

THE CITY, MANY VIEWS

The Industrial Sublime takes many forms. Early in the 20th century, urban realists like Robert Henri and fellow artists of the Ashcan School, turned away from the natural landscape to focus, instead, on the life of the city and its often chaotic and gritty spaces where people and architecture intersected.

Others, like Jonas Lie and J. Alden Weir, painted poetic visions of the new metropolis, cloaked in mist and mystery or painted its buildings rising from river's edge as dramatic, forceful constructions.

A few years later, artists of the 1920s and 30s generally dispensed with such romantic depictions to focus on the new dynamism of the city and its towering structures. European strains of modernism, particularly Cubism as well as developments in photography influenced this new generation, known today as Precisionists, to paint the city with slick brushwork, a restricted palette, and detached, mathematical precision.