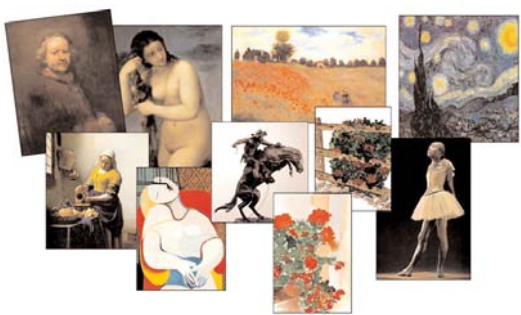


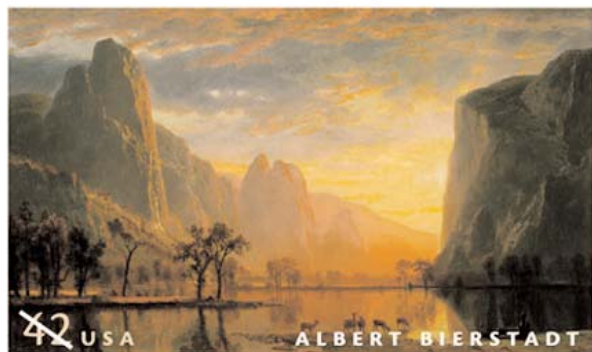
A DAY IN THE ARTS

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A Grand View: The Life and Paintings of Albert Bierstadt



Solingen, Germany, in 1830. His family immigrated to the U.S. two years later and settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where his father apparently became a barrel maker. There isn't much else known about his youth or his artistic training until 1850



Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains, California, 1868
Oil on canvas, 183 x 305 cm (72 x 120 in), National Museum of American Art, Washington

On August 14, 2008, the United States Postal Service dedicated a new commemorative stamp at the American Philatelic Stamp Show as part of its American Treasures series. The image, *Valley of the Yosemite*, was painted in 1864 by landscape artist Albert Bierstadt. While the painting is stunning, most people that I questioned could not identify the artist or even know who the artist was once they were told. Obviously, it was time to do some research on this once well-known American artist.

Bierstadt was born in



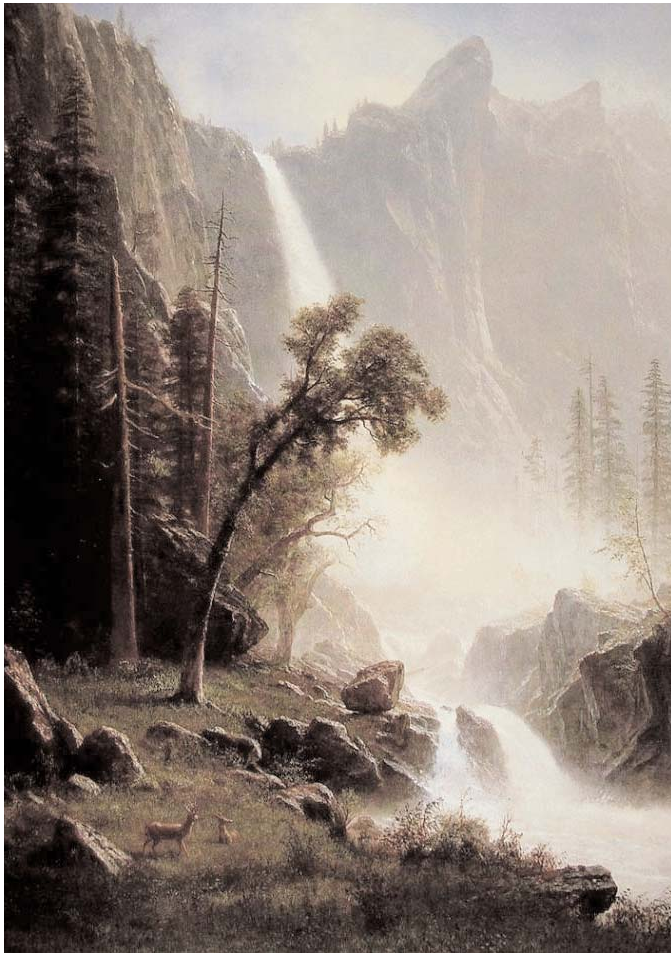
when he promoted himself as teacher of monochromatic painting. He was successful in supporting himself in this way.

Travelin' Man

When he was twenty-three, Bierstadt was able to travel to Europe to study art. His first stop was in Dusseldorf where he met many American artists, including Worthington Whittredge and Carl Wimar at the Dusseldorf Art Accademy. Some feel that it was this during this period of study that Bierstadt's

true talents began to shine through. Perhaps it was the influence of German painters Karl Friedrich Lessing and Andreas Aachenbach whose landscapes were large, highly detailed, melodramatic scenes, much like Bierstadt's work would become.

Bierstadt continued his traveling education by further travel in Europe with Whittredge and others before returning to the United States in 1857. In 1859, a whole new world opened up before him when he joined Colonel F.W. Lander on an exhibition along the Overland Trail. Bierstadt's art took on a whole new importance as he traveled through the untamed West, along magnificent mountains and thunderous waterfalls. Since much of the western U.S. hadn't yet been



Bridal Veil Falls, Yosemite, about 1871-73
Oil on canvas, 36 1/8 x 26 3/8 in. (91.7 x 67.0 cm.)
North Carolina Museum of Art



Tropical Landscape with Fishing Boats in Bay, Oil.
17 3/4 x 29 1/4 in.

popularity in the various cities they toured. According to an article in the New York Post of 1867, Bierstadt's works were shown in a spectacular fashion. "The light is most carefully excluded from that part of the room occupied by the spectators, both by day and night. The walls about the end of the room where the picture is are carefully and gracefully draped with dark stuff, which absorbs most of the light that does not fall directly upon the picture. As the painting represents a view of an extensive valley from a considerable eminence, two galleries have been constructed from which a down view can be obtained, thus heightening the illusion. In the night time this deceptive effect is stronger than can be obtained from a day view, and is not unlike that of a set in a theatre".

(Continued in next issue.)

Dusseldorf's Art Academy had become famous internationally and many students, who once would have traveled to London to study, now headed to Germany. The "**Dusseldorf style**" became well known for its "excellence in draftsmanship, its dramatic composition, and its sometimes theatrical light effects that satisfied the prevailing taste for sentimental naturalism".