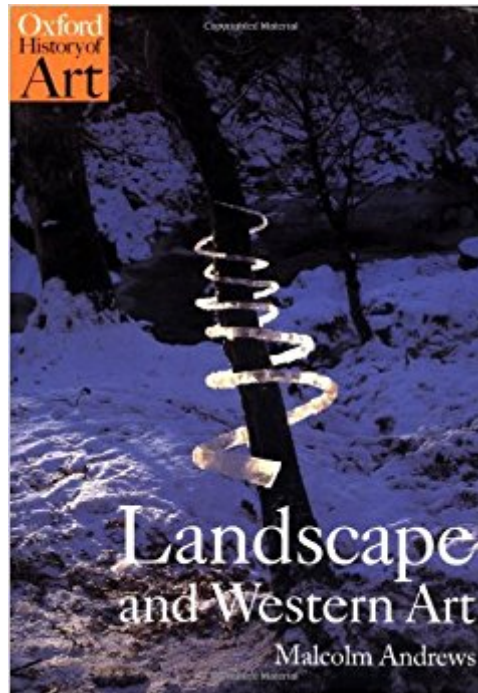


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Landscape And Western Art (Oxford History Of Art)



Synopsis

What is landscape? How does it differ from "land?" Does landscape always imply something to be pictured, a scene? When and why did we begin to cherish images of nature? What is "nature?" Is it everything that isn't art, or artifact? By addressing these and many other questions, *Landscape and Western Art* explores the myriad ideas and images of the natural world in Western art since the Renaissance. Implying that land is the raw material, and that art is created by turning land into landscape, which then becomes art, author Malcolm Andrews takes the reader on a thematic tour of the fascinating and challenging issues of landscape as art. The book's broad sweep covers the full, rich spectrum of landscape art, including painting, gardening, panorama, poetry, photography, and art. Artistic issues are investigated in connection with Western cultural movements, and within a full international and historical context. Clear explanations and beautiful illustrations convey to the reader the idea of landscape as an experience in which everyone is creatively involved. *Landscape and Western Art* provides an enlightening and comprehensive critical overview of landscape art.

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Customer Reviews

"A splendid text ... with images both celebrated and startling, he shows landscape as a construction, a theatre in which humans act and enjoy seeing themselves act."--Professor Richard Thomson, Edinburgh University
"A very accomplished survey of a notoriously complex and elusive subject ... nothing--not even words like 'environment' and 'art' is left unquestioned."--Andrew Wilton, Keeper and Senior Research Fellow, Tate Gallery
"Highly intelligent ... it insists that the making of landscape

is inseparable from the history of the moment of its production, but also recognizes the intense personal experiences that motivate it."--Professor John House, Courtauld Institute of Art

Malcolm Andrews is Professor of Victorian and Visual Studies at the University of Kent. He is the author of *Dickens on England and the English*, *The Search for the Picturesque*, and *Dickens and the Grown-up Child*. He has edited a three-volume anthology, *The Picturesque: Sources and Documents* and is currently editor of the journal *The Dickensian*.

This is a much more lavishly produced book than Sir Kenneth Clark's *LANDSCAPE INTO ART* (1949), which I have recently been reading, but much less satisfactory as a survey of landscape art. Indeed, a better title might have been "Some Questions About Landscape." They are good questions, though, including the one on his second page, where Andrews questions Clark's assumptions:-- In Clark's title, landscape was the raw material waiting to be processed by the artist. I began by implying that land rather than landscape is the raw material, and that in the conversion of land into landscape a perceptual process has already begun whereby that material is prepared as an appropriate subject for the painter or photographer, or simply for absorption as a gratifying aesthetic experience. The process might, therefore, be formulated as twofold: land into landscape; landscape into art. Indeed, Andrews calls his first chapter "Land into Landscape." He brings a dizzying amount of erudition and reference to the question, calling on poets, photographers, philosophers, and even anthropologists to answer it. The heart of the matter, he suggests, is man's changing relationship to nature. "Landscape in art tells us, or asks us to think about, where we belong." Recently, though, that relationship has changed:-- We don't have to imagine, with the aid of alluring images of Arcadian natural simplicity, what it must have been like to live in Nature; we are all too aware of our dependency on Nature now. More crucially still, we feel Nature's dependency on us. Landscape as a way of seeing from a distance is incompatible with this heightened sense of our relationship to Nature as a living (or dying) environment. As a phase in the cultural life of the West, landscape may already be over. Although there is a rough chronological flow to Andrews' subsequent chapters, his book makes no attempt to offer a history of landscape painting; rather, it tackles similar philosophical questions in roughly the order in which they became relevant. His chapter on the Renaissance, for instance, "Subject or Setting?", considers the emergence of landscape backgrounds by examining a series of mostly unfamiliar paintings of St. Jerome, delving into everything from Catholic hagiography to contemporary hermeneutics. He marshals a fascinating set of examples, from Antonello da Messina to Magritte, in "Framing the

