

Boscobel Restoration in Garrison, New York, is pleased to announce the opening of a new exhibition, *Home on the Hudson: Women and Men Painting Landscapes, 1825-1875*, on view from June 6 to September 7, 2009. It is organized by Katherine Manthorne, Prof. of Art History, Graduate Center, City University of New York.

The term “Hudson River School” is in wide circulation. It references a group of landscape artists who painted the scenery in and around the Hudson Valley in the years from about the 1825 through 1875, and established themselves as America’s first native school of art. Their artistic careers correspond to an historic moment when New York City was emerging as the economic capital of the country and its center for the arts. Although there have been many books and exhibitions about the Hudson River School, this focused exhibition and its accompanying publication promises a fresh perspective afforded by our choice of who, how, what, and where.

This show takes a two-pronged strategy. First, we shift the focus away from New York City to the homes of the artists and their patrons up the river, map their country residences, and link them with their local scenery. Second, our show expands the canon to include women such as Eliza Pratt Greatorex, Julie Hart Beers, and Julia McEntee Dillon, who are generally excluded from consideration.

The objects and materials featured in this exhibition and publication are specimens of work these artists did in the vicinity of their residences. We include watercolors, prints, and photographs to complement the spectacular and in some cases little seen oil paintings. Hanging side by side, they demonstrate the kinship that existed among these artists. Even when they shared a subject, however, we discover that the pictures have different looks, as each artist gave their own individual stamp of style and approach.

The exhibition includes a map of the river that pinpoints where the artists lived and the motifs they painted from New York City to Albany. A display case and a website offer a look at illustrated guide books that instructed painters in the importance of particular sites, along with 19th century ferry and train schedules. Prints add another important dimension to this project. They were less expensive and therefore more commonly owned by 19th century Americans: art for the middle class. Selections are included from *The Hudson River Portfolio* which consists of twenty hand-colored aquatints. Such portfolios established the canon of places that the painters followed in their work. We also feature Fanny Palmer, the woman who made more prints for Currier & Ives than any other artist in the firm.

Our title *Home on the Hudson* refers not only to the dwellings of the artists but also to the domestic settings where these landscapes hung. We learn how these paintings functioned within interior spaces. A folding screen is decorated with a view of the river at Albany, a variation on the theme of landscape pictures as decorative objects. We also showcase painted china and a

range of domestic objects that carried Hudson River imagery from fine arts into the domestic arts.

Most exhibitions of Hudson River art are held far from the landscape that gave rise to it, and therefore lack specificity of place. *Home on the Hudson* is hosted by Boscobel, situated directly on the river just opposite West Point, a frequently painted view. Visitors can move from the natural belvedere on Boscobel's grounds into the galleries to see the scenery portrayed. This is an important opportunity for viewers to compare and contrast physical motif with paintings and prints of it.

The run of the exhibition at Boscobel during the summer of 2009 is perfectly timed to coincide with the 400th Anniversary of Henry Hudson's discovery while sailing in his ship the *Half Moon* of the river that bears his name. Some of the material in the exhibition will manifest this historical event. The exhibition runs from June 6 through Sept. 7, 2009 at Boscobel Restoration, 1601 Route 9D, Garrison, NY. For more information please call 845-265-3638 or visit Boscobel.org.