



HAWTHORNE
Fine Art

JOSEPH FOXCROFT COLE (1837—1892)

In the Meadow

Oil on canvas

8 x 10 inches

Signed lower right

Joseph Foxcroft Cole was born in Maine in 1837. His family resettled in Boston, Massachusetts when he was seven years old. After graduating from the city's public schools, he became an apprentice to Winslow Homer at J. Bufford's lithography shop. This experience inspired Cole to pursue his artistic training further, and he travelled to France in 1860 where he studied in the government art schools, as well as under Émile Lambinet; he remained in France until 1863. After a brief sketching trip to Italy, Cole returned to Boston and opened a studio. Cole quickly caught the attention of William Morris Hunt, an important artistic figure in New England who spearheaded the American Barbizon School. With Hunt's active support—he bought no less than four paintings from Cole—the younger artist was able to return to France to study under Charles Jacque (1813—1894) from 1865 to about 1870.

During these five years in Jacque's studio, Cole became acquainted with many of the leading Barbizon painters such as Constant Troyon (1810-1865), Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796—1875), Charles-François Daubigny (1817—1878), and Narcisse Virgilio Diaz (1807—1876); indeed, perhaps with the exception of William Morris Hunt, no other American artist was more intimate



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with the group of French landscape painters that came to be named after the small town outside of the Forest of Fontainebleau where they congregated. Of this group, it appears that Troyon was the greatest influence on Cole, for he became most praised for his depictions of cows, like the older artist.



Constant Troyon, *Cattle Drinking*, Walters Art Museum.



J. Foxcroft Cole, *New England Farm with Cattle Resting*

Cole exhibited in the 1866 and 1867 Paris Salons, as well as the 1867 International Exposition, before returning to Boston in 1870. He went back to France two years later, where he would remain for another five years. He



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exhibited in the Paris Salons in 1873-75, as well as frequently with the London Royal Academy. He also received a medal in the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. He settled permanently in Massachusetts by 1877, and was elected to the Society of American Artists in 1880. Apart from a few brief trips to California and Europe, he remained in Winchester at Mystic Lakes, until he died in 1892.

Although Cole remained true to landscape painting, his work from the last fifteen years of his life reflected the misty environments of his immediate surroundings in Winchester and nearby Provincetown; this painting of a New England field is most likely from this period. Painted with looser brushwork, this painting suggests Cole adopted the same Impressionist techniques that eclipsed his Barbizon counterparts. The top third of the canvas is dominated by a gray, swirling sky, reminiscent of the stormy weather that often characterizes the lake region. The field occupies the rest of the canvas, painted in a dark green that is tinged with brown, which suggests the end of summer or the beginning of fall. Amongst the few trees, one can make out a group of farm animals in the distance, most likely cattle, Cole's favorite animal subject.

Cole's reputation as a talented practitioner of the brief American Barbizon movement persisted after his death. He posthumously won a gold medal at the Paris Exposition in 1900. Today, his work can be found in the collections of many prominent museums across the country such as the Art Institute of Chicago, the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, the Museum of Fine Arts,



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Boston, the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Addison Gallery of American Art, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Farnsworth Art Museum, and the Walters Art Museum, among others.