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The painted American landscape has long been used as a backdrop to tell tales of human trials and affairs. Countless artworks depict mans' conquest and governance of wild lands, or else treat those domesticated worlds as places for our expansion and leisure.

Even when seemingly depicting the grandeur of the wilderness, as with the Hudson River School Painters, the work still reeks of supremacy – peering ravenously down from a high rock at the wild young lands. There were less obvious postures of dominance, too; the Impressionists, for example, painted charming and peaceful outdoor scenes to inspire and comfort during times of industrialization and war, in the process reaffirming the misguided idea that nature is our inexhaustible refuge.

I grew up on a farm in central Minnesota and got to participate in restoring much of the land back to native prairie. Watching it change over the years, getting richer and fuller and repeatedly hearing those words “back to native prairie” made me aware from a young age that my home did not always look this way and that my ancestors have not always been here. American landscape painting, along with American History, has for the most part ignored thousands of years of indigenous human history, acting as though this land was ours to tackle and overpower. Art history has also significantly overlooked the 200 million-some years of stories within the land itself before people ever stepped foot on the Americas. How did nature act before we were here? Will it ever look that way again?

I flip the roles in my paintings, daydreaming of a time and place outside of human hegemony. In this post-human America, the plants and landforms are characters, able to express themselves after hundreds of years of White (European) dominance. Their movements are those of freedom and festivity. Trees high-five each other knowing they are finally liberated from human devastation. Smoke floats like reaching arms across borders that no longer exist. Rain clouds release drops into a lake, creating towering columns between heaven and earth. The paintings are from a bird's-eye view, or the perspective of a cloud or spirit, hovering somewhere outside of human perception and dominion.