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Gallery Text

This painting is based on sketches and photographs that Bierstadt compiled in the summer of 1859, when

he joined a government survey expedition led by Frederic W. Lander. But the work is an imagined view rather than an accurate topographical rendering. Painted and exhibited in Bierstadt's New York studio, it is geared to the sensibility of urban East Coast viewers. With its dramatic sunlit mountain range and verdant, uncultivated valley, the painting portrays the American West as an edenic landscape filled with hope and opportunity. It signals the promise of new beginnings, a resonant theme for a nation torn apart by civil war. Bierstadt, one of the first American painters to explore the West, journeyed as far as the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming. Though he encountered and sketched many Native Americans on his travels, this work does not include any signs of the indigenous population.

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## Identification and Creation

### Object Number

1895.698

### People

Albert Bierstadt, American (Solingen (near Dusseldorf), Germany 1830 - 1902 New York, NY)

### Title

Rocky Mountains, "Lander's Peak"

### Classification

Paintings

### Work Type

painting

### Date

1863

Culture  
American

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Location

Level 2, Room 2100, European and American Art, 17th–19th century, Painting and Photography in an Era of Social Change

 [View this object's location on our interactive map](#)

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Physical Descriptions

Medium  
Oil on linen

Dimensions

110.8 x 90.2 cm (43 5/8 x 35 1/2 in.)

frame: 146.4 x 126.4 x 10.8 cm (57 5/8 x 49 3/4 x 4 1/4 in.)

Inscriptions and Marks

Signed: l.l.: A. Bierstadt 63 (AB in monogram)

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Provenance

Acquired by William Hayes Fogg, New York; his bequest to his wife, Mrs. William Hayes Fogg, 1884; her bequest to Fogg Art Museum, 1895.

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Acquisition and Rights

Credit Line  
Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Bequest of Mrs. William Hayes Fogg

Accession Year

1895

Object Number

1895.698

Division

European and American Art

Contact

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## Publication History

Fogg Art Museum and Benjamin Rowland, Jr., *Real and Ideal in American Art*, exh. cat. (Cambridge, MA, Summer 1948), cat. 22 as "Landscape in the Rockies"  
Richard S. Trump, "Life and Works of Albert Bierstadt" (Thesis, Ohio State University, 1963), Unpublished and Ohio State University, 217

Gordon Hendricks, "The First Three Western Journeys of Albert Bierstadt", *The Art Bulletin*, College Art Association of America (September 1964), vol. XLVI, no. 3, pp. 333-65, pp. 333-365; reproduced fig. 5  
*Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture from the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University*, exh. cat., Yale University Art Gallery (New Haven, CT, 1967), n.p.

Peter T. Harstad, "The Lander Trail", *Idaho Yesterdays*, Idaho State Historical Society (Boise, ID, Fall 1968), vol. XII, no. 3, cover

Barbara Novak, "American Landscape: The Nationalist Garden and the Holy Book", *Art In America* (January 1972 - February 1972), pp. 46-57, reproduced p. 47, color

Louise Todd Ambler and Kenyon Castle Bolton, III,

"American Painting at Harvard", *Antiques* (New York, NY, November 1972), vol. 102, no. 5, pp. 876-883, p. 877, pl. 1

Kenyon Castle Bolton, III, Peter G. Huenink, Earl A. Powell III, Harry Z. Rand, and Nanette C. Sexton, *American Art at Harvard*, exh. cat., Fogg Art Museum (Cambridge, MA, 1972), cat. 74, ill.

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Jonathan L. Fairbanks, *Frontier America: The Far West*, exh. cat., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Boston, MA, 1975), p. 63, cat. 72, ill.; p. 216; back cover, ill.

