

British Art Studies

Issue 10, published 29 November 2018

Landscape Now

Cover image: David Alesworth, *Unter den Linden*, 2010, horticultural intervention, public art project, terminalia arjuna seeds (sterilized) yellow paint.. Digital image courtesy of David Alesworth.

PDF generated on 17 December 2018

Note: *British Art Studies* is a digital publication and intended to be experienced online and referenced digitally. PDFs are provided for ease of reading offline. Please do not reference the PDF in academic citations: we recommend the use of DOIs (digital object identifiers) provided within the online article. These unique alphanumeric strings identify content and provide a persistent link to a location on the internet. A DOI is guaranteed never to change, so you can use it to link permanently to electronic documents with confidence.

Published by:

Paul Mellon Centre

16 Bedford Square

London, WC1B 3JA

<http://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk>

In partnership with:

Yale Center for British Art

1080 Chapel Street

New Haven, Connecticut

<http://britishart.yale.edu>

ISSN: 2058-5462

DOI: 10.17658/issn.2058-5462

URL: <http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk>

Editorial team: <http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/about/editorial-team>

Advisory board: <http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/about/advisory-board>

Produced in the United Kingdom.

A joint publication by



PAUL MELLON
CENTRE

YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART

Contents

On Place and Displacement:
Benjamin Henry Latrobe and the Immigrant Landscape, Julia A. Sienkewicz

Abstract

This essay approaches British landscape studies through the concept of the immigrant landscape. Studying watercolors from the Virginian residence of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, this feature analyzes the concept of “displacement” as a contribution to landscape studies. Through paired and serial landscape images, Latrobe explored his sense of self in space and place, confronting illusive associations with his homeland, while attempting to understand his new surroundings.

Authors

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art, the Yale Center for British Art, and the Huntington Museum for their support of her participation in the Landscape Now conference. She would also like to thank fellow speakers and attendees at this conference, whose valuable feedback helped to inform this feature.

Cite as

Julia A. Sienkewicz, "On Place and Displacement: Benjamin Henry Latrobe and the Immigrant Landscape", *British Art Studies*, Issue 10, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-10/look-first>

Nothing might seem more central to the tradition of landscape painting than the creation of a sense of place. In the traditions of British and American art history, artists such as Thomas Cole and John Constable earned their imposing stature in large part due to their ability to render specific sites effectively, thus provoking deep associations with the cultural imaginaries of their moments. The Grand Tour landscape tradition grew from a fascination with significant sites in Continental Europe that could inspire aesthetic reactions and also serve as points of connection between past and present viewers. Even the arcadian tradition builds its moral and intellectualized fantasies of the past on a specific sense of place, built on allegorized references to the ancient world and specific programmatic relationships of figures and human activities to landscape features.

The landscape watercolors that Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764-1820) produced in the four years after his emigration from London (1795-1799) to the United States, experiment with innovations in visual form that challenge the primacy of a fixed sense of place within the landscape tradition. In these works from his immigrant years, Latrobe makes use of the sensory and bodily experience of landscape scenes in order to probe the jarring contrasts that an immigrant experiences between “place” and “displacement”.¹ This article offers a study of the staged sense of place and displacement through a series of Latrobe’s paired and serial landscapes from these years. The current digital publication platform for this article, which emphasizes close looking and comparison, is appropriate to these works, as the artist produced them over years in which he relied on his own eyes and bodily experience in order to help him to understand the significant qualities of the American versus the British landscape. While examining the contents of Latrobe’s landscape watercolors, the scrutinizing gaze of the viewer is closely akin to Latrobe’s own immigrant vision. At the same time, through the paired and serial nature of his studies, Latrobe moves the viewer as if a body through space, confronting the realities and disjunctures of the immigrant vision. Through these images, the viewer is both confused and enlightened—but also, in Latrobe’s own words, is “undeceived,” countering his tendency to overlay expectations developed in a previous homeland onto the new sites encountered.² Latrobe’s watercolor views were composed primarily in sketchbooks and he worked on the scenes while also reflecting on his experiences in journal entries. Similarly, this article pairs visual analysis with excerpts from Latrobe’s directive commentary on his images, thus deepening the reader’s/viewer’s confrontation with the sensations of place and displacement that Latrobe sought to evoke.

