Marie-François-Régis Gignoux (1814–1882)
*Mammoth Cave, Kentucky*, ca. 1843
Oil on canvas
Gift of an Anonymous Donor, X.21
After training at the French *École des Beaux-Arts*, Gignoux immigrated to the United States, where he soon established himself as a landscape specialist. He was drawn to a vast underground system of corridors and chambers in Kentucky known as Mammoth Cave. The site portrayed has been identified as the Rotunda—so named because its grand, uninterrupted interior space recalls that of the Pantheon in Rome. Gignoux created a romantic image rooted in fact and emotion. In contrast to the bright daylight glimpsed through the cavern mouth, the blazing fire impresses a hellish vision that contemporaneous viewers may have associated with the manufacture of gunpowder made from the bat guano harvested and rendered in vats in that very space since the War of 1812.

William Trost Richards (1833–1905)
*June Woods (Germantown)*, 1864
Oil on linen
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–127
Richards followed the stylistic trajectory of the Hudson River School early in his career, except for a brief time in the early 1860s, when he altered his technique and compositional approach in response to the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetics of the English critic John Ruskin. Ruskin’s call for absolute fidelity to nature manifested itself in the United States in a radical
group of artists who formed the membership of the Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art, to which Richards was elected in 1863. The minutely detailed foliage and the “uncomposed” character of this scene near Richards’s Germantown, Pennsylvania, home aligns this painting with the American Pre-Raphaelite movement.

Robert Havell, Jr. (1783–1878)
*View of Hudson River from near Sing Sing, New York, ca. 1850*
Oil on canvas
*Museum purchase, Watson Fund, 1971.14*
Havell was the English engraver of John James Audubon’s *The Birds of America*. He came to the United States in 1839, settling about 1841 at Sing Sing in Westchester County and returning to landscape subjects. His painting is an elaborately detailed panoramic vista from his hilltop house, Rocky Mount, charting both sides of the river almost in the manner of a mapmaker. A bright sky presides over the eastern bank while dark clouds rise above the distant heights to the west. Vessels of all kinds ply the waters of the Tappan Zee. Havell’s vision celebrates the riverside village as a bucolic haven.

Thomas Worthington Whittredge (1820–1910)
*A Window, House on Hudson River, 1863*
Oil on canvas
*The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–71*
This charming subject is said to depict an interior at Riverside, New York, on the west side of the Hudson north of Troy. An African-American nurse and her charge sit at a window seat with a splendid view behind them. The nurse would have been a free person, since slavery had been
abolished in New York State in 1827. A broad beam of sunlight streams through the open window, illuminating the lace curtains and highlighting a few objects in the deeply shadowed interior. The dim room, with its handsome architecture and furnishings, offers an unusual framing device for the narrow, brilliantly lit glimpse of the river beyond.

**Attributed to Victor de Grailly (1804–1889)**

*View from Hyde Park on the Hudson River*, ca. 1845  
Oil on canvas  
Museum purchase, 1923.5

**Attributed to Victor de Grailly (1804–1889)**

*Kosciuszko’s Monument, West Point*, ca. 1845  
Oil on canvas  
Museum purchase, 1923.6

Both paintings are copies of engravings after the British topographical draftsman William Henry Bartlett’s original sepia watercolors commissioned to illustrate Nathaniel Parker Willis’s popular series *American Scenery*. Published in installments as steel engravings in the late 1830s, Bartlett’s illustrations were further embellished by Willis’s descriptive texts. A French artist, de Grailly made many oil paintings for the American and European markets based on Bartlett’s images. West Point, the location of the United States Military Academy since 1802, has long been a popular destination, distinguished for its dramatic site above the Hudson River and monuments dedicated to military heroes. Thaddeus Kosciusko was a Polish patriot who served in the Revolutionary army of George Washington. Located north of Poughkeepsie, Hyde Park was renamed early in the eighteenth century in honor of Sir Edward Hyde, royal governor of New York. Today Hyde Park is a tourist
destination known for the Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Sites as well as the Vanderbilt Mansion.

**John Frederick Kensett (1816–1872)**
*View from Cozzens’ Hotel Near West Point, 1863*
*Oil on canvas*
*The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–189*
One of the second generation of Hudson River School artists, Kensett expressed his vision through contemplative light-filled landscapes like this one, which captures the dramatic vista of the Hudson Highlands from the elevated vantage point of a popular hotel. The view is suffused in luminous air, painted with the delicately precise calibrations of light and atmosphere for which the artist was justly famous. While Kensett’s canvas is small, the scale of the image itself is vast and his detail is exquisite.

