



Fig. 15-1. A momentary burst of white ground fog lifted by a wind gust under a layer of altostratus Cheyenne, WY 22 Dec 2018.. Jan Curtis.



Fig. 15-2. Cirrocumulus and Cirrus on opposite sides of a cloud band over Boynton Beach FL 08 Jan 2010. SDG.



Fig. 15-3. Altocumulus lenticularis and Cirrocumulus, with Earth's shadow, Belt of Venus and Anticrepuscular ray, Cheyenne, WY 29 Nov 2021. Jan Curtis.

Wonders of the Atmosphere

Chapter 15: Diverse and Artistic Skies

Started 04 Jul 2025

15.1 Matching Painted and Photographed Skies



Fig. 15-4. Cumulus and altocumulus over Boynton Beach, 1330 EST 26 Dec 2011. SDG.

Until now we have almost exclusively chosen photographs of skies occupied by only a single cloud genus or optical phenomenon. The sky knows no such limitation. It often houses several cloud genera and on occasion, more than one optical phenomenon at the same time, as in Fig. 15-1, Fig. 15-2, and Fig. 15-3.

Here, we also include painted skies. Long before the camera was invented artists provided the only visual records of the sky, painting skies of great beauty with fidelity and insight. This section and the next contain a few highlights of sky paintings treated at length in *The Soul of All Scenery: A History of the Sky in Art*.



Fig. 15-5. Claude Monet. *The Basin at Argenteuil*. 1872. Musée d'Orsay.

Every sky photographer's dream is to capture the perfect rainbow, aurora, tornado. (Since there is no such thing as perfection the search remains lifelong.) Stan's dream includes capturing skies or finding sky photos that match the skies of great paintings.

One of the times Stan struck paydirt was at Boynton Beach, FL at 1330 EST on 26 Dec 2011. A few cumulus mediocris had sprung up within the previous half hour and reached a layer of altocumulus at the base of a capping inversion (Fig. 15-4). It was a pretty sky, though not extraordinary by any standard, except that both the form

and lighting of the clouds matched those in Claude Monet's painting, *The Basin at Argenteuil* (Fig. 15-5), which contains similar cumulus mediocris below a sheet of altocumulus at top left.

The Basin at Argenteuil was designed as a topographical painting, with its view facing ENE along the Seine River. The trees on the left cast long shadows toward the right, showing the Sun was not high in the sky and near due west (to the left and behind the artist). This set the time and day near 4:30 PM around the summer solstice. In the photograph of Fig. 15-4 the view faces due east and the Sun is in the WSW (to the right and behind the viewer.)

The lighting of the clouds in the *Basin* also matches that of the photo and of nature in general. The sunlit sides of the optically thick cumulus clouds are brighter than the altocumulus, which is illuminated by transmitted light. The shaded bases of the optically thick cumulus are the darkest. Thin sheets of altocumulus can be blinding bright when seen near the Sun, but tend to be much less bright more than 90° from the Sun, as in the painting and the photo.

The close match of both cloud forms and lighting between painting and photo strongly suggests that Monet created his painting not only as a document of a specific place and time, but also of the very sky he saw that afternoon in 1872.

It is not always possible to tell if the sky in a painting, even a topographic work, is a studio production or was drawn from direct observation. For example, after seeing cumulus a few times, it can be painted convincingly with endless variations without ever looking at another cumulus. But there are some phenomena so specific, such as a rainbow, or so distinct and unusual, such as an arcus cloud beneath a thunderstorm, that the artist must have seen and remembered it. Of course, artists often make astute observations and then manipulate scenes according to their wishes.

One example may be Frederic Church's *Rainy Season in the Tropics* (Fig. 15-6), Church was one of the great sky painters. He considered himself the painter that Alexander von Humboldt had always wanted

to document his findings during his world travels for his multivolume *Kosmos*. Church's intent was to capture in realistic detail the varied aspects of nature. As a result, his repertoire included a number of cloud forms, atmospheric optical phenomena, and even the aurora, all done with an incisive eye for 'truth'.

That makes *Rainy Season in the Tropics* something of a mystery. A double rainbow arches over the scene. The colors are in the proper order for both bows and the primary is brighter than the secondary. The sky is brightest inside the primary and darkest in Alexander's dark band. Bright and dark spots on the primary bow are accompanied by segments of anticrepuscular rays that cross the bow at right angles. Recognizing and depicting all those subtle details accurately is the mark of a great observer and artist.