Latrobe’s landscape watercolor views are embodied landscapes—they connect viewers to specific bodily sensations associated with the represented sites, and they also are constructed around a viewing experience that is bodily and spatial, not merely visual. Through the first

person account of Latrobe's own vision, they seek to immerse viewers in understanding particular qualities of landscape sites. True to the artistic traditions of his moment, Latrobe relies on the manipulation of aesthetic modes and their symbolic tropes in order to provoke both bodily and sensory reactions in his viewer (e.g., the sublime thrill of danger, the soothing picturesque qualities of a rural scene). In his landscapes that explore the concept of displacement, Latrobe offers a window into something that is less well known in the artistic tradition—the immigrant's dual sensibility of space and place. Through Latrobe's eyes, we can see the landscape of Britain as both "homeland" and "foreign" or the shores of Virginia as synchronously familiar in their shared qualities with Britain and, yet, jarringly strange. As an individual artist moving through space and across the years of his life, Latrobe quite self-consciously captured the specific bodily and viewing experiences that were tied to his own condition.

For modern scholars, then, these works offer a rich and powerful interpretive challenge, both in terms of reinterpreting Latrobe's artistic practice and in assessing the contours of our art historical fields. While Latrobe has been bracketed from the American landscape tradition as a British watercolorist, and as an amateur with no stakes in the content-driven professional sphere, he has also been heralded as the primogenitor of the architectural profession in the United States with his European origins being a mere backdrop to his American architectural practice.³ Within the scholarship of British art, Latrobe has held no place. His known watercolor work was nearly all produced in the United States and, further, has been characterized as the amateur work of an architect, not the ambitious work of a trained watercolorist.⁴ These landscapes of displacement render the necessity of disrupting the nationalist fields of art history.⁵ Latrobe as an immigrant-artist occupies not only the dual categories of both British and American, but also something that we could understand as a complicated third space of a body-and-mind in motion between these identities. When Latrobe's own complex and multinational biography is taken into account, the British and American categories are even more troubled.⁶ The paradigm of Atlantic world scholarship offers one useful model for understanding the position of these watercolors, especially as Latrobe often positions his views around bodies of water, but it is an imperfect answer to his perspective on Virginia, especially after several years spent in the state distanced him from his transatlantic crossing. These watercolors offer detailed studies of specific landscapes—as such they are careful considerations of the local. At the same time, they are transnational both in content and in the implicit bodily experience of the viewer, often probing conflicting and, perhaps oppositional, understandings of a site or contrasting two sites with which Latrobe was familiar. Through his landscapes of displacement, Latrobe explores the complex ways in which bodies and minds move through places, both real and imagined. While he is

explicit in his technique and content, his works challenge art historians to develop new methodologies of landscape interpretation in order to more fully uncover other such sophisticated traces of artists-in-motion.

The Rupture of Emigration

Two watercolors, *View of the Coast of England at Hastings* and *Moonlight Scene at Hastings, England* (both 1797–99), can introduce the visual techniques that Latrobe utilized in order to convey displacement (Fig. 1, Fig. 2). These views reflect Latrobe’s experiences of observing the southern coast of England, while aboard the *Eliza*, an American ship that carried him across the Atlantic. The *Eliza* spent a hapless month wandering lost around the English Channel, due to poor luck and even worse navigation by the crew.⁷ Latrobe left a rich record of images and writing documenting this interval. He repainted these two views, which he likely drew from a lost sketchbook source, in his hand-illustrated manuscript *An Essay on Landscape*, which dates to ca. 1798.⁸

Figure 1.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *View of the Coast of Hastings*, published in *An Essay on Landscape, Explained in Tinted Drawings* (Richmond, Virginia: Library of Virginia, 1798–99), 1797–99, watercolour, 19.1 x 26.1 cm. Digital image courtesy of Library of Virginia.

Figure 2.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *Moonlight scene at Hastings*, published in *An Essay on Landscape, Explained in Tinted Drawings* (Richmond, Virginia: Library of Virginia, 1798–99), 1797–99, watercolour, 19.1 x 26.1 cm. Digital image courtesy of Library of Virginia.

View of the Coast of Hastings is dominated by the face of a high cliff, its striated surface is bathed in light. Two boats have been pulled onto the shadowy, foreground shore. Beneath the cliff, a carriage progresses on the road and two windmills are prominent in the background. The scene juxtaposes the human hand and that of nature, and Latrobe’s text reflects that both nature and humankind have ravaged the landscape, though in this case, the powerful surge of the sea has proven the strongest force. *Moonlight Scene at Hastings, England* presents a sliver of beachfront, which recedes beneath the massive bulk of a cliff. Angled walls of a robust fortress, a bristling array of ship masts, and a single house are all dimly visible. This small inlet of human influence is dwarfed by the cliffs, which rise three times the height of the tallest masts. The right-hand side of the view is an open expanse of gently rippling ocean. The moon hovers above the horizon and casts a clear beam across the rippling water, leading the eye in a straight

line along the surface of the water, toward the horizon beyond. A large boat bobs to the right, perhaps resting at anchor overnight at a safe distance from the rocky cliffs.