**George Boughton (1833-1905)**
*Hudson River Valley from Fort Putnam, West Point, 1855*
*Oil on canvas*
*Gift of John V. Irwin and William F. Irwin, 1927.1*

**Asher Brown Durand (1796–1886)**
*Black Mountain from the Harbor Islands, Lake George, New York, 1875*
*Oil on canvas*
*Gift of Mrs. Lucy Maria Durand Woodman, daughter of the artist, 1907.17*
This glacially formed body of water, some thirty-four miles long, is situated at the eastern edge of the Adirondack Mountains. This monumental work is said to be Durand’s last major painting, completed when the artist was seventy-nine years old. While attentive to the specific topography of the
setting, Durand suppressed the minute details of nature. He distilled his image further by enveloping the scene in an atmospheric haze suffused with light, suggesting a spiritual presence in nature. Although smoke from a lake steamer rises in the distance and a rowboat progresses toward a picnic, the prevailing mood is still one of nature’s solitude.

Asher Brown Durand (1796–1886)
Chapel Pond Brook, Keene Flats, Adirondack Mountains, ca. 1870
Oil on canvas
Gift of Miss Nora Durand Woodman, granddaughter of the artist, 1932.13

Asher Brown Durand (1796–1886)
Chapel Pond Brook, Keene Flats, Adirondack Mountains, New York
1871
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. Lucy Maria Durand Woodman, daughter of the artist, 1907.4

Durand’s conversion to landscape painting was said to have occurred in 1837 while sketching with Cole in the Adirondacks; he and Cole were among the earliest artist visitors to this remote region. By the time he painted these works in the 1870s, the Adirondacks had become a popular destination for tourists and sportsmen, as well as artists. Chapel Pond Brook is one of the tributaries of the Ausable River and flows through Keene Flats above the hamlet of Keene. Durand charted the stream’s course as it wound its way over a rocky bed between rough mossy boulders and wooded banks. Elements of the smaller work served as a study for the larger version of the subject.
Jasper Francis Cropsey (1823–1900)
*Sunset, Lake George, New York, 1867*
Oil on canvas
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–126
Lake George was one of the most popular tourist resorts in the nineteenth century. Rather than focusing on the wilderness aspects of the lake’s setting, Cropsey emphasizes its pastoral nature, including the presence of a small fishing boat and the herd of cattle gathered on the shore. The light from the setting sun is orchestrated into dramatic rays presenting the quiet lake as an earthly paradise. Cole had observed that autumn was the “season when the American forest surpasses all the world in gorgeousness”; Cropsey, among the best known of second-generation Hudson River School artists, was especially famous as a painter of the American autumn.

John Trumbull (1756–1843)
*Niagara Falls, from under Table Rock, 1808*
Oil on canvas
Gift of Dr. Alexander Eddy Hosack, 1868.5
Long established as a distinguished portrait painter, Trumbull visited Niagara Falls in 1807 and 1808. That year, he painted a pair of large panoramic images as preparation for a profit-making enterprise in London. He planned to erect a large-scale circular panorama of Niagara as a theatrical spectacle to which audiences would buy tickets. In his studies, the artist deliberately distorted the perspective of his long and narrow canvases to create the impression that the scene was already painted on a curved surface. However, Trumbull’s panorama venture did not succeed and he abandoned the landscape project.
Asher B. Durand (1796–1886)
_Catskill Study, N.Y., ca. 1870_
Oil on canvas
Gift of Nora Durand Woodman, granddaughter of the artist, 1932.29

Asher B. Durand (1796–1886)
_Study from Nature: Rocks and Trees, ca. 1856_
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. Lucy Maria Durand Woodman, 1907.26

These vivid little paintings are still celebrated as a special body of works known as Durand’s _Studies from Nature_. Smaller in scale and less formal than studio compositions, the studies record the particulars of a given site close up with the aim of conveying the sensation of direct experience. These carefully observed details also convey the belief that contemplation of unspoiled nature offered opportunities for spiritual meditation and renewal, what Durand called “lessons of high and holy meaning.”

