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The Brooklyn Museum To Conduct Conservation of Vast Bierstadt Canvas in Public Galleries

BY JULIET HELMKE | MAY 23, 2017



"A Storm in the Rocky Mountains, Mt. Rosalie," by Albert Bierstadt. Oil on Canvas, 83 in. x 142.24 in.

What is it about being allowed backstage during a performance; stumbling across filming in progress on the street; or even witnessing how cheese, truffles, and other delicacies get made that's an almost thrilling experience—like seeing something in a state of undress? Maybe it's just that we love being made privy to what goes on behind the scenes, observing the labor involved in what's eventually presented to the public eye. On

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Monday, the Brooklyn Museum revealed that they'll be conducting the conservation of a work of art in public view, and the announcement of this unrestricted access (from June 7 to July 15) caused, for this writer anyway, probably more excitement than has ever been displayed at the news of a gentle cleaning.

“A Storm in the Rocky Mountains, Mt. Rosalie,” 1866, is a landscape in oil by the Hudson River School adherent [Albert Bierstadt](#), best known for his expansive vistas inspired by the American West. The Brooklyn Museum acquired the painting in 1976, at which point the almost 12-by-7-foot piece became a cornerstone of their American collection. Its size, however, is what has led to the maintenance of the hefty canvas being conducted *en pleine vue*. Its difficult maneuverability played a large role in the decision to locate the conservation within the galleries, as the institution's chief conservator Lisa Bruno explained in a release issued by the museum.

In the 5th Floor Rotunda gallery from the hours of 2–5 p.m., Wednesday to Sunday, viewers will be able to observe the slow and meticulous labor of removing surface dirt from the sweeping canvas's imagery. That includes a group of Native Americans on a hunting expedition, a mirror-still mountain lake, and of course the high peaks of Mt. Rosalie—so named by the artist for Rosalie Ludlow who was at the time, the wife of his travel companion, but who very soon after the painting's first public showing left her husband to become Mrs. Albert Bierstadt. The mountain, which is actually the highest summit of the Chicago Peaks in the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains, was eventually formally named Mount Evans, though it will always be Mount Rosalie to true romantics and scandal-lovers alike (especially because its later title was in honor of a pretty terrible man,

credited with inciting a horrific massacre of Native American men, women, and children).

After its conservation, the museum reports “A Storm in the Rocky Mountains, Mt. Rosalie,” will depart on a traveling exhibition that highlights the museum’s collection of American art, and finishes its run back in Brooklyn. The show is titled "American Landscape Masterpieces from the Brooklyn Museum" and includes major works by Thomas Cole, Robert S. Duncanson, Childe Hassam, Martin Johnson Heade, and George Inness. Further details on the tour and dates are yet to be released.

URL: <http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/2235043/the-brooklyn-museum-to-conduct-conservation-of-vast-bierstadt>