View of the Coast of England at Hastings and *Moonlight Scene at Hastings, England* are pendants that, when considered as a set, create a significant and complex viewing experience. The two views pivot, as Latrobe notes, from a single point along the shoreline of the coast. *View of the Coast of England* faces toward the west along the English Channel and from there promises the viewer a course out toward the open ocean. *Moonlight Scene at Hastings* turns the viewer toward the east, back along the route already traveled by the *Eliza*. In *View of the Coast of England*, the viewer's perspective seems firmly grounded on the sandy beach in the foreground, but having pivoted toward *Moonlight Scene at Hastings*, the thin strip of beach virtually drops the viewer into the ocean. One scene is rooted on the terra firma of homeland; in the other, the viewer is cast to sea. The contrast is further accented by the paired effects across the two views, most notably between day and night, sunlight and moonlight, and the corresponding contrasts of warm and cool pigment. This set of contrasts creates an interesting cycle of sensations. Melancholy and longing seem inherent in the moonlight view, which draws the eye tantalizingly beyond the coast of Hastings back toward the shimmering promise of the moon. *View of the Coast of England*, by contrast, appears peaceful, bathed in the light of a sunny day that Latrobe specifically noted he had created for this warm effect.⁹

Latrobe's accompanying description of the coast further emphasizes the inhospitable nature of this shoreline to the stranger.¹⁰ Once departed from Britain, it is difficult to return. A stranger would be just as likely to crash on the rocky coast as to enjoy its shelter and welcome. *Moonlight Scene at Hastings* conveys anticipation in its stillness and longing in the silver light of the moon, appropriate for the emigrant viewer given its homeward bound orientation. This association is tempered, though, by the fact that the moonlight pulls the viewer out across the open water toward an unseen destination beyond the horizon, seeming to beckon toward distant lands across the water.

Between Two Worlds

Once landed in Virginia, Latrobe employed this technique of pendant landscapes on multiple occasions, though perhaps most strikingly in Richmond, Virginia. In a lengthy diary entry, he described the sensation of visiting cities in the new world that shared names with places he had known in the old. Of all these sites in Virginia, Richmond most captured Latrobe's fancy because, as he remarked, it was only there that he felt himself home

again in England. He found the likeness between the twin Richmonds so striking that he mused: “if a man could be imperceptibly and in an instant conveyed from the one side of the Atlantic to the other he might hesitate for some minutes before he could discover the difference.” ¹¹

Despite the imaginative fancy of this statement, Latrobe sought to describe a real sensation of space and place and he attempted to capture this sensibility in his landscape views. In its placid beauty, *View of Richmond* (1796) presents the landscape characteristics that Latrobe attributed to the British Richmond in his lengthier passage—undulating hills, carefully coiffed landscape, and brilliant white classicism (Fig. 3). *Sketch of Washington's Island* (1796), by contrast, offers a vista that appears untouched by human hand, save for two African-American boatmen (Fig. 4). The James River flows rapidly across the painting, pushed forward by the force of the falls, and trees and foliage are a scraggly, continuous mass.

Figure 3.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *View of Richmond from South Side of James River showing Capitol from Bushrod, Washington*, 1796, watercolour, 17.7 x 26.6 cm. Collection of Maryland Historical Society (1960-108-1-1-36). Digital image courtesy of Maryland Historical Society.

Figure 4.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *Sketch of Washington's Island, James River, Virginia*, 1796, watercolour, 17.7 x 26.6 cm. Collection of Maryland Historical Society (1960-108-1-1-33). Digital image courtesy of Maryland Historical Society.

Yet if one scene seems British and the other American, they both render Latrobe's new home in Virginia. The views, which are so different in their characterizations of this location, are bound together by the selective, displaced, and disoriented character of the immigrant viewer. This consistent, if conflicted, immigrant experience is inherent in the construction of these works. If we place the views side by side, the viewers exchange gazes across the river, the two scenes highlighting the river's water, like the Atlantic, as the space separating the British from the American. In an instant, the viewer is transported across the Atlantic, even as he realizes the trick—both landscapes are really *American*, though one seems a world apart.

In Virginia, Latrobe developed this technique further through the creation of serial landscape views, which focus on manipulating the viewer's perception across space and time. Importantly, he often signals the relationships among these images through textual cues in his writing—a phenomenon we can study in three views Latrobe created at Norfolk. These breadcrumbs have allowed me to decode the relationships in several of his landscape series—but they are visually challenging to identify.