John William Casilear (1811–1893)
_River Scene, Catskill, New York, 1861_
Oil on canvas
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–4

Influenced by Cole, Kensett, and especially Durand, Casilear retired from the business of engraving in the 1850s to take up landscape painting. He sketched each summer with artist friends in the Catskills, the Adirondacks, the White Mountains, and the Genesee Valley. Casilear was recognized especially for his serene images of domesticated landscapes, bathed in a skillfully rendered delicate silvery haze. A contemporary critic characterized Casilear’s distinctive contribution to American landscape painting: “His
skies are luminous, and his distances tender and melting . . . there is a poetic pastoral charm in all his work.”

Asher Brown Durand (1786–1886)
*Catskill Clove, New York*, 1864
Oil on canvas
Gift of Nora Durand Woodman, granddaughter of the artist, 1932.14
Catskill Clove, a great gorge in the heart of the Catskills, was a hallowed subject for two generations of Hudson River School artists. Durand’s painting depicts the Clove from a distant height, following the deep panoramic vista of heavily forested mountains and tracing the winding course of Katterskill Creek. The rift runs from west to east past Tannersville and Palenville, villages where artists and tourists could find modest accommodations. On a visit in October 1848 Durand had reported the presence of nine other artists working there.

Thomas Cole (1801–1848)
*Catskill Creek, New York*, 1845
Oil on canvas
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–157
In 1836 Cole left New York City to settle at Catskill, a village on the west side of the Hudson River, on the route to what had become popular sketching and touring grounds. This painting depicts one of Cole’s favorite local subjects—a view of the distant Catskill range, some twelve miles to the west, and featuring the distinctive shape of North Mountain. This landmark vista is from Catskill Creek, whose still waters mirror an image of the mountain profiles and the sky behind them, suffused in the glow of an early autumn twilight. Cole was also inspired to celebrate Catskill Mountain sunsets in
verse, composing “Sunset in the Catskills” in 1838: The valleys rest in the shadow and the hum Of gentle sounds and low toned melodies Are still, and twilight spreads her mighty wings . . Until the setting sun’s last lingering beams Wreathe up in many a golden glorious ring Around the highest Catskill peak

Grand Landscape Narratives
Thomas Cole’s The Course of Empire

Not only do I consider The Course of Empire the work of the highest genius this country has ever produced, but I esteem it one of the noblest works of art that has ever been wrought.

James Fenimore Cooper to Louis L. Noble, 1849

The guiding theme for this series—the cyclical pattern of history—took root around 1829 during Cole’s first European sojourn, a trip that essentially took him to his own past, inasmuch as he had spent his first eighteen years in his native England. The project was finally begun in earnest with the 1833 commission by the New York merchant Luman Reed, who died before its completion in 1836. By 1833 Cole already had a reputation as one of the country’s most innovative landscape painters, and it may be argued that at that moment he was the only American painter equipped to manage the technical and intellectual apparatus required to create a complex visual epic of this magnitude. The artist elaborated his theme through the orchestration of established landscape aesthetics, art historical precedent, and literary sources, all of which were unified by the device of showing the same landscape through successive eras whose temporal passage is communicated according to the times of day and seasons depicted in each of the five canvases.
The Course of Empire was essentially generic in its presentation of a dominant theory of history—that all societies were subject to the same inevitable rhythms of growth and decay. A more specific allegorical reading suggested itself to Cole’s audience in 1836, however, leaving open the question of whether or not the United States would follow in the course of the empires that had gone before or break the pattern and avoid extinction.

Thomas Cole (1801–1848)
The Course of Empire: The Savage State, 1833–36
Oil on canvas
Gift of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, 1858.1
In an 1833 letter to Luman Reed, Cole envisioned that the first canvas in the projected series, “representing the savage state, must be a view of a wilderness, . . .” The untamed terrain recalls the art of the Baroque painter Salvator Rosa and is the foundation for this interpretation of the dawn of civilization. A mountain peak catches the first rays of morning light that dispel the mists and darkness that had shrouded mankind’s existence. As the focus for this composition, this mountain becomes the narrative anchor for the cycle that bears witness to the rise and fall of a civilization.

