



J.M.W. Turner. *The Blue Rigi, Lake of Lucerne, Sunrise* (above), ***The Dark Rigi*** (opposite top) and ***The Red Rigi*** (opposite bottom), all watercolour on paper, 30 x 45 cm (12 x 18”), 31 x 46 cm (12 x 18”) and 31 x 46 cm (12 x 18”).

The Blue Rigi, is now in the Tate collection, London, *The Dark Rigi* is in a Private collection, *The Red Rigi* is in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

All three are redolent of direct report in front of the landscape on the edge of Lake Lucerne in 1842, probably over a brief period and from slightly different viewpoints and atmospheric conditions. Turner had previously travelled to Lucerne in 1809. 1842 was during the period of his planned summer visits to such sights with specific professional attention to facturing work for known clients. All three paintings of the Rigi in 1842 could have been done in one day, but just as easily could have taken three separate days. The different view points of the Rigi are emphasised by the different depictions of shape and conditions which vary from one to the other. The medium and scale lends itself to direct report and would have encouraged beginning and completing each painting at one sitting. The medium facilitated Turner’s capacity to catch the precise moment and energy of light and air conditions enhanced by the use of a soft brush applied in layers and quite quickly, but with interludes of drying. It would be viable to plan for this and facture many paintings at the same occasion, moving from one to another as the drying took place. The foreground, giving a sense of scale to the overall picture, has been added at a slower pace using brushes with firmer points to pick out the precious details of the bird life and human habitation. The humans and birds are in conflict as the former are in the process of shooting the latter, signified by the flue of white water rising on the left adjacent to the birds lifting away from the water into the air.

Watercolour painting is an ancient practice that was reinvigorated and developed in eighteenth century Britain by John Robert Cozens (1752-1797), Edward Dayes (1763-1804), Thomas Hearne (1744-1817), Michael Angelo Rooker (1746-1801) and Paul Sandby (1731-1809). Turner (1775-1851) with Thomas Girtin (1775-1802) were at the forefront of subsequent developments in the early process of learning the disciplines of facture with watercolour from Dr. Thomas Munro’s collection of watercolours by Cozens.