View," about the interplay between inside and outside. He is brilliant in "Astonished beyond Expression," about mountain scenery and the sublime in art. And, striking off from Turner's astonishing Snowstorm in his chapter "Nature as Picture or Process?", he revisits many of the arguments from his opening chapter, but in a more dynamic way, more closely tied to actual examples. In short, I enjoy him most when he compares actual paintings, all of which are beautifully illustrated in the book, mostly in color, with superb close-up details prefacing each chapter. But too many of his topics—those on landscape as amenity, topography, and politics, for example—read like isolated lectures rather than chapters in a book, discussing often abstruse points in difficult language, buttressed by works that are often far outside the mainstream of landscape art. So this is by no means a text to recommend as a general introduction, although I respect the fact that he demands answers to questions which, in six years of teaching and sixty of gallery-going, I had never thought to ask.

Interesting review of landscape painting

great

Andrews has a unique take on the history of western landscape art. A must for your library shelf.

Great book big help in writing essays

This book faces two usually insurmountable hurdles - first, designing an art book in a smallish size, with the corresponding destruction of anything like a scale appreciation for larger images true size; and second, covering an enormous amount of material in a very short text. The first remains an indefensible decision, and there's no more to be said. As for the second hurdle, Andrews does a fine job of what baseball pitchers refer to when they wiggle out of endless bases loaded situations without giving up a run - walking between the raindrops. This scholarly act of prestidigitation calls for hearty applause - usually such surveys are either too careful or too general. Happily this book is neither, but rather thought-provoking and sagacious. Andrews success seems to lie in an acquired acceptance that for all the modern kitchen sink tools applied to art history - from Levi-Straussian anthropology to historical statistical analysis to Foucault's deconstructionist revisionism, there remains an abiding need for aesthetic appreciation. As one reads through the book, a sort of moderated meditation or commentary on what is landscape, how we see it, a large array of such

new thinking pops up, many contemporary responses about the nature of landscape are offered. Yet in the end Andrews falls back, and rather slyly I might add, on a sort of updated aestheticism. The distinction, and the difference Andrews makes with this old tool is surprising. The material comes across with a clarity and directedness absent from the more typical contemporary approaches to art, approaches emphasizing far more than the works of art, usually at the expense of shrinking down their full import in a maze of dubious cross-referencing. Andrews greatest gift is confidence - he conveys a supreme sureness whatever he is writing about. In an age of relative values Andrews' certainty reverberates with an insolent disdain for doubt. (I am reminded of one critic's snickering potshot at A.L. Rowse's offhand dismissal of alternate Shakespeare author theories as pure nonsense - "for Rowse, doubt is an undiscovered country.") But Andrews, for all of that, is very much the modern, quite up on the various formalized readings and professional jargon. He has taken the measure of each of these chimeras and gone back to draw his own conclusions around an aesthetic largely free of post-modern cant. For Andrews the modern critical methodologies are but tools, used when needed, and not self-indulgence repudiating the reader in deliberately obtuse and hermetic language. And a huge bonus - Andrews is fun to read, displaying an extraordinarily adept mind; his questions and examples rarely failing to not only make his point, but develop it. Having showered the author with praise I must point out one caveat: unlike Kenneth Clarke, who invariably seemed to put his figure on the one painting defining an age or movement, Andrews sometimes misses the obvious. A discussion of Niagara which is posed to rightly culminate in Church's great masterpiece suddenly veers off into a discussion of the Panorama, interesting enough as idea, but invariably second rate art. In deliberately thumbing an intellectual nose at Church, Andrews reveals some blind spots - he fails to understand what connects Church's greatest work with the early Wright's prairie architecture - land-gripping yet enclosed and interlocking horizontals celebrating the continent's scale. I find it strange indeed that such a book could fail to register Wright's influence and importance on our view of landscape. Next to these responses to the New World Andrew's Panoramas appear quite naked, generalized and simplistic. Although they fit nicely into his argument, he misses the chance to look beyond and over the edge, as it were. This blatant Eurocentric reading of American art continues on in a discussion of imperialist viewpoints and uninteresting observations on the over-rated Bierstadt: for Andrews the historical connections of American painting outweigh the purely artistic. The result? Even a century and half later Europeans refuse to take seriously our greatest landscape artist Church because he doesn't fit their critical template. Despite these peccadilloes this remains a first rate book, and a must for any Art History collection.

Great intro to the subject. Note that this book is not a basic inventory of important works so much as overview of important historical themes. More appropriate for art historian.

This book is an thought provoking continuation of the 1962 discussion on "landscape art" that art historian Kenneth Clark introduced in his pioneering work "Landscape into Art". This is NOT an easy read nor "the history of landscape" as the title suggests but rather a discussion of key themes in landscape art such as landscape as cultural construct, political catalyst, topography, and practices of "framing the view" appropriate for those educated in art history. The many wonderful but small reproductions serve to illustrate the concepts presented throughout the text.

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