



American Picturesque

John Joseph Conron

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American picturesque, as defined by John Conron, is America's first aesthetic, one that permeated all aspects of American culture in the nineteenth century. Twenty years in the making, this book presents the picturesque aesthetic as the common thread holding together American literature, art, and landscape architecture. Focusing on the peak years of the aesthetic, 1830 - 1880, Conron describes how the picturesque transformed not only American perception but also American space. American Picturesque demonstrates the sweeping breadth of the concept and the specific aesthetic of the picturesque in many aspects of nineteenth-century American culture. Conron traces the picturesque through landscape, topographical, and genre painting; rural cottages and villas in styles ranging from Gothic and Italian Revival to Queen Anne; a landscape garden (Montgomery Place); a rural cemetery (Mount Auburn); a suburb (Llewellyn Park); Central Park and urban architecture; and prose narratives by James Fenimore Cooper, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Wilson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and others. Ultimately, Conron ably defines the multifaceted structure of the picturesque and establishes its influence on nineteenth-century writers and artists in various media. He also shows how the picturesque aesthetic influenced people from all walks of life in the way they perceived a painting, a woodland scene, a public park, a house, or even one another. This book will appeal to anyone interested in nineteenth-century American art, literature, or culture in general.

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