The mystery is why Church made the spacing between the bows exactly half what it should be. This was no accident. In a study for the work, Church gave the two bows the proper spacing. One likely solution to this mystery was suggested by George Siscoe. He pointed out that George Inness, praised by art critics for his fidelity to nature was a known practical joker, and deliberately reversed the color sequence of the primary bow and the order of sky brightness making Alexander's dark band a bright band and the sky darkest inside the primary bow in *A Passing Shower* (1860). We'll never know for sure, but perhaps Church, who also celebrated for the fidelity to nature in his paintings (Mark Twain was one of his admirers) and also known as a practical joker, used Inness's joke as a model for his closely spaced bows in *Rainy Season*.

Jean-François Millet didn't joke about the meteorology of *The Coming Storm* (Fig. 15-7), which he certainly based on a direct observation, such as the close match with Fig. 15-8. An arcus cloud with a turbulent leading edge is plowing its way across the field. Rain fall streaks under and inside the arcus are tilted outward by the downburst's outflow. The sky is darkest under the arcus and much lighter where the rain is falling. The arcus is only a last-minute warning. It was led by the thunderstorm's overhanging anvil, with clear or at least brighter skies in the distant horizon.



Fig. 15-6. Frederic Church. *Rainy Season in the Tropics*. 1866. Fine Arts Museums San Francisco. Was the close spacing of the bows a deliberate joke?



Fig. 15-7. Jean-François Millet. *The Coming Storm*. 1868. MFA Boston.

The one meteorological difference between drawing and photo is the drawing's much richer earth tone color. That too may be real, given that the darker ground of the drawing suggests the source of the illumination is more distant and hence scattering would have reduced the blue tones. Touches that Millet may or may not have observed at the time include the farmer freeing his stupid, domesticated cattle from the plow and struggling to move the stubborn animals out of harms way while the wild birds at top right need no encouragement to flee the coming storm.

15.2 A Capsule Survey of Artistic Skies

The paintings shown above are just three of many that portray the sky in a convincing manner, often with a documentary quality that served when there were no photographs, and can be matched to



Fig. 15-8. Arc cloud with outflowing rain fall streaks under a severe thunderstorm east of Keyes, OK 31 May 2007. ©Jimmy Deguara.

photographs. They are a testament to the fact that many of the great artists, many of whom were also scientists and engineers of their time, were astute observers of all aspects of nature, who devoted attention, care, and knowledge to the sky. These artists instinctively recognized John Ruskin's directive to paint from nature because,

There is more beauty about [cloud] forms than can be arrived at by any random felicity of invention, however brilliant.
Modern Painters, Vol. 3, Ch. 2.

As a result, in many cases their painted skies are inspired by

1. Specific skies or weather events.
2. The climate that enveloped them.
3. The character of the times.

For example, *The Basin at Argenteuil* is one of the many placid Impressionist scenes painted directly from Nature that also reflects the climate of France, with summer skies frequented by cumulus, and

winter skies by nimbostratus. Impressionist paintings also quietly advertise late 19th century triumphs of science and technology. Few violent storms disrupted their paintings, And who would think from the glistening water in *The Basin* that the Seine at Argenteuil was choked by endless effluent flowing out of the sewers of Paris.

