

# RISD MUSEUM

**Virtual Visit:**

*Landscape (Landscape with Tree Trunks), 1828*



The image shows a grand, historic interior space, likely a museum gallery. The walls are painted a muted sage green, accented with white decorative moldings and a white wainscoting base. A large, dark-stained wooden chest of drawers with multiple drawers and ornate brass handles stands as the central piece of furniture. To its left, a framed landscape painting in a gold leaf frame hangs on the wall. In the foreground, a dark wooden chair with a high, curved back is visible. To the right, a staircase with a red carpet and a dark wood handrail leads to an upper level. A large, ornate lantern-style light fixture hangs from the ceiling, casting a warm glow. In the background, an arched doorway leads to another room, and a small table with chairs is set up. The overall atmosphere is one of classic elegance and historical significance.

# RISD MUSEUM

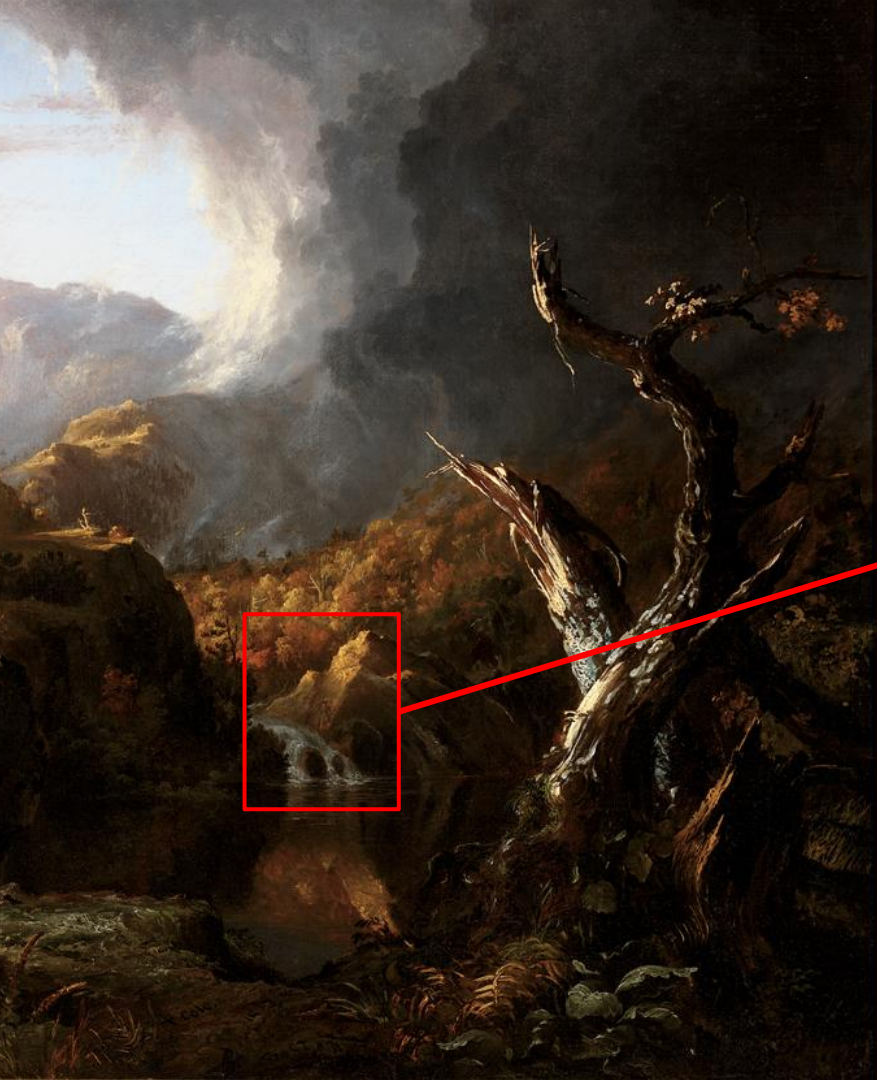
Thomas Cole  
*Landscape (Landscape with  
Tree Trunks)*, 1828  
Oil on canvas

















John William Hill  
*View on the Erie Canal,*  
1829





William James Bennett, *View of South Street, from Maiden Lane, New York City*, c. 1827





> **Write**

Do you think this painting is spreading a message of hope, a message of despair, or some of both? Use visual evidence to support your opinion.

