

<p><b>Winslow Homer,</b> <b><i>Hudson River,</i></b> 1892, watercolour on paper, 36 x 51 cm (14 x 20")</p>	<p>initial analysis</p> <p>Homer made his first visit to the Adirondack Mountains in 1870. He made three trips in the 1870s, then again in 1889 and then annually to the North Woods Club, a five thousand acre private retreat near Minerva. In all about 20 trips staying from one week to two months. He factured more than 100 watercolours in the area, particularly between 1889 and 1895 when he factured eighty-five.</p>	<p>After the American Civil War in the late 1860s there was a surge of public interest in the vast expanse of scenic wilderness in the Adirondacks. Artists, writers, photographers, tourists and sportsmen and sportswomen flocked to the area with better roads and boarding houses opened to receive them.</p>
	<p>A foreground of rocks on the near shore of the river with vegetation.</p>	
<p>A young boy crouches behind a pile of cut trees, concealed from watching two deer interacting on the far shore beach.</p> <p>It is typical of Homer to include human and animal activity in his landscape paintings. Logging had become a serious issue in the area, sometimes jamming and diverting the Hudson. This in turn produced a serious effect on the fishing.</p>	<p>A middle ground of the river Hudson, in places made rapid by the rocks. Evident also some floating logs.</p>  <p>The foreground depicts a boy, a large pile of cut timber and a near shore of the river with rocks and vegetation.</p>	<p>The painting is constructed horizontally and could be said to be divided between the foreground river shore, a young boy and timber, a middle section of the river and a background of the far shore and woodland. These horizontal divisions are set against a visual diagonal from the boy across to where the deer are interacting. The timber also implies a diagonal from the other corner, but the main objective has been to report on the boy's activity in elation to the deer.</p>
<p>The size of the painting and the media are comparable to the <i>in situ</i> work achieved by Turner and Girtin. Like Turner, Homer travelled extensively to facture landscape paintings in the open air. Notably his sites for painting include the Adirondacks in New York State, the coast and waters of Maine, the interiors of Florida, and the beaches and bays of Bermuda and the Bahamas.</p>	<p>The work is based on a direct report of perception and could have been painted <i>in situ</i>. Homer often first draws the report in graphite and then adds watercolour. The drawing has the function of organising the spatial plane of the paper before the watercolour is applied. Watercolour can seldom be changed without an added complexity of layer and sometimes through the use of opaque watercolour or gouache and even occasionally by scraping away. More often the initial application is left intact. The effect is of immediacy and realism. This in an inheritance from the watercolour practice developed by British painters in the eighteenth century and aspects also of the developments achieved by French painters and others, in the late nineteenth century, such as his contemporary, James Abbott McNeill Whistler and subsequent artists such as John Singer Sargent.</p>	<p>The painting is part of the collection at the Museum of Fine Art, Boston.</p>