Thomas Cole (1801–1848)
The Course of Empire: The Arcadian or Pastoral State, 1833–36
Oil on canvas
Gift of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, 1858.2
In his letter to Reed, Cole imagined the second painting in the series, saying, “[It] must be the pastoral state, —the day further advanced— . . . the scene partly cultivated—a rude village near the bay— . . . groups of peasants either pursuing their labours in the field, . . . or engaged in some simple
amusement.” The completed painting, although fashioned after the pastoral compositions of the Baroque landscapist Claude Lorrain, inspires a more specific reading that rests on mankind’s intellectual development. For example, the old man, the boy, and the woman in the foreground represent the emergence of the mathematical, written, and domestic arts, respectively.

**Thomas Cole (1801–1848)**
*The Course of Empire: The Consummation of Empire, 1836*
*Oil on canvas*
*Gift of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, 1858.3*

Cole’s plan for the central painting of the group was for “a great city girding the bay, . . . splendid processions, &c.—all that can be combined to show the fullness of prosperity. . . .” The orchestration and abundance of architectural features relies on *Dido Building Carthage*, a painting by the English artist J. M. W. Turner that Cole had seen in London. New Yorkers may have viewed this canvas in terms of their own history, seeing in it a cautionary message rooted in the economic failures that grew out of the policies of Andrew Jackson. Some scholars theorize that the red-cloaked conqueror borne on the bridge in the foreground is a metaphor for Jackson.

**Thomas Cole (1801–1848)**
*The Course of Empire: Destruction, 1833–36*
*Oil on canvas*
*Gift of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, 1858.4*

Cole’s outline for the fourth painting included a “tempest, —a battle, and the burning of the city. . . .” In the tradition of such English landscapists as J. M. W. Turner and John Martin, Cole created his own version of the aesthetic sublime, most
likely recognizing that his depiction of urban conflagration would resonate with New Yorkers who had seen flames engulf their city in the Great Fire of 1835. The imagery of destruction also corresponded to the respected cyclical approach to history, exemplified by Edward Gibbon’s *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, first published in the United States in 1804.

**Thomas Cole (1801–1848)**  
*The Course of Empire: Desolation*, 1836  
*Oil on canvas*  
*Gift of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, 1858.5*  
For the last episode of the cycle, Cole proposed that it “must be a sunset, —the mountains riven—the city a desolate ruin—columns standing isolated amid the encroaching waters—ruined temples, broken bridges, fountains, sarcophagi, &c.—no human figure—a solitary bird perhaps: a calm and silent effect. This picture must be as the funeral knell of departed greatness, and may be called the state of desolation.” Perhaps the most original and certainly the most poetic of the five canvases, *Desolation* captures the exquisite stillness of a world without mankind.

**Jasper Francis Cropsey (1823–1900)**  
*Landscape with Ruins*, 1854  
*Oil on canvas*  
*Gift of Mrs. Louis A. Gillet, 1945.450*  
The crenelated towers of a ruined castle are dramatically silhouetted against a reddening sky at sunset. Cropsey’s early training as an architect made him exceptionally attuned to the “language” of architecture and its potential to evoke the past. Cropsey and his wife had honeymooned in Italy from 1847 to 1849. The sketches and memories with which he returned provided rich sources for imaginary compositions
such as this. His interest in nature is revealed in the varying states of decay and destruction discernible in the trees (nature's architecture), providing a parallel layer of content for this scene of a vanished arcadia.

William Stanley Haseltine (1835–1900)
Castle of Ostia Seen from the Pine Forest of Castel Fusano, 1881
Oil on canvas
Museum purchase, Thomas Jefferson Bryan Fund, 1992.11
Haseltine lived in Rome in the 1870s and 1880s. This panoramic view with the Castle of Ostia rising above the distant horizon carries the eye from the hushed, darkened foreground into the golden brilliance of the setting sun. An almost oppressive stillness evokes the history of the site itself—a dead city whose ruins were silent reminders of a once vital ancient civilization. It was perhaps this painting that elicited the following response by a nineteenth-century visitor to Haseltine’s studio: “A large picture of Ostia attracted our attention by the sense of desolation and picturesque death that hovers about it. . . .”

Thomas Cole (1801–1848)
Italian Scene. Composition, 1833
Oil on canvas
Gift of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, 1858.19
As in many of Cole’s landscapes, a small foreground figure—here the contemplative peasant at the lower right—sets the stage for interpreting the painting. The young man ignores the panoramic vista that unfolds around him, perhaps signifying the imaginary nature of Cole’s Italian scene. Indeed, Cole has presented an inventory of the elements
contributing to his idea of Italy—Roman ruins, roadside shrines, dancing peasants, Mediterranean light, and cypress trees—all derived from sketches made on his first trip to Italy and overlaid with a patina of romance and nostalgia.