Latrobe's three views of Norfolk were his first concentrated study of an individual city in the United States, and were located adjacent to one another in his sketchbook. *View on the Elizabeth River, Norfolk Virginia* (1796) presents a majestic scene of water, trees, sky, and sailing vessels (Fig. 5). No sign of a surrounding city is evident, except in the presence of boats on the river. The subsequent sketchbook sheet, *View of Part of the Ruins of Norfolk* (1796–98), shows the viewer a landscape in ruins (Fig. 6). The subject matter is striking, as it immediately seems to denote Europe for a viewer, yet is clearly labeled as an American scene. The pictured ruins are byproducts of the American Revolution, during which the city was damaged by both sides. Although not central to the discussion here, it is important to mention that this view meditates on the American Revolution as both a Revolution and a Civil War—a concept it explores in tandem with ancient sources concerning the Roman Civil War, and on which it builds within the fraught contemporary context of the French Revolution.¹² Finally, *View of Norfolk from Smith's Point* (1796–98) offers a detailed city view of a thriving port (Fig. 7).

Figure 5.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *View on the Elizabeth River, Virginia*, 1796, watercolour, 17.7 x 26.6 cm. Collection of Maryland Historical Society (1960-108-1-1-26). Digital image courtesy of Maryland Historical Society.

Figure 6.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *View of part of the ruins of Norfolk, Virginia*, 1796–98, watercolour, 17.7 x 26.6 cm. Collection of Maryland Historical Society (1960-108-1-1-27). Digital image courtesy of Maryland Historical Society.

Figure 7.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *View of Norfolk from Smith's Point, Virginia*, 1796–98. watercolour, 17.7 x 26.6 cm. Collection of Maryland Historical Society (1960-108-1-1-28). Digital image courtesy of Maryland Historical Society.

The differences between these three views are more striking than their similarities—they comprise a pleasant landscape scene of untouched nature, a melancholy study of ruins, and a conventional topographical urban view. Even more surprisingly, a careful reading of Latrobe's annotations reveals that all three scenes were found in close proximity to one another. In *View on the Elizabeth River*, three trees occupy the right-hand side of the image. In his caption to the watercolor, Latrobe notes, "The trees on the right hand are those behind which the brig appears in the next Landscape."¹³ Turning to *View of Part of the Ruins of Norfolk*, the viewer identifies these same trees as the clustered clump of trees abutting the two ruined chimneys along the

river's edge. Once this connection is made, it is also apparent that the tall sailing vessel and the smaller ship to its left are in both images. In *View of Norfolk from Smith's Point*, the caption again signals the connection among the images, noting "This View is taken from the point near the 4 Trees behind which the Brig appears in the foregoing sketch." Tied to the visual anchors of a small clump of trees and repeated sailing vessels, these images guide the viewer on a journey, though one confined to only a few steps across a real landscape.

Most literally, the differences among these images derived from the variance between their perspectives. *View on the Elizabeth River* situates the viewer with his back to the ruins, enjoying an unsullied scene of nature. *View of Norfolk from Smith's Point* shifts only a few steps—but the scene is transformed. Standing in front of the cluster of trees and turned slightly toward the left, the viewer admires prosperous civilization. Finally, facing the same direction, but pivoted, the viewer sees both majestic sailboats and the sketchiest hint of the thriving seaport, as the backdrop to a dramatic representation of the city in ruins. In this series, Latrobe achieves a multifaceted study of place by exploiting the viewer's capacity for displacement—only by becoming aware of the space behind his back, or by moving metaphorically across time (past, present, future) or geography (European versus American ruins), can the viewer gain a deeper reflective perspective.

Undeception

A final image can offer a taste of Latrobe's experimentation with landscape in trompe l'oeil, again in the service of exploring immigrant sensation. A *Collection of Small Moonlights*, which I have dated to 1797, juxtaposes a textual backdrop with three diminutive landscape vignettes (Fig. 8).¹⁴ This image offers an exceptional opportunity to explore Latrobe's engagement with the social unrest of the Age of Revolutions and his contemplation of the relationship between the United States and Europe, which I explore more fully elsewhere.¹⁵ Here a central moonlit landscape, labeled "Scene at Hampton, Virginia," depicts a small, one-room log house, from which a welcoming bright red light shines into the deepening dusk. The house sits next to a body of water, which reflects the moon's rays in ripples across its surface. A large boat drifts on the horizon. In the foreground, a rowboat bobs gently in a sheltered cove, proffering safe passage to the cabin. The second vignette is a river scene in which shimmering water is flanked by trees and rocks. A full moon hovers on the horizon and shines a strong beam onto the water. At the vanishing point, a large sailing vessel turns a bend of the river. The final vignette appears located on the oceanfront. A fire illuminates the

hull of an immense sailing vessel. In the distance, four more ships sail on still ocean water and the moon again hovers on the horizon, casting shimmering light on the water.