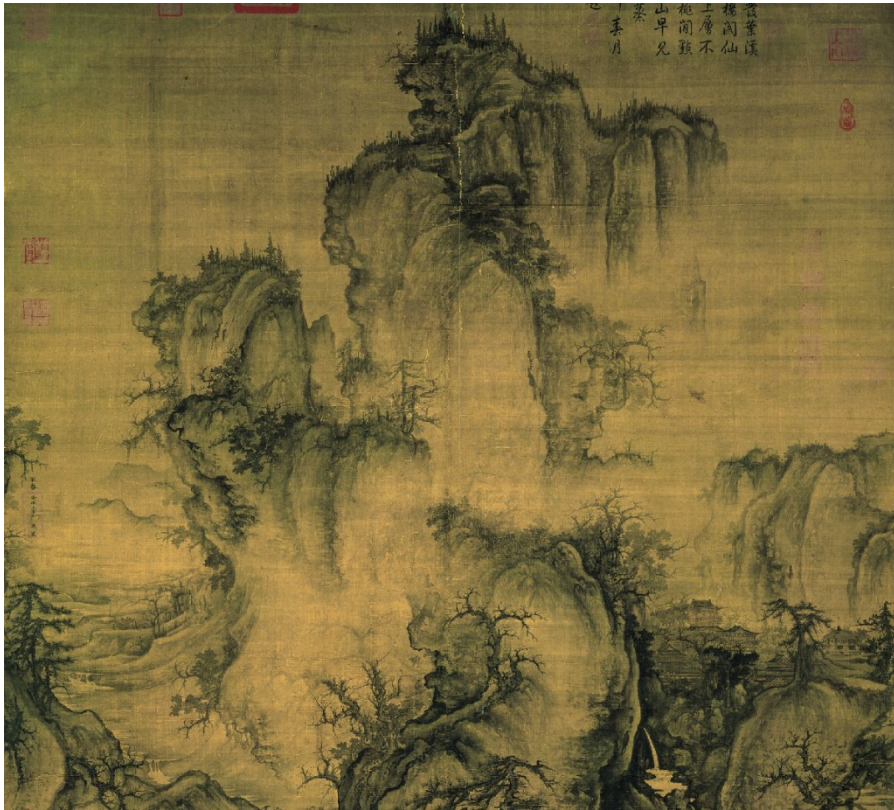


Fig. 15-9. Guo Xi. *Early Spring*. 1072.

We start our brief survey of sky paintings about 1000 years ago, when Chinese landscape painters began their enduring love affair with a meteorological setting exemplified by Guo Xi's *Early Spring* (Fig. 15-9). Precipitous pinnacles topped by trees emerge from fog-filled valleys into an empty sky. A narrow ribbon waterfall is almost always included in the foreground while progressively obscured peaks recede into the distance. The setting, in defiance of or relief

from an already densely populated China, is remote with a few almost inconspicuous villas and travellers.



Fig. 15-10. Zhangjiajie National Park @ Sunrise in the fog, 19 Oct 2017. ©Albert Wirtz.

Inspiration for these works comes from precipitous karst limestone peaks in several regions of China, for example in the Zhangjiajie National Park (Fig. 15-10), and from China's climate, where valley fog is common on clear mornings, especially in Autumn.

In 1819, some 750 years after *Early Spring*, a similar setting inspired Caspar David Friedrich to paint *Wanderer Above the Sea of Mist* (Fig. 15-11). The solitary figure stands atop a peak overlooking the tree-topped pinnacles of the Bastei in the Elbe Sandstone Mountains, which emerge from the fog that fills the Elbe River valley. The viewer faces SE to the Zierkelstein, a sandstone butte, and the triangular Kipphorn, both of which are rendered less distinct by mist.

Though the *Wanderer* closely resembles the Chinese paintings, there are two meteorological differences. While the Chinese painted fog is

amorphous, Friedrich's fog is shredded at top by the wind. And while the Chinese fog painters left the sky vacant, Friedrich filled the sky of the *Wanderer* with altocumulus castellatus in the foreground and altocumulus stratiformis toward the horizon, though the cloud cover often acts like a blanket that reduces the cooling of the ground and reduces the chance of nocturnal ground and valley fog.



Fig. 15-11. Caspar David Friedrich. *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, 1818. Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

Friedrich used a new source of information and inspiration for his clouds. He completed the *Wanderer* in 1819, six years after Thomas Forster's *Researches About Atmospheric Phenomena* broadcast to the world Luke Howard's 'discovery' that clouds have distinct, identifiable forms. Friedrich, as well as John Constable and J. M. W. Turner in England were leaders of the early 19th century Romantic sky painters who benefitted from and were inspired by that new knowledge.



Fig. 15-12. J. M. W. Turner *Entrance of the Meuse*, 1819. Tate Britain.

Turner had been painting landscapes and seascapes with dramatic skies including rainbows for at least 20 years before he learned of Luke Howard's work. The *Entrance of the Meuse* (1819) (Fig. 15-12) reveals familiarity with Howard's classification scheme because it is the first of his shipwreck paintings to include a sheet of cellular altocumulus, and one of very few Turner paintings with almost textbook cloud forms.

