

Landscape artists



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Rousseau and Inness: A Comparison Of the nine landscape artists to choose from, I picked Théodore Rousseau and George Inness for comparison. First, both artists are die-hard landscapists. They are best known for their landscape masterpieces, and perhaps so because they hardly explored any other genres existing in their generation. Second, these painters tend to favor realism in their works. Browsing through their masterpieces, these similarities are immediately apparent, which lay a solid ground for an educated comparison.

One would notice that either one or a group of trees stand out in Rousseau's paintings, leaving the clouds and mountains, and even animals, almost unnoticed. This pattern seems to mirror his conservative attitude towards nature: that introducing another life form may no longer be necessary, or even appear destructive, which probably explains why he rarely juxtaposes humans with trees. Inness, on the other hand, doesn't seem to mind. His own definition of nature is broad enough to even include houses. In fact, in his "Albanersee, Italien," he painted what seems to be a recreational area with humans strolling around who are, like him, enjoying nature's splendor. He seems to suggest that animals, including humans, go hand in hand with nature towards a harmonious coexistence. We could tell from their works that both painters admire nature so much that they want it captured in their paintings in meticulous detail. Otherwise, they would not stay that long in the landscape and realism genre.

Rousseau's works, however, are mostly gloomy, evoking a sense of romantic melancholy to the beholder. Solitude, his favorite theme, is expressed by painting trees standing alone or unusually taller than the other accessory figures so that anyone staring at his canvass would immediately notice such

isolation. Darkness usually dominates his works, depicting either sunset or cloudy skies, seemingly to warn danger looming ahead. But Inness is just the opposite, painting clear skies suggesting a fine weather, which also evokes feelings opposite to the kind Rousseau attempts to bring. Inness's paintings are mostly bright and sunny, with animals and humans that seem to be enjoying nature's hospitality. In this sense, his paintings look more inviting to the human eye, provoking viewers to look further into the minute details. But in fairness to Rousseau, his masterpieces are successful in bringing intense emotion to the viewers. I admire him for that, as it takes a great deal of creativity to express beauty while attempting to elicit a dominant mood in an artwork. Inness, on the other hand, simply recreates what is commonly seen around.

Both painters' works staunchly reflect reality. In fact, many scholars agree that their paintings pay too much attention to details. Although generally disheartening, Rousseau's landscapes do not go beyond that mood. His works are not even close to the idea of hell, as I believe that nature, no matter how depressing it is expressed, is never a good tool to express pandemonium. Inness's works, on the other hand, are not close to paradise either; it's simply too detailed or too realistic - they merely depict nature's supreme beauty. To both artists, high fidelity is the key to a successful replication and immortalization of nature's beauty.

We can deduce from this in-depth examination of Rousseau and Inness's works that artists who desire to capture nature's beauty at large tend to be realist and landscapist. From there, the artist can then choose the mood he may want to create with his painting. This shows how two artists working on

a similar theme could come up with contrasting ideas depicted on their canvass.