Figure 8.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *A Collection of Small Moonlights, Virginia*, 1796–98, watercolour, 17.7 x 26.6 cm. Collection of Maryland Historical Society (1960-108-1-1-16). Digital image courtesy of Maryland Historical Society.

The text beneath the vignettes is a sardonic commentary on reactions to battles between French and Austrian forces.¹⁶ It facetiously suggests that it has been “proved as plain as the Nose on [a] Face” that the current turmoil will lead to peace between England and France and accordingly “religion order and subordination put upon its old proper footing.” Despite the complex international spectrum of concepts with which Latrobe’s image is engaged, the “Scene at Hampton, Virginia” is both the visual center of the image and the lingering focus of the eye. The minutely rendered cabin is at the physical center of the painting and the warm light flooding from its small window offers welcome, anchoring the image in a sea of chaos and conveying an air of tranquility not reflected in the text. If the vignettes are studied beginning at right and following a clockwise-motion ending with the “Scene at Hampton, Virginia,” they suggest a theme of travel and homecoming. While no explicit geography is given, the flaming bonfire in the right-hand vignette may well be a metaphor for the flames of war burning in Europe, behind which ships and moonlight guide the viewer’s eye suggestively across the water. In the next vignette, the ship has implicitly traveled across the Atlantic and sails toward a large river, still following moonbeams. The final vignette shows the ship on the horizon and moonbeams pointing into the cove. Having traveled a great distance, the passenger can now find his home in this sheltered cove within a literal, even a clichéd, representation of this American home. While war rages in Europe and nations are thrown into upheaval, Latrobe’s image suggests travel across the Atlantic leading to another world.

Yet, this is a *trompe l’oeil*, and a viewer must avoid succumbing too easily to its compelling visual narrative. The stillness and tranquility of the central scene contrasts with both the violent and disillusioned text below and with the insistent circular motion across vignettes. Placed within the larger context of Latrobe’s imagery and writings from this period—and noting his focus on moonlight—the *trompe l’oeil* can be understood as melancholy, rather than celebratory. Overwhelmed by his own sadness and disconnection from Virginian society, Latrobe dreamed of the hermit’s lifestyle—even purchasing property on which to achieve this goal. Although such a lifestyle would be satisfying, he lamented that it would also be a failure—a way of

renouncing his hopes for personal and professional achievement in the United States.¹⁷ The isolated retreat at the heart of this image suggests an escape from the world—a flight from failed homelands past and present. *Collection of Small Moonlights* offer the illusion of a compelling vision of American homecoming, while also capturing the preoccupations of the immigrant artist, who obsesses over European news (and American ignorance of current affairs), meditates on transatlantic connections, and seeks escape from displacement through a more permanent and self-conscious ascetic retreat. In his journals of this period, Latrobe described multiple moments in which Virginia and its inhabitants nearly appeared British to him—but each time he would experience a remarkable moment of “undeception” (a term Latrobe himself used, with fascinating correspondence to Wendy Bellion’s recent analysis of the term). This trompe l’oeil invites the viewer to experience this jarring circumstance of undeception—lured toward a promising homeland in America, the viewer nonetheless encounters a landscape rocked by an uncertain international context. Instead of a secure homeland, the image proffers the melancholy and stateless life of the hermit.

Accounting for the Immigrant Landscape

What, then, can Latrobe’s immigrant landscapes contribute to this feature’s focus on the current state of British landscape studies? Here I have discussed landscapes that are peripherally British—through their post-colonial context and/or through the perspective of the European artist-émigré. Latrobe’s Virginian watercolors firmly reject any sense of celebratory American nationalism, even as they also reckon with Latrobe’s sensibility of displacement. Similarly, these works take account of Latrobe’s British subject position, and the former Colonial status of the landscapes he represents, even as they focus on “undeception,” spatial journeys, and the immigrant’s sensibility of landscape. Finally, in his innovative techniques of landscape painting, including the spatial experimentation and trompe l’oeil, Latrobe suggests ways in which these immigrant images can contribute to our understanding of ambitious landscape painting at the end of the eighteenth century. Far from the documentary images for which they have been mistaken, Latrobe’s studies expect philosophical reflection, close visual scrutiny, and a content-driven analysis. As works that fall outside of the traditional boundaries of both British and American landscape studies, Latrobe’s immigrant landscapes challenge us to see both place and displacement, perception and deception, through new and more complex lenses of analysis.