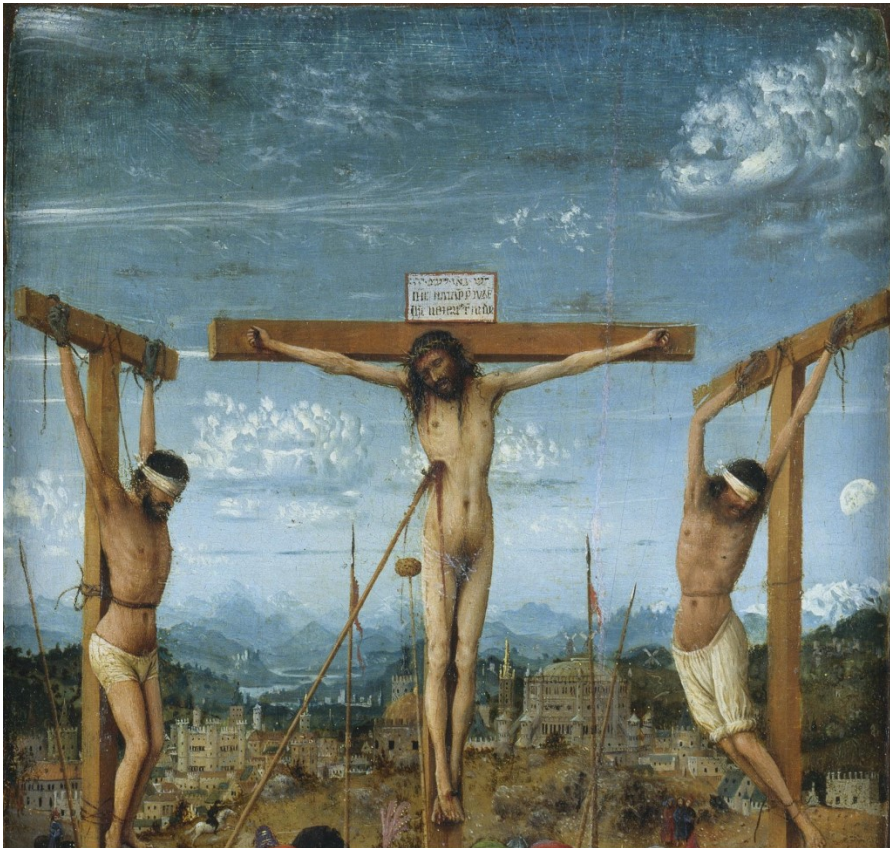


Fig. 15-13. Jan van Eyck. *The Crucifixion*. ca 1435. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Luke Howard's classification and naming of clouds certainly gave sky painters a boost, but artists had for centuries been painting the various cloud forms. *The Crucifixion* of Jan van Eyck (Fig. 15-13) painted around 1435 at the dawn of the Renaissance, is a remarkable meteorological document. In all the history of painting it is the closest to a cloud atlas, with almost textbook examples of four of the cloud genera, cumulus mediocris, cirrus fibratus, altocumulus lenticularis, and cirrocumulus lacunosus, 370 years before Luke Howard and Lamarck. The painting also contains an evolving weather situation based on both the meteorological and biblical setting.

The *Crucifixion* shows the moment a Roman soldier lanced Christ's side. This sets the date within month after the vernal equinox, at 3:00 PM on Good Friday, when Christ expired after three hours of darkness. The mid afternoon spring Sun is located in the WSW, behind and to the left of the viewer. Even though (as David Lynch pointed out) the Moon should already have set in the southwestern sky, it has been resurrected as a symbolic compass to point to the Sun and establish that the scene faces north. That suggests an Italian setting just south of the Alps, though it has never been identified.

The rendition of aerial perspective is flawless. No vegetation covers the brown foreground, for it is a place of death. Beyond the city, green forest grades to blue and ultimately to almost white in the furthest distance, even where the mountains are not covered by snow. The sky grades from deep blue above to white near the horizon.

The clouds have textbook form. The boxlike cumulus have flat bases and corrugated sides and tops. They are still growing, but are not large or threatening. The cirrus fibratus in the *Crucifixion* is the paradigm of painted cirrus. It consists of distinct streamers that converge and slope down toward the left at a gentle, 2.5° angle. This indicates the wind aloft is from the left, or west, the jet stream's prevailing direction over the Low Countries in spring. A small patch of cirrocumulus lacunosus appears just above the cirrus at top center. The miniature cloud group at extreme upper left consists of a stack of about 7 smooth veneers that arch upward in the center like eyebrows. This is a pile of plates altocumulus lenticularis produced by the west wind crossing over the mountains.

The Crucifixion was meticulously designed to tell a meteorological tale consistent with the mandated guidelines of Scripture and the observed behavior of north Europe's weather. Though there are no dark or stormy clouds there is compelling evidence it had been dark and stormy a short time before and that a slowly moving cold front had just passed through.

Slowly moving cold fronts are often associated with unbroken cloud shields that last for several hours around frontal passage and then clear abruptly. The high visibility and deep blue sky of *The Crucifixion* are associated with a cold, dry air mass that follows a cold front. The arrested vertical development of the cumulus shows that the cold air mass is shallow and implies that the front is not far and has passed quite recently. Cirrus and mountain wave clouds in crystalline skies indicate thin humid layers aloft in an otherwise dry atmosphere, typical of skies in the hours following the passage of slowly moving cold fronts. The NE surface wind direction, determined from the three windmills just beyond the Temple of Jerusalem, is also consistent with dramatic clearing following the passage of a slowly moving cold front.

Van Eyck's imposed sense of meteorological order, focus on perfectly formed individual specimens of all of God's creations, skies of high visibility, and serene weather were dominant characteristics of the early Renaissance simplistic, optimistic, and pious outlook.

