



Landscape of Slavery: The Plantation in American Art

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An exhibition catalog for a traveling exhibit to be debuted in January 2008, "Landscape of Slavery" marries art history with social history in an original study of plantation images from the eighteenth century through the present in an effort to unravel the realities and fictions inherent in this subject matter. Through eighty-nine color plates and six thematic essays, the collection examines depictions of plantations, plantation views, and related slave imagery in the context of the history of landscape painting in America, while addressing the impact of these images on U.S. race relations. A genre predominantly tied to the American South, the plantation view has traditionally received marginal attention in the study of American landscape art. Viewed primarily as a derivative of the early-eighteenth-century British estate view, the plantation image straddles the aesthetic boundary between topographical depiction and landscape painting. In recent years, plantation views have attracted the attention of several social historians who have identified the genre as a rich source for exploring issues of wealth, power, race, memory, nostalgia, and resentment. With each field of study operating independently, the various conclusions drawn suggest only a partial understanding of the issues that surround plantation images and related images of slavery in art. This exhibition and corresponding catalog, therefore, will provide an opportunity for a comprehensive and interdisciplinary examination of plantation imagery in the American South.

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