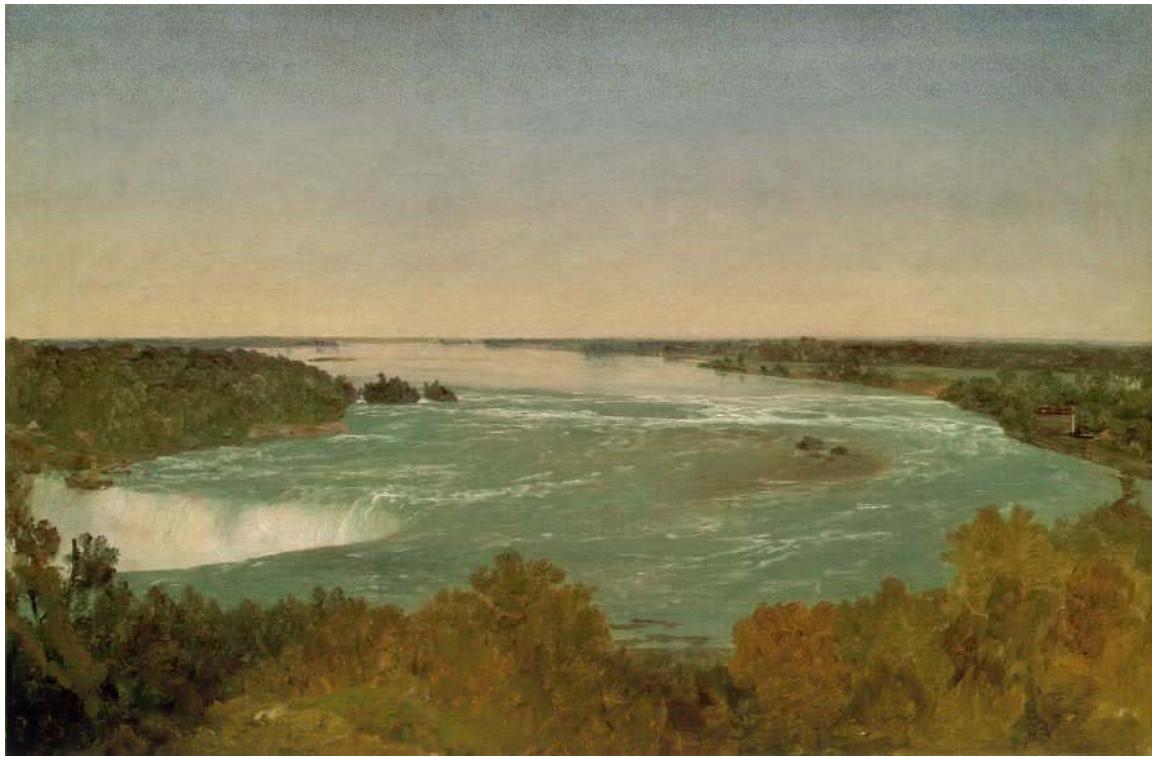
(1816-1872)

Eulogized by the Honorable George William Curtis of New York as "a man of great gifts, and of the sweetest nature," John Frederick Kensett throughout his nearly forty-year career enjoyed the affection of his fellow artists, the support of collectors, and the enthusiastic approbation of the general public. A prolific painter and regular participant in the major exhibitions of his day, Kensett had a congenial personality that led him to positions of leadership in many important art organizations.

Born in Cheshire, Connecticut, in 1816, Kensett received his first artistic training from his father, Thomas, and an uncle, Alfred Daggett, both engravers. During the 1830s, he worked in print shops in New York, New Haven, and Albany, but grew increasingly restless at the engraver's trade and eager for a career in the fine arts. In 1840, he sailed for Europe, where he lived and worked in England and Paris and toured the Rhine region, Switzerland, and Italy.

Although Kensett's initial popularity stemmed from a series of classically balanced, Arcadian landscapes he produced in the 1850s, by the 1860s he had evolved another manner, for which he is most admired today. It consists of an asymmetrical, reductive composition; a subdued, near-monochrome palette; and an interest in the effects of light and atmosphere rather than topography. That style culminated in what is called the "Last Summer's Work," a group of almost forty paintings Kensett executed in the summer of 1872, the last of his life. He died of heart failure that December, at the age of fifty-six.

Kensett, John Frederick The White Mountains - From North Conway 1851 Oil on canvas
40 x 60 in (101.6 x 152.4 cm) Wellesley College Museum, Massachusetts



Kensett, John Frederick Niagara Falls and the Rapids c. 1851-52 Oil on canvas
16 x 24 in (40.6 x 61 cm) Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Kensett, John Frederick October Day in the White Mountains 1854 Oil on canvas
31 3/8 x 48 3/8 in (80 x 123.5 cm) The Cleveland Museum of Art



Kensett, John Frederick Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor 1857 Oil on canvas 22 1/2 x 36 in (57.1 x 91.5 cm) National Gallery of Art, Washington
Information found at <http://www.artchive.com/artchive/K/kensett.html>