All that began to change shortly after 1500. Complexity replaced simplicity in art. Painted forests replaced stands of individual trees and cloud fields were added to individual clouds. Hazy or smoky skies and stormy weather, sometimes with optical phenomena, increasingly replaced skies with infinite visibility and placid weather.

Leonardo da Vinci was among the leaders. He added haze (*sfumato*) to give a sense of grandeur, as in the *Mona Lisa*, and cataclysmic storms, as in his *Deluge* drawings. Done in the last decade of his life, the *Deluge* drawings have been interpreted as the pessimistic views of an aging man obsessed with death and destruction. But they are masterpieces of fluid dynamics, showing double vortex downbursts descending from storm clouds and vortex outflow of flood water along the ground (Fig. 15-14), which is identical to the outflow vortex of thunderstorm downbursts. That flow was rediscovered in two steps over 450 years later, first by meteorologists Tetsuro Fujita and then by Fernando Caracena in 1982. A compelling case of the downburst and its outflow vortex was captured in the video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_G2KRzha7o



Fig. 15-14. Leonardo da Vinci. *Deluge*. ca 1517. Royal Collection Trust.

Albrecht Altdorfer, another artist/engineer, was one of the leaders in painting forests and complex skies of cloud fields. Altdorfer gave the *Battle of Issus* (Fig. 15-15) such an elevated viewpoint that you can see the Earth's curvature. The work was painted in 1529, seven years after the remnants of Magellan's fleet completed the first (known) circumnavigation of the globe on 06 Sep 1522. It purports to show the entire eastern Mediterranean basin and a meandering Nile River that opens into a delta, accompanied by fanciful mountains. The sky is shown just before sunset, near the end of the battle. At right, just above the western horizon, crepuscular rays penetrate a gap in a towering cumulus whose top appears to spread out into a truncated anvil. A field of small, bright cloud cells appears under and to the left of the anvil. It is uncertain if the cells are mamma on the anvil's underside or if they are cirrocumulus. At upper left a ringed corona around the waxing crescent moon (that should be turned almost 90° counterclockwise) illuminates an opening in a field of altocumulus.



Fig. 15-15. Albrecht Altdorfer, *Battle of Issus* 1529. Alte Pinakothek, Munich.



Fig. 15-16. El Greco. *View of Toledo*. ca 1599. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

El Greco's *View of Toledo*, (Fig. 15-16) also has a curved horizon, not to show that the Earth is a sphere but to exaggerate the city's elevation and aggrandize the stark scene. Even so, it is largely topographic. It faces north, showing the city from the south rim of the Tagus River Valley. The shadow on the Alcázar shows that it is mid morning with the Sun ESE.

In this painting, El Greco used his customary vertically stretched scale not for people but for the field of cumulus mediocris that covers



Fig. 15-17. Jacob van Ruisdael. *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Fields*. Ca 1670-75. Kunsthau Zürich.

most of the deep blue sky. Lighting contrasts of the clouds are also exaggerated to the extreme. The shaded cloud centers are almost jet black, especially just above the city, while the illuminated cloud fringes graded to blinding white. Such lighting contrasts, though not so extreme, can occur when thick cumulus form in pristine air.

The contrast between the living, light green spring ground cover and the dead gray buildings and cathedral of this capital of the Inquisition

only add to the picture's austere mood. As a final note, stick-figure people are shown fishing or sporting in the water or on the walkway leading to or from the bridge into the city, but not a living soul can be seen inside the city gates.

The expansive sky and its grand clouds became symbols of life and liberty in 17th century Dutch sky paintings. Taken together, they show almost every aspect of Holland's weather and climate, from the Little Ice Age's joyous ice skating scenes to its brutal storms and relentless cold of winter, to thundery or even placid, warm summer days. Faithful to nature, soft-edged stratiform clouds dominated the winter scenes while burgeoning convective clouds dominated summer scenes, as with the Impressionists in nearby France.

Jacob van Ruisdael's *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Fields* (Fig. 15-17) was one of hundreds of thousands of convincing sky paintings that adorned Dutch homes. The city with the great Church of St. Bavo is seen from the NW. The right face of the Church is sunlit but the north face is shaded, making it early or mid afternoon. All the windmills face the SE (Fig. 15-18 left), indicating a SE wind.



Fig. 15-18. (Left) Detail of Fig. 15-16 with windmills facing SE wind. (Right) Explosive turret of towering cumulus over Jacob Lake, AZ. SDG.

