

Basic Detail Report



Title: Rondout Creek

Date: 1862

Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@3e653

Medium: Oil on canvas

Description: "Rondout Creek" expresses the Hudson River School concept that nature had the power to convey and inspire religious, philosophical, didactic, and therapeutic ideals. Kensett's deliberate choice of subject--a tranquil pool in the midst of cool woodlands enveloped in limpid light--is a direct manifestation of his belief in landscape's moral import. He believed in the picturesque notion of nature's tranquillity and of a consonant relationship between nature and man. He conveyed this idea in "Rondout Creek" through a carefully conceived and balanced compositional design, beautifully modulated tonal palette, and subtly orchestrated light. These elements created for the viewer a direct and intimate entry into the scene as well as a sense of the peace and harmony that inspired the artist. The expressive draftsmanship evident in the delineation of the foreground trees and the somewhat thicker impasto of the two trunks and sky gently animates the composition. The silvery gray of the craggy lichen-marked rocks is a Kensett hallmark, as is the desiccated log in the foreground that conveyed an iconographically potent message about the cyclical nature of life to the mid-nineteenth-century viewer. Also typical of Kensett is the inclusion of rather anecdotal cows. The canvas is a standard size in Kensett's work, one that he found compatible for paintings done in his New York studio and for those done directly from nature.

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"Rondout Creek" does not have the studied perfection expected in a studio painting of this period. Rather, the brushwork conveys a sense of immediacy and spontaneity and the palette and light effects impart a sense of intimacy that suggest the work was executed on the site. JD Bibliography: Ellen H. Johnson, "Kensett Revisited," "Art Quarterly 20" (spring 1957): 71-92; John K. Howat, "John F. Kensett", exhib. cat. (New York: American Federation of Arts, 1968); John Paul Driscoll, "John F. Kensett Drawings", exhib. cat. (State College, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University, Palmer Museum of Art, 1978); John Paul Driscoll and John K. Howat, "John Frederick Kensett, An American Master," exhib. cat. (New York: Worcester Art Museum, 1985).

Dimensions: Frame: 24 1/2 x 34 in. (62.2 x 86.4 cm) Image: 15 x 24 in. (38.1 x 61 cm)