Thomas Hiram Hotchkiss (1833–1869)
*Roman Colosseum*, 1868
Oil on paper mounted on panel
Gift of Nora Durand Woodman, 1932.39
Hotchkiss’s atypical and relatively unassuming view of the Colosseum and its environs runs counter to the famed structure’s legendary history of entertainment, excess, and violence. Completed in 80 ce during the reign of the Emperor Titus, the Colosseum officially opened with a 100-day series of events during which some 9,000 animals and 2,000 gladiators reportedly died in the course of entertaining the 70,000 spectators who regularly filled the arena. The painting’s hauntingly desolate mood—established by the empty foreground space, the fading light, and the marginalized, cropped vision of the Colosseum—suggests that all things great wither with time.

Thomas Hiram Hotchkiss (1833–1869)
*Taormina, Island of Sicily*, 1868
Oil on paper, mounted on cardboard
Gift of Nora Durand Woodman, 1932.45
Hotchkiss succumbed to the romance of the Old World, settling in Italy by 1860. He spent most of his remaining time there, dying from tuberculosis in the arms of his friend the painter John Rollin Tilton, not far from the scene depicted in this *plein-air* study. Like many artists of the period, Hotchkiss framed the ruins of the ancient Greek theater in the foreground against the distant, but dramatic form of the still
active volcano Mt. Etna—a construct that contrasted the living, changing aspects of the earth’s geology with the decaying remnants of human achievement.

Sanford Robinson Gifford (1823–1880)
*Lake Maggiore, Italy, 1858*
Oil on canvas
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–193
Gifford was exceptionally talented at capturing the glowing atmospheric effects of light, and it was perhaps this particular interest that attracted him to the golden luminosity offered by the reflective surfaces of the quiet waters of Italy’s northern lakes. He visited Lake Maggiore on both of his European trips, in 1855–57 and 1868–69. The scene presented here is taken from the vantage point of one of the lake’s islands, *Isola Bella* (Beautiful Island), and features the nearby *Isola dei Pescatori* (Fisherman’s Island), known for its quaint village, which was seemingly untouched by the modern world.

George Loring Brown (1814-1889)
*Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples from the Island of Capri, 1850*
Oil on canvas
Gift of Thomas Jefferson Bryan, 1867.288
George Loring Brown spent much of his professional life in New England, but he had an extended sojourn in Europe from 1839 to 1859, living in Rome and Florence. He often painted romantic Italian landscapes such as this one, which hung in the gallery of New York collector Thomas Jefferson Bryan in 1852 and 1853.
Thomas Cole (1801–1848)
_Autumn Twilight, View of Corway Peak [Mount Chocorua], New Hampshire_, 1834
Oil on wood
Gift of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, 1858.42

Thomas Cole (1801–1848)
_Summer Twilight, a Recollection of a Scene in New England_, 1834
Oil on wood
Gift of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, 1858.46

These two paintings of identical dimensions were conceived as a pair of images in which Cole contrasted the natural disarray of the wilderness with the order of a cultivated landscape. By depicting the Native American paddling a canoe in the foreground of _Autumn Twilight_ and the woodsman carrying an ax in _Summer Twilight_, the artist set up a series of oppositions between original Indian life in the region and the changes wrought by New England’s colonists. Cole’s viewers would have been familiar with the legend of Chocorua, whose Indian protagonist placed a curse on the land before leaping to his death to elude capture by settlers. Cole used the pair of landscapes to chart the course of civilization, one wild and embodying concepts of the “sublime” and the other cultivated and representative of the “picturesque.” These landscape devices parallel (on a much smaller scale) those used for _The Savage State_ and _The Pastoral State_ in Cole’s _Course of Empire_, on view nearby.

George Henry Boughton (1833–1905)
_Winter Twilight near Albany, New York_, 1858
Oil on canvas
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–234
Winter Twilight was the first of Boughton’s paintings to gain widespread critical notice. Shown at the National Academy of Design in 1858, it was described by one critic as “a perfect piece of winter.” The painting was largely a plein-air endeavor. As Boughton recalled, “It was the depth of winter and it struck me that I had never seen a winter landscape painted just as I saw it. I went into a field and worked until I was so cold that I was on the point of giving up.”