Through Latrobe’s landscapes of displacement, we can see an artist’s interpretation of the lived experience of immigration. Although there is a sudden rupture to immigration, with specific watershed moments that can be identified—boarding the transatlantic vessel, enduring the voyage,

disembarking at the destination—Latrobe reminds us that the immigrant landscape is a continuous lived experience. Focused intently on getting to know the landscape of Virginia, Latrobe scrutinizes its sites with great attention and captures this specificity of place in his watercolors. But, he is also caught between two worlds. By rendering displacement, he is able to create a semblance of this continuous dual existence lived between past and present homelands. In seeking to understand artists within the historiographies of American or British art (as examples), we have been too ready to see these categories as absolute. Latrobe's works remind us of the subtleties in perspective and begin to train our eyes to look for such clues of displacement.

Deception and undeception are also important facets of the immigrant perspective that Latrobe explores. As in *A Collection of Small Moonlights*, imagination and reverie play a crucial role in the immigrant-artist's reconciliation of self. This particular piece plays on ideas of homeland, while ultimately building a forceful sensibility of isolation, and cultivating a vision of a philosophical refuge in isolation from the world. Pushed and pulled across the Atlantic, the viewer confronts the realities of a world connected, while at the same time reckoning with the spatial and cultural divides between Europe and the United States. Whether imagining being "transported at an instant" back home or being temporarily tricked into thinking that an American ruin is a sign of Ancient European civilization, Latrobe allows the viewer to experience the powerful "undeception" of the immigrant who confronts the differences between the world inside his head and the realities of the surrounding landscape. While trompe l'oeil is an obvious medium in which to expect such games of deception/undeception, Latrobe also incorporates the process to good effect into his serial and paired landscapes. Wendy Bellion has demonstrated the significance of undeception to Early National cultures of citizenship in Philadelphia, but Latrobe's implementation of the process, though also created in the young United States, emphasizes the significance of "undeception" more broadly in the complex international sphere of the 1790s. ¹⁸

Landscape painting has long been interpreted as a means of envisioning a shared cultural imaginary for viewers in both Britain and the young United States. Through the space of this shared vision, artists could offer cultural critique, political commentary, probe scientific inquiry, and pursue many other interpretive directions. Latrobe's landscapes of displacement remind us of an alternative view, in which a landscape may refer to multiple places at once and might also be alienating or deceiving in its contours. In the case of Latrobe's landscapes, textual documentation allows the artist's alternative visions to be decoded with reasonable accuracy. This oeuvre presents a significant case study in the complex realities of artists-in-motion, traveling across national boundaries, and associating the sites that they encountered

with multiple (sometimes conflicting) sensibilities. The conjoined sensibilities of place and displacement in Latrobe's watercolors invites (British) landscape studies to think with greater subtlety about the diverse perspectives of rendering and perceiving sites, recognizing that a viewer might be contemporaneously both placed within a view and displaced from it through diverse strategies of framing, fantasy, and reference.