I think this painting is spreading a message of \_\_\_\_\_  
because I see \_\_\_\_\_







English or European  
*Native American Sachem*  
ca. 1700

# Examining Native American stereotypes

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the myth of  
the vanishing Native



Alonzo Chappel, *The Landing of Roger Williams in 1636*, 1857



Something that bothers me in the painting...  
if you look at the top right corner, those four  
warriors blend right into the smoke.

For me, that represents the erasure of us—  
that at some point we're going to just become  
part of the sky and no longer exist.

— Lorén Spears



## > Write

How could Thomas Cole's painting perpetuate the myth of the vanishing Native?

Use visual evidence to support your ideas.

- One thing I see that reinforces the vanishing Native myth is...
- I think that because...



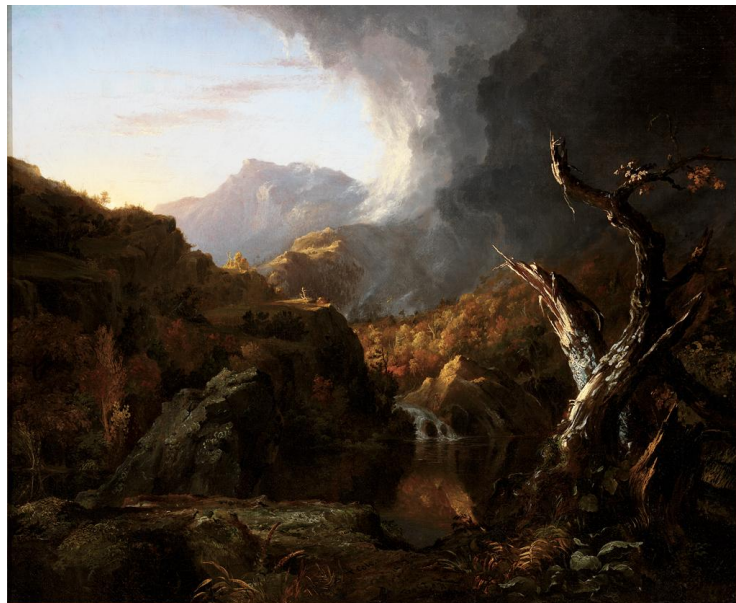


## > Create a museum label

Look at the painting and your written responses to create a new museum label.

Your label should be one paragraph (about 80–100 words) that includes:

- A simple visual description of the artwork (what?)
- Facts about the context in which it was made (where? when? who?)
- Ideas that Thomas Cole may have been exploring (why?)



For label examples, browse  
[risdmuseum.org/collection](https://www.risdmuseum.org/collection)

## > Research and reflect

Find 2 examples of creative work by Native American artists in different media. One place to start is by searching “Native” on [risdmuseum.org/collection](https://www.risdmuseum.org/collection).

Taking inspiration from one of the creative works, write a short paragraph about what the work reveals about its maker’s context, relationship to nature, or sense of self.



Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Native North American  
*Glengarry cap*  
1800s



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Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, *Sticky Mouth*, 1997

## We would love to hear from you!

Your teacher or you can share your work with us at [teachers@risd.edu](mailto:teachers@risd.edu).

## Tag us in your art & design-inspired projects with:

#RISDMuseum #museumfromhome #TeachingwithArt

**More activities + resources on [risdmuseum.org](https://risdmuseum.org)**  
including this lesson on Thomas Cole's *Landscape*  
(*Landscape with Tree Trunks*)

—Teaching Notes: [Imagining the Americas](#), page 11





## Credits

Installation view of Pendleton House galleries at the RISD Museum, 2019.

Thomas Cole, *Landscape (Landscape with Tree Trunks)*, 1828. Walter H. Kimball Fund

John William Hill, *View on the Erie Canal*, 1829. The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, The New York Public Library.

William James Bennett, *View of South Street, from Maiden Lane, New York City*, c. 1827. The Edward W. C. Arnold Collection of New York Prints, Maps, and Pictures, Bequest of Edward W. C. Arnold, 1954. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

English or European, *Native American Sachem*, ca. 1700. Gift of Mr. Robert Winthrop

Alonzo Chappel, *The Landing of Roger Williams in 1636*, 1857. Museum Works of Art Fund

Haudenosaunee (Iroquois); Native North American, *Glengarry cap*, 1800s. Gift of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, *Sticky Mouth*, 1997. Mary B. Jackson Fund.