Jervis McEntee (1828–1891)

Autumn, Mill Stream, 1860

Oil on canvas

The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S-12

Many of McEntee’s paintings featured the landscape surrounding his native Rondout, New York, a small town on the Hudson River. Although he intended his paintings to be faithful representations of specific locales, McEntee believed in landscape’s capacity to construct meaning, saying: “In landscape you can tell a certain kind of story.” Here, the autumnal view augers the end or metaphorical death of the year. The abandoned structures (the wooden building whose peaked roof pierces the horizon and the stone hearth directly below it) also suggest the passing of time by introducing the motif of the ancient ruin in New World terms.

Louis Rémy Mignot (1831–1870)

The Harvest Moon, 1860

Oil on canvas

The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–160

Mignot’s aesthetics ranged from the operatic sublime of the Ecuadorian tropics and Niagara Falls to intimate views of anonymous American harvest fields, as exemplified here.
Harvest themes were frequently addressed at midcentury, often out of moralizing aims associated with national politics or the economy. In this case, however, Mignot eschewed obvious narrative content and gave greater attention to the formal aspects of his art. As Mignot’s contemporary the influential critic Henry T. Tuckerman, wrote: “He [Mignot] has a remarkable facility of catching the expression, often the vague, but, therefore, more interesting, expression of a scene. . . .”

**George Henry Durrie (1820–1863)**
*Returning to the Farm, 1861*
Oil on canvas
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–58

**George Henry Durrie (1820-1863)**
*Farm Yard, Winter, 1862*
Oil on canvas
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–196

The rural landscape of Durrie’s native Connecticut inspired the scenes of simple New England farm life for which he was noted. The largely self-taught painter mastered the effects of atmosphere and the varying textures of snow and ice. Yet his paintings, which frequently repeat architectural and figural elements, display an underlying naïveté in technique and conception. His winter subjects gained additional popularity through prints published by Currier and Ives beginning in 1861.

**William Sidney Mount (1807–1868)**
*Coming to the Point, A Variation on “Bargaining for a Horse”, 1854*
Oil on canvas
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–141
This painting is a reprise of Mount’s critically successful 1835 *Farmers Bargaining* (on view in the Luce Center on the fourth floor). The theme of farmers negotiating the sale of a horse extended the tradition of wry American genre subjects that Mount had effectively popularized. Here the humor rests on the pun of the farmer who whittles his wood to a point as he reaches the critical “point” of the transaction. This painting stimulated negative press responses because the speculative deal between the publisher William Schaus and Mount for the sale of reproductions of the image smacked a bit too much of Yankee entrepreneurship, given that *Coming to the Point* is a reworking of an earlier painting.

**Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait (1819–1905)**  
*The Latest News, Cattle in the Stable*, 1862  
Oil on canvas  
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–175  
Tait arrived in the United States from his native England in 1850 and soon began to concentrate on Adirondack hunting and sporting subjects, many of which were reproduced by Currier & Ives. *The Latest News, Cattle in the Stable* is unusual in Tait’s output because of its politicized content. The imagery of men debating over a newspaper held a particular place in nineteenth-century American art, especially during the Civil War. Tait, however, underscored his identity as an animal specialist by relegating the elements of human interest to the periphery of the composition.

**Martin Johnson Heade (1819–1904)**  
*Study of an Orchid*, 1872  
Oil on canvas  
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–112
Heade had very likely seen wild orchids on his first trip to Brazil in 1863, but it was not until 1871 that he added the flower to his thematic repertoire. This depiction of flora and fauna is scientifically accurate. Yet the composition, a hybrid of still-life and landscape, creates the uncanny impression that we are observing living characters enacting roles on nature’s stage. Although orchids were of scholarly and popular interest in the nineteenth century, critics rarely mentioned Heade’s numerous orchid-and-hummingbird subjects, probably because of the plant’s sexual connotations and the part played by the bird in the flower’s reproductive process.