Footnotes

- 1 The concept of Latrobe's immigrant years is explained in detail in my forthcoming book *Epic Landscapes: Benjamin Henry Latrobe and the Art of Watercolor* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2019).
- 2 See Latrobe's journal entry of May 17, 1796, which has been reprinted in *The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1795-1798*. Edited by Edward C. Carter II, with Angeline Polites, Lee W. Formwalt, and John C. Van Horne. Vol. I 1795-1797. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Maryland Historical Society, 1977): 127. Latrobe's choice of the word "undeceived" is interesting and closely ties his ideas to the concept of "undeception" that is central to Wendy Bellion's study of visual perception in early national Philadelphia: *Citizen-Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011): esp. 3 and 9.
- 3 In addition to Sienkewicz, *Epic Landscapes*, the principle resources concerning Latrobe's watercolor oeuvre remain *Latrobe's View of America, 1795-1820: Selections from the Watercolors and Sketches*, edited by John C. Van Horne and Charles E. Brownell (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for The Maryland Historical Society, 1985); and *The Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, published in three volumes, edited by John C. Van Horne and Lee W. Formwalt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for The Maryland Historical Society, 1981-1987). Significant mentions of his work in watercolor by scholars of American art include: Wendy Bellion, PhD Dissertation, "Likeness and Deception in Early American Art" (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 2001), 169-170; Kathleen A. Foster, *Captain Watson's Travels in America: The Sketchbooks and Diary of Joshua Rowley Watson, 1772-1818* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press for The Barra Foundation, 1997), 268-271. The bibliography concerning Latrobe's architectural practice is too broad to review fully here. Interested readers are encouraged to begin with the following sources: Jeffrey A. Cohen and Charles E. Brownell, *The Architectural Drawings of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, Vol. 2, Parts 1 and 2, *The Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, Series II: *The Architectural and Engineering Drawings* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for the Maryland Historical Society and the American Philosophical Society, 1994); Michael W. Fazio and Patrick A. Snadon, *The Domestic Architecture of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Talbot Hamlin, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).
- 4 Most of the Latrobe scholarship was written before Greg Smith's excellent work to draw the close connections between architectural rendering and watercolor in late eighteenth-century Britain. See *The Emergence of the Professional Watercolourist: Contentions and Alliances in the Artistic Domain, 1760-1820* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), esp. 74-80.
- 5 My research contributes to a growing body of scholarship that seeks to think across the fields of British and American art, to think across their nationalist categories. Among these recent publications are: Tim Barringer and Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser, *Thomas Cole's Journey: Atlantic Crossings* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2018); Tim Barringer, Gillian Forrester, and Jennifer Raab, *Picturesque and Sublime: Thomas Cole's Trans-Atlantic Inheritance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018); Maurie McInnis, "Cultural Politics, Colonial Crisis, and Ancient Metaphor in John Singleton Copley's 'Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Izard,'" *Winterthur Portfolio* 34, nos 2-3 (Summer-Autumn 1999): 85-108; Susan Rather, *The American School: Artists and Status in the Late Colonial and Early National Era* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2016); Susan Rather, "Benjamin West, John Galt, and the Biography of 1816," *The Art Bulletin* 86, no. 2 (June 2004): 324-345; Jennifer Roberts, *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America* (Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 2014).
- 6 Latrobe's most important identity during his youth was as a member of the Moravian Church. He was raised in residential faith communities and schools in Yorkshire and for his teenage years in Silesia (on the modern-day borders between Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic). He began to separate from the church prior to his return to London ca. 1783 or in early 1784. In terms of heritage, Latrobe's father was Irish, his mother was born in a Moravian community in Pennsylvania, and he claimed more distant French ancestry.
- 7 For an exhaustive record of Latrobe's voyage, see Polites, *The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1795-1798*, Vol. 1. See also Sienkewicz, *Epic Landscapes*, Chapter 1.
- 8 The manuscript was never published in Latrobe's lifetime and was written as a pedagogical tool and gift for his American student in watercolor, Susan Catherine Spotswood. It has received limited scholarly attention since being reprinted with valuable editorial notes in Polites, *The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1795-1798*, Vol. 2, 468-531. For further bibliography and discussion, see Sienkewicz, *Epic Landscapes*, esp. Chapter 5.
- 9 See Benjamin Henry Latrobe, "An Essay on Landscape," in Angeline Polites (ed.) *The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1795-1798*, Vol. 2 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for the Maryland Historical Society, 1977), 485.
- 10 See Latrobe, "An Essay on Landscape," 490.
- 11 Journal entry of April 7, 1796, *The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1795-1798*, Vol. 1, 90.

- 12 See Sienkewicz, "Shattered Landscapes: Revolutionary Ruins in the Virginian Watercolors of Benjamin Henry Latrobe," *Art Inquiries* 17, no. 2 (December 2017): 155-171; and Sienkewicz, *Epic Landscapes*, Chapter 2.
- 13 Labrobe, Sketchbook I, image caption. Reprinted in Van Horne and Brownell, *Latrobe's View of America, 1795-1820*, 64.
- 14 This watercolor was first published in *Latrobe's View of America, 1795-1820* and dated in that text to 1799. For discussion of the corrected date, see Sienkewicz, *Epic Landscapes*, Chapter 8.
- 15 See Sienkewicz, *Epic Landscapes*, Chapter 8.
- 16 These references permit the dating of the image to 1797, as they accurately refer to military figures involved in skirmishes on the Rhine that happened in that year.
- 17 Retreat was a prominent strategy considered by Latrobe during his Virginian years. See Sienkewicz, *Epic Landscapes*, Chapters 3 and 7. See especially Latrobe's letter to Giambattista Scandella, January 24, 1799, reprinted in Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *The Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, Vol. 1: 1784-1804, edited by John C. Van Horne and Lee W. Formwalt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for The Maryland Historical Society, 1984), 72.
- 18 See Bellion, *Citizen-Spectator*.

