



The Civil War and American Art (Metropolitan Museum, New York: Exhibition Catalogues)

By Eleanor Jones Harvey

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The Civil War redefined America and forever changed American art. Its grim reality, captured through the new medium of photography, was laid bare. American artists could not approach the conflict with the conventions of European history painting, which glamorized the hero on the battlefield. Instead, many artists found ways to weave the war into works of art that considered the human narrative—the daily experiences of soldiers, slaves, and families left behind. Artists and writers wrestled with the ambiguity and anxiety of the Civil War and used landscape imagery to give voice to their misgivings as well as their hopes for themselves and the nation.

This important book looks at the range of artwork created before, during, and following the war, in the years between 1852 and 1877. Author Eleanor Jones Harvey surveys paintings made by some of America's finest artists, including Frederic Church, Sanford Gifford, Winslow Homer, and Eastman Johnson, and photographs taken by George Barnard, Alexander Gardner, and Timothy H. O'Sullivan.

Harvey examines American landscape and genre painting and the new medium of photography to understand both how artists made sense of the war and how they portrayed what was a deeply painful, complex period in American history. Enriched by firsthand accounts of the war by soldiers, former slaves, abolitionists, and statesmen, Harvey's research demonstrates how these artists used painting and photography to reshape American culture. Alongside the artworks, period voices (notably those of Emily Dickinson, Mark Twain, and Walt Whitman) amplify the anxiety and dilemmas of wartime America.

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Editorial Review

Review

“*The Civil War and American Art* is a scholarly and a narrative achievement both harrowing and sublime. Eleanor Jones Harvey has written a keenly critical and often lyrical assessment of the war she calls all but “unpaintable.” In genre painting that captured universal meanings out of local episodes in the ugly ironies of war, and especially in the new moods, metaphors, and forms that landscape painters drew from the war, Harvey demonstrates a profound, seismic influence of history on art. But she also brilliantly demonstrates that artists, even the photographers, could not so much re-make the actual history of our Armageddon as they could represent what we might indirectly see or learn from such a withering and mythic experience as modern war.”--David W. Blight, Yale University, author of *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*

(David W. Blight 2012-11-19)

“Eleanor Jones Harvey’s *The Civil War and American Art* is the rare book that connects the dots between art and history so well that the reader assumes that the subject is well-worn. It is not. The book...deserves to win awards in two disciplines: Art history and American history....”—Tyler Green, *Modern Art Notes*

(Tyler Green *Modern Art Notes*)

“A great art history tour and coffee-table topper.”—*Garden & Gun*

(*Garden & Gun*)

“Provocative and insightful.”—Stephen May, *Antiques and the Arts Weekly*

(Stephen May *Antiques and the Arts Weekly*)

"The latest from Harvey. . . provides a nuanced, sensitive, and deeply informed accounting of a major period in the history of American art. . . . The comprehensive study manages to remain engaging across its redolent academic and historical interests, creating a sincere excitement appropriate to Harvey's always insightful and vital reckoning with America's scarred past.”—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

(*Publishers Weekly*)

Winner in the Photography/Art category at the 2013 Great Southeast Book Festival.

(Great Southeast Festival *JM Northern Media LLC* 2013-03-13)

"*The Civil War and American Art* is a glorious companion piece to a moving, beautifully curated, perspective-altering show. . . . Harvey’s book is perfect for lovers of American art and history.”

—*PopMatters*

(*PopMatters*)

“Harvey skillfully integrates literature and journalism into a thoughtful and rich narrative of this pivotal period. An important cohesive assessment for scholars that is also broadly accessible and well-illustrated...”—*Library Journal*, starred review

(*Library Journal*)

“a beautiful companion volume...”—*The Nation*
(*The Nation*)

“Harvey’s catalogue text stands as a monumental, often thrilling feat of detailed scholarship”—Peter Schjeldahl, *The New Yorker*
(Peter Schjeldahl *The New Yorker*)

“One of the great publishing triumphs of the Civil War Sesquicentennial.”—*North Carolina Historical Review*
(*North Carolina Historical Review*)

Selected as a *Choice* Outstanding Academic Title for 2013 in the Art & Architecture Category.
(Outstanding Academic Title *Choice* 2014-01-21)

From the Author

“In landscape paintings during the Civil War years, the skies and geography told a version of the story, bringing together literary metaphor and visual imagery to create a war-inflected layer of meaning. When we consider the literature, speeches, sermons, and letters that invoked stormy weather, volcanic eruptions, and celestial portents to understand the war and all its profound consequences, that imagery gains depth and the paintings’ meaning becomes clearer. Landscape painting thus became the emotional barometer of the mood of the nation.”—Eleanor Harvey

About the Author

Eleanor Jones Harvey is senior curator at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Her books include *The Voyage of the Icebergs: Frederic Church's Arctic Masterpiece* (Yale) and *The Painted Sketch: American Impressions from Nature, 1830–1880*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jason Carr:

Book is definitely written, printed, or outlined for everything. You can learn everything you want by a e-book. Book has a different type. To be sure that book is important matter to bring us around the world. Close to that you can your reading proficiency was fluently. A reserve *The Civil War and American Art* (Metropolitan Museum, New York: Exhibition Catalogues) will make you to become smarter. You can feel far more confidence if you can know about every little thing. But some of you think that open or reading the book make you bored. It isn't make you fun. Why they might be thought like that? Have you seeking best book or ideal book with you?

Dave Edwards:

This book untitled *The Civil War and American Art* (Metropolitan Museum, New York: Exhibition Catalogues) to be one of several books this best seller in this year, honestly, that is because when you read this reserve you can get a lot of benefit into it. You will easily to buy this kind of book in the book retailer or you can order it via online. The publisher with this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more easily to

read this book, as you can read this book in your Smartphone. So there is no reason for your requirements to past this e-book from your list.

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The Civil War and American Art (Metropolitan Museum, New York: Exhibition Catalogues) can be one of your nice books that are good idea. We all recommend that straight away because this guide has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort to put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing The Civil War and American Art (Metropolitan Museum, New York: Exhibition Catalogues) yet doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest along with based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can drawn you into completely new stage of crucial contemplating.

Roberta Lawrence:

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