Louis Rémy Mignot (1831–1870)
*Street View in Guayaquil, Ecuador, 1859*
Oil on canvas
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S-188

Mignot traveled to Ecuador in 1857, hiking and sketching in the Andes alongside Frederic Church. Upon their return Church painted *Cayambe*, which hangs to your right, and Mignot developed a reputation for similar tropical subjects. Collector Robert L. Stuart commissioned this painting, and in contrast to the panoramic views that Mignot was known for, here the artist focused on one of the small towns that are usually nestled in the foothills of his mountain scenes. He depicted Guayaquil as an outpost of civilization, with exotically-dressed figures going about their daily business among the city’s characteristic wooden, straw-roofed structures embellished with colonnades.
Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900)
*Cayambe*, 1858
Oil on canvas
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, S–91
Painted soon after Church returned from his second trip to South America, *Cayambe* embodies the artist’s synthesis of his personal experience of the tropical sublime and the writings of the nineteenth-century German scientist-explorer Alexander von Humboldt. The moon rises, yet the scene is bathed in the light of the setting sun; the tropical heat suggested in the foreground vegetation is countered by the snow-capped and cloud-shrouded peak of the inactive volcano Cayambe in the distance. Such visual opulence coincides with Humboldt’s opinions on landscape painting, which “requires for its development a large number of various and direct impressions, which, when received from external contemplation, must be fertilized by the power of the mind.”

Thomas Hicks (1823–1890)
*Portrait of Elisha Kent Kane, M.D. (1820–1857)*, 1858
Oil on canvas
Gift of several ladies of New York, 1859.1
Dr. Elisha Kent Kane led an adventurous globetrotting life as a surgeon with the U.S. Navy. In 1850 he was assigned to join an expedition to the Arctic in search of the British explorer Sir John Franklin and his party, who disappeared in 1845 on an expedition seeking the Northwest Passage. Though this voyage and a second journey failed to find the missing men, Dr. Kane wrote two best sellers about these expeditions. In this memorial portrait Dr. Kane sits in his cabin aboard the *Advance*. A distant ship refers to his far-flung adventures and the table is covered with the tools of an explorer.
William Bradford (1823–1892)
*Summer in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, ca. 1880
Oil on canvas
Museum purchase, The Louis Durr Fund, 1893.4

Inspired by Kane’s books, William Bradford visited the far north in the spring of 1861 and returned almost every summer for the next six years. *Summer in the Land of the Midnight Sun* portrays the perils of a voyage to the Arctic regions, where waters are open to navigation for only one or two months in the year. Bradford captures the drama of vessels trapped in the ice of a vast and barren landscape of vividly colored glacial peaks. In the foreground, the ship’s crew works to salvage supplies and equipment under the eerie light of the midnight sun.

Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902)
*Donner Lake from the Summit*, 1873
Oil on canvas
Gift of Archer Milton Huntington, 1909.16

Bierstadt went to the summit of the High Sierras with Collis P. Huntington, the railroad magnate who commissioned a painting of this site to commemorate the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. Despite Huntington’s interest, the painting’s title speaks more to the national memory of the ill-fated Donner Party—settlers trapped by the onset of winter in 1846, whose sensational story of privation, cannibalism, and death remains a source of gruesome fascination. A critic writing about the painting’s public debut in San Francisco in 1873 noted, “The two associations of the spot are . . . sharply and suggestively antithetical: so much slowness and hardship in the early days, so much rapidity
and ease now; great physical obstacles overcome by a triumph of well-directed science and mechanics.”

**Thomas Hill (1829–1908)**  
*View of the Yosemite Valley, 1865*  
*Oil on canvas*  
*Gift of Charles T. Harbeck, 1897.2*

This painting was requested by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies to be displayed at the Inaugural Luncheon that took place in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol on January 20. There, President Barack Obama and the First Lady were seated at the head table before Thomas Hill’s panoramic view of the Yosemite Valley. Senator Dianne Feinstein noted that the painting was selected because the subject represents the Inaugural theme “A New Birth of Freedom,” as the nation marks the 200th Anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s birth and the ideals of national unity and westward expansion that distinguished his presidency. The subject of the painting represents an important but often overlooked event from Lincoln’s presidency — his signing of the 1864 Yosemite Grant, which set aside Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias as a public reserve. The New-York Historical Society was proud to play a role in celebrating President Obama’s inauguration and the beginning of a new chapter in the nation’s history.

To hear the ABC News coverage of the inaugural luncheon simply press 201 on your handheld audio guide, which are t-coil compatible for the hearing impaired. You can also dial 646-205-7617, then 201# on your cell phone. There is no charge for the call other than the minutes you may use on your plan.