John Wilmerding, "Harvard and American Art", *Apollo* (June 1978), vol. CVII, no. 196, pp. 490-495, p. 491, pl. XXI

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Chris Bruce, ed., *Myth of the West*, Rizzoli/The Henry Art Gallery, Univ. of Washington (New York and Seattle, WA, 1990), p. 62; reproduced, color, p. 66

Marjorie B. Cohn, "A Slow Start for American Art at the Fogg", *Harvard University Art Museums Review* (Fall 1992), vol. II, no. 1, p. 3, p. 3, fn. 6

Jean Clair, ed., *Cosmos: From Romanticism to the Avant-Garde*, exh. cat., The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Montreal, Canada, 1999), pp. 82-3, illustr. in b/w  
Andrew Wilton and Tim Barringer, *American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States, 1820-1880*, exh. cat., Tate Gallery Publishing Limited (London and Princeton, NJ, 2002), pp. 230-231, cat. 89, ill.

Gabriella Belli and Paola Giacomoni, *Montagna: Arte, scienza, mito da Durer a Warhol* (Milan, Italy, 2003), p. 196

John Updike, *Still Looking: Essays on American Art*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. (New York, 2005), pp. 41-43, ill. opp. p. 43

Kimberly Orcutt, "Personal Collecting Meets Institutional Vision: The Origins of Harvard's Fogg Art Museum", *Journal of the History of Collections* (2006), vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 267-284, p. 270; p. 271, fig. 3; p. 274  
Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825-1875*, Oxford University Press (NY) (New York, NY, 2007), pl. 3, ill.

Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., Virginia Anderson, and Kimberly Orcutt, ed., *American Paintings at Harvard, Volume Two, Paintings, Drawings, Pastels and Stained Glass by Artists Born 1826-1856*, Harvard University Art Museums/Yale University Press (Cambridge, MA and New Haven, CT, 2008), p. 44, cat. 21, ill. p. 46  
Stephan Wolohojian, ed., *Harvard Art Museum/ Handbook*, Harvard Art Museum (Cambridge, MA, 2008), ill. p. 156

Judy Murray and Ray Williams, *Engaging New Americans, Preparing for US Citizenship with the Harvard Art Museums*, Harvard Art Museums (Cambridge, MA, 2012), ill. p. 44

Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr. and Melissa Renn, *American Paintings at Harvard, Volume One: Paintings, Watercolors, and Pastels by Artists Born before 1826*, Yale University Press and Harvard Art Museums (Cambridge and New Haven, 2014), p. 26

Cambridge, 06/01/1948 - 09/01/1948  
*Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture from the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, 10/12/1967 - 12/03/1967*  
*The American Vision: Painting 1825-1875, Rosenberg Gallery, New York, 10/08/1968 - 11/02/1968*  
*American Art at Harvard, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, 04/19/1972 - 06/18/1972*  
*The American Landscape, Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago, 11/15/1973 - 12/30/1973*  
*Frontier American, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Boston, 01/23/1975 - 03/16/1975; Denver Art Museum, Denver, 04/16/1975 - 06/01/1975; Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, San Diego, 07/02/1975 - 08/17/1975; Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, 09/17/1975 - 11/02/1975; Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, 12/05/1975 - 01/18/1976*  
*America: Art and the West, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 12/11/1986 - 01/21/1987; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 02/06/1987 - 04/05/1987*  
*Myth of the West, Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, 09/14/1990 - 11/25/1990*  
*The Persistence of Memory: Continuity and Change in American Cultures, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, 07/29/1995 - 05/13/2001*  
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*32Q: 2100 19th Century, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, 11/01/2014*

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Subjects and Contexts

Collection Highlights  
Google Art Project



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Related Works



Straus.8316

**Artist of original:**

**Albert Bierstadt**

X-radiograph(s) of  
"Lander's Peak "  
Photographs

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This record has been reviewed by the curatorial staff but may be incomplete. Our records are frequently revised and enhanced. For more information please contact the Division of European and American Art at [am\\_europeanamerican@harvard.edu](mailto:am_europeanamerican@harvard.edu)