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2012 Exhibition to Open at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site Worlds Between: Landscapes of Louis Rémy Mignot



Louis Rémy Mignot, *View across the Valley of Pierstown, New York from a Point above Cascade Hill* c.1858. Oil on canvas, 17 ½ x 31 ½ in. Munson-Williams- Proctor Institute, Museum of Art

(Catskill, N.Y.) On Sunday, April 29th the Thomas Cole National Historic Site hosts an Open House and lecture to celebrate their 2012 exhibition: *Worlds Between: Landscapes of Louis Rémy Mignot*. Admission to both the lecture and the Open House is free. Curated by Katherine E. Manthorne, this is the first major solo show of **Louis Rémy Mignot** (1831-1870) in over two decades. The exhibition will offer an intimate look at the work of this young, Charleston-born artist who painted in the style of the Hudson River School – and whose tragic life story is as captivating as his landscape paintings. In this exhibition the Thomas Cole National Historic Site offers a rare chance to see a full range of Mignot’s accomplished and fascinating work - paintings that move between worlds and ports, and that remain full of complexity, enigma, and beauty unsurpassed.

Public Opening: The event on Sunday April 29th begins with a talk by the curator Dr. Manthorne at 2 pm, followed by a reception, Open House and viewing of the exhibition in the Main House. Admission to the lecture is free and available