Although the *View of Haarlem* appears photographic two aspects of the meteorology are problematic. First, the sky is filled with three parallel cumulus cloud streets that stretch from SW to NE. Cloud streets are seen often over Haarlem especially when a westerly wind

blows inland from the North Sea. coast. But the cloud streets in the *View of Haarlem* cross the SE wind at almost 90° instead of lining up parallel to it. Second, the cumulus turret at the center diverges explosively upward from a focal point. This certainly is possible (Fig. 15-18 right) because of the mushroom shape of thermals (recall §6.4), but most cumulus rise from a flat base, which the 17th century Dutch sky painters either denied or disguised at all costs.



Fig. 15-19. Peter Paul Rubens. *Landscape with Bird Catcher*. Ca 1635-1640. Louvre.

Just south in Belgium, Peter Paul Rubens tended to be more accurate in the meteorology of his landscape paintings. One outstanding but lesser known work is his *Landscape with Bird Catcher* (Fig. 15-19). It is just after dawn around mid-October, based on the foliage, so it faces ESE. The sails of the windmill face north to greet the brisk north wind following a cold front passage some hours before. The north wind sweeps the frigid post-dawn polar air across the warm waters of the stream, lifting shreds of steam fog that tilt up to the south before evaporating (recall Fig. 4-32). Any scene with such detailed and accurate meteorology could not possibly be an a priori



Fig. 15-20. Frederic Church. *Twilight in the Wilderness*. 1860. Cleveland Museum of Art.

creation of the mind; it had to be drawn from direct observation of a specific event. This was a painting not made for sale, but for Ruben's love of Nature during his well-deserved retirement.

Love of Nature and its spacious skies was a propelling motive for the Romantic painters of the early 19th century and even more so for the American painters of the Hudson River School. The American

painters had a mission to save the vanishing sublime wilderness. Jasper Cropsey couldn't have said it better.

The axe of our civilization is busy with our old forests....Yankee enterprise has little sympathy with the picturesque, and it behooves our artists to rescue from its grasp the little that is left ere it is too late.

Frederic Church, a disciple of Thomas Cole, was an exemplar of that attitude. His *Twilight in the Wilderness* (Fig. 15-20) is an imaginative composite of topographic scenes around Mount Desert Island and Mount Katahdin, ME. It was a studio work but based on intimate knowledge of the sky and a photographic memory. The setting is just after sunset and the air is pristine. At this time, the sky is orange up to an elevation angle of 1.5° , which the mountains in the background block, leaving only a blazing yellow strip of sky up to the far edge of the altocumulus cloud deck. The underlit cloud bands blaze orange near the horizon and deep red above. The reflected light from the cloud base tints the lake red. Higher up, clear openings in the cloud deck show dark blue sky

One year later, in 1861 as the Civil War began, Church painted a modification of *Twilight in the Wilderness* that he named *Our Banner in the Sky*. It added stars in the clearings and transformed the altocumulus bands to stripes to mimic the flag, while a bare, tilted tree trunk stood as the flag pole.

By about 1880 fickle fashion and arthritis turned the public from the once renowned Frederic Church and his detailed realism to new styles of painting. About that time the arts began to undergo an unprecedented sea change. Nature still served as a model for artists but now to express their often troubled and tortured emotions.

Vincent van Gogh could not paint his landscapes without a view of nature and the sky before him but his renditions became increasingly tortuous, as in *Cypresses* (Fig. 15-21). It was a time of the fierce northerly wind called the Mistral when the trees and the clouds were set in motion. To the left of waving cypresses are wavy, possibly

lenticular clouds crossing the Alpilles. On the right below a crescent Moon, a mushroom-capped thermal bulges with protuberances. Most European and American painters attempted to capture solid cloud form; Van Gogh and da Vinci followed in the tradition of Chinese painters by rendering clouds as living, vibrant, fluid entities.