Bibliography

- Barringer, T., Forrester, G., and Raab, J. (2018) *Picturesque and Sublime: Thomas Cole's Trans-Atlantic Inheritance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Barringer, T. and Kornhauser, E.M. (2018) *Thomas Cole's Journey: Atlantic Crossings*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Bellion, W. (2001) "Likeness and Deception in Early American Art." PhD Dissertation, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University.
- Bellion, W. (2011) *Citizen-Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Cohen, J.A. and Brownell, C.E. (1994) *The Architectural Drawings of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, Vol. 2, Parts 1 and 2, *The Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, Series II: *The Architectural and Engineering Drawings*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for the Maryland Historical Society and the American Philosophical Society.
- Fazio, M.W. and Snadon, P.A. (2006) *The Domestic Architecture of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Foster, K.A. (1997) *Captain Watson's Travels in America: The Sketchbooks and Diary of Joshua Rowley Watson, 1772-1818*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press for The Barra Foundation.
- Hamlin, T. (1955) *Benjamin Henry Latrobe*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Latrobe, B.H. (1977 [1798-1799]) "An Essay on Landscape." In Angeline Polites (ed.), *The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1795-1798*, Vol. 2 1-2, 1797-1798. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for the Maryland Historical Society.
- McInnis, M. (1999) "Cultural Politics, Colonial Crisis, and Ancient Metaphor in John Singleton Copley's 'Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Izard'." *Winterthur Portfolio* 34, nos 2-3 (Summer-Autumn): 85-108
- Polites, A. (ed.) (1977) *The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1795-1798*, Vol. 1 1-1, 1795-1797; Vol. 2 1-2, 1797-1798. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for the Maryland Historical Society.
- Rather, S. (2004) "Benjamin West, John Galt, and the Biography of 1816." *The Art Bulletin* 86, no. 2 (June): 324-345.
- Rather, S. (2016) *The American School: Artists and Status in the Late Colonial and Early National Era*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.
- Roberts, J. (2014) *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America*. Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press.
- Sienkewicz, J. (2017) "Shattered Landscapes: Revolutionary Ruins in the Virginian Watercolors of Benjamin Henry Latrobe." *Art Inquiries* 17, no. 2 (December 2017): 155-171.
- Sienkewicz, J. (2019) *Epic Landscapes: Benjamin Henry Latrobe and the Art of Watercolor*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press.
- Smith, G. (2002) *The Emergence of the Professional Watercolourist: Contentions and Alliances in the Artistic Domain, 1760-1820*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Van Horne, J.C. and Brownell, C.E. (eds.) (1985) *Latrobe's View of America, 1795-1820: Selections from the Watercolors and Sketches*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for The Maryland Historical Society.
- Van Horne, J.C. and Formwalt, L.W. (eds.) (1981) *The Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1799-1820: From Philadelphia to New Orleans*, Vol. 3 1-3. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for The Maryland Historical Society.
- Van Horne, J.C. and Formwalt, L.W. (eds.) (1985) *The Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1784-1804*, Vol. 1 4-1, 1784-1804. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for The Maryland Historical Society.
- Van Horne, J.C. and Formwalt, L.W. (eds.) (1987) *The Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1811-1820*, Vol. 3 4-3, 1811-1820. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for The Maryland Historical Society.
- Van Horne, J.C. and Formwalt, L.W. (eds.) (1988) *The Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1805-1810*, Vol. 2 4-2, 1805-1810. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for The Maryland Historical Society.

Licensing

The Publishers of *British Art Studies* are committed to supporting scholarship on British art and architecture of all periods. This publication is made available free of charge at <http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk>. We ask users to identify the use of materials made available through this website and to provide an appropriate credit to the author and the publication, so that others may find and use our resources.

Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International Licence (CC BY-NC 4.0). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

The Publishers fully support the protection of intellectual property and are committed to complying with, and strictly adhering to, all applicable copyright law. In many cases, copyright or other proprietary rights may be held by individuals or entities other than, or in addition to, the Publishers. If a work or a photographic image is still protected by copyright, you must cite the relevant copyright information when using the image and comply with all other terms or restrictions that may be applicable to that material.

In some cases, exceptions to copyright that permit limited use of protected works without the permission of the copyright owner may have been applied. We are confident that we have carried out due diligence in our use of copyrighted material as required, but we apologise for any inadvertent infringement of rights.

Digital copies of resources are made accessible for research for one of the following reasons:

- they are in the public domain;
- the rights are owned by the Publishers;
- we make them accessible under an exception or limitation to UK copyright law, as outlined in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended);
- we have permission to make them accessible;
- or, there are no known restrictions on use.

If you believe that we have made a mistake and wish for your material to be removed from our site, please contact us at copyright@paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk.

Please include the following information with your request:

- Name and contact information, including email address and phone number.
- Identification of the resource for consideration of removal. Providing URLs in your communication will help us locate content quickly.
- The reason for the request.

The Publishers respond promptly, normally within 21 business days. We may remove the resource from our site while we assess the validity of the request. Upon completion of the assessment, we will take appropriate action and communicate that action to you.