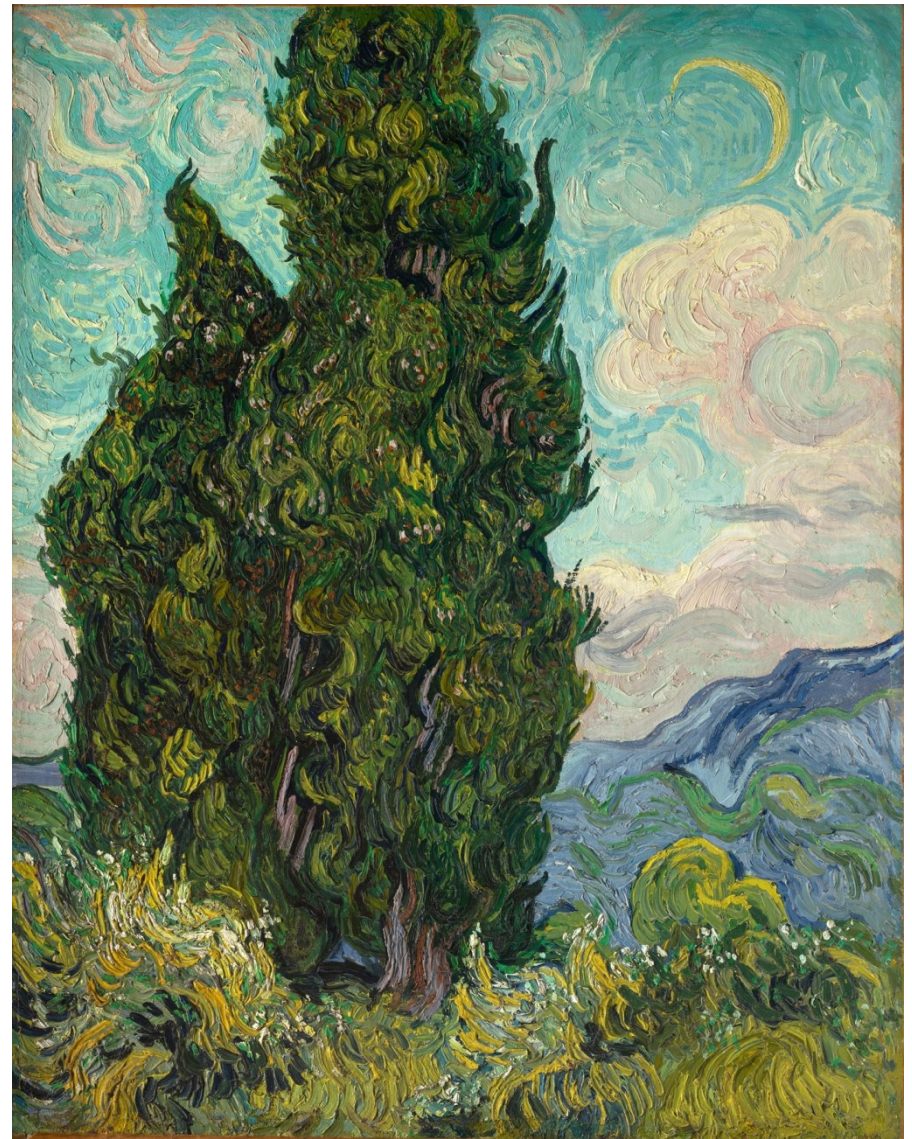


Fig. 15-21. Vincent van Gogh. *Cypresses*. 1888. Metropolitan Museum of Art

Edvard Munch portrayed a wavering world in his iconic masterpiece, *The Scream* (Fig. 15-22). Despite the distortions, the scene is identifiable and based on a singular meteorological observation that Munch wrote about unfortunately without dating it. It is a view of Oslo (then Christiania) facing west to its church and port and the hills beyond, set just after sunset. In Munch's oft quoted words,

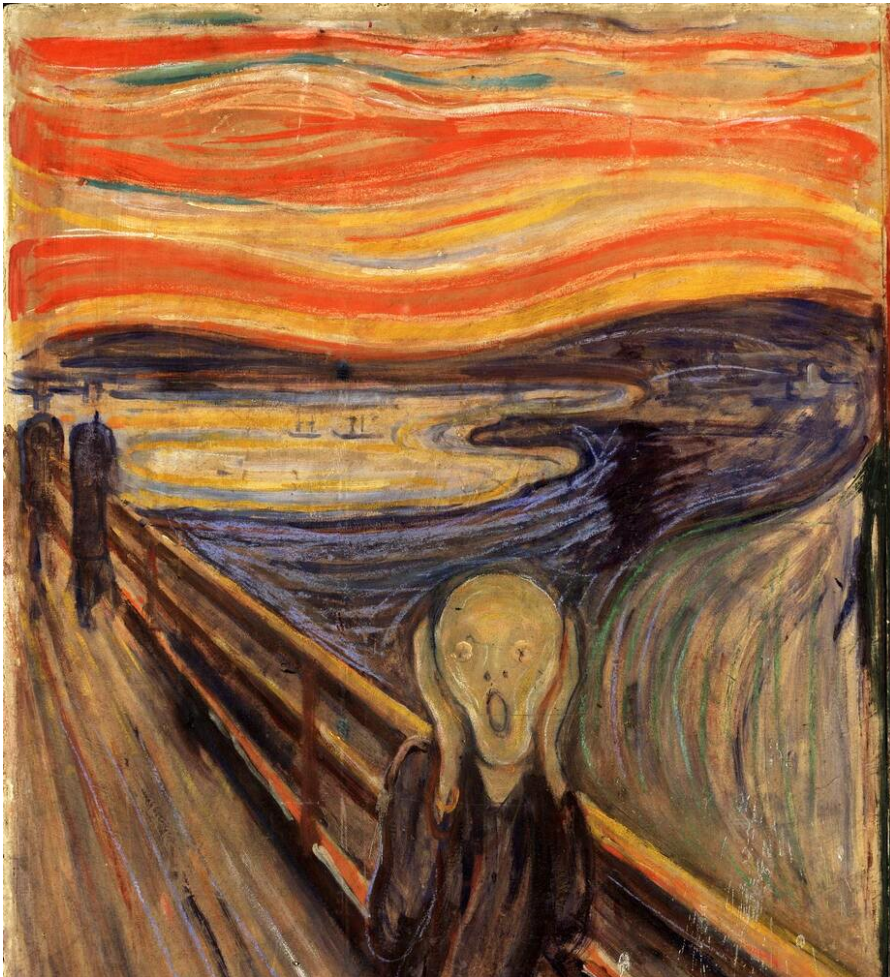


Fig. 15-22. Edvard Munch *The Scream* 1893 National Museum Oslo

I was walking along the road with two friends – the Sun was setting – I felt a wave of sadness – the Sky suddenly turned

blood-red. I stopped, leaned against the fence tired to death – looked out over the flaming clouds like blood and swords – The blue-black fjord and city – My friends walked on – I stood there quaking with angst– and I felt as though a vast, endless scream passed through nature. [Added later] It seemed to me that I could hear the scream. I painted this picture, painted the clouds as real blood. Diary entry 22 Jan 1892, weeks after the event.

Taking out the emotions, the description matches that of lenticular wave clouds. There are two possibilities. One is iridescent polar stratospheric, mother of pearl clouds. This is problematic because Munch left Oslo before any of the recorded cases in late 1891. The other is underlit tropospheric wave clouds, somewhat like Church's *Twilight in the Wilderness*.

European artists went on to further abstractions, either relegating nature to a subservient role or ignoring it completely as they descended into the night of senseless and horrific World Wars.

Artists of America's Heartland had no time or tolerance for terrors of the psyche and self-destructive acts. Celebration of America's spacious skies and survival in the face of raw nature were their themes. A group of Midwestern artists known as the Regionalists documented life out on the Great Plains in a time of tornadoes and the Dust Bowl. John Steuart Curry was perhaps foremost among these meteorological artists. In *The Line Storm* (1934), Curry created the first known painting of a green thunderstorm with lightning bolts behind an advancing arcus.

Five years earlier, just before the Depression and the Dust Bowl, and a decade before *The Wizard of Oz*, Curry painted *Tornado over Kansas* (Fig. 15-23) depicting a family retreating to their storm cellar as a tornado that stirred up a dust ring threatened. Curry also painted the once controversial unfinished mural that now proudly graces a wall in the Kansas State Capitol, controversial because it correctly pointed out that the ravages of the Dust Bowl were enhanced by poor farming methods.



Fig. 15-23. John Steuart Curry. *Tornado over Kansas* 1929 Muskegon Art Museum.

Throughout America's history, even in the midst of the Dust Bowl, celebration of its spacious skies has been an abiding theme for artists. Certainly, there is no better place in the world for viewing the monarch of clouds, the cumulonimbus, with all its attendant features. Wilson Hurley was one of its premier apostles. Sensitive to color and nature from infancy, he dreamed of painting the beautiful sights of our planet from his time as a pilot during World War II. One day, after two decades of misery as a lawyer, Wilson decided to live his dream and walked out of his office into New Mexico's open skies. Largely self trained, he began painting those skies and more. His *Thunderstorm Building in the Sandias* (Fig. 15-24) is one of his renditions of the towering cumulonimbus so often seen in full profile in the Western states.

Georgia O'Keeffe also drew her inspiration directly from nature, and moved to New Mexico in good part because of its open skies. But, she used her great sensitivity to color and form in her paintings to

transform what she saw. On her first flight at age 75, she was so taken with the "Both Sides Now" view of clouds that she painted four increasingly cartoonized, yet convincing, versions of a pancake flat deck of cellular stratocumulus including the panoramic *Sky Above Clouds IV* (Fig. 15-25).



Fig. 15-24. Wilson Hurley. *Thunderstorm Building in the Sandias*. 1998. Private Collection.

Limitations imposed by space require concluding this brief section with a few mere words on the countless professional and amateur sky painters around the world, and increasingly now, by computer with fractals or Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques. Examples of the increased attention to and knowledge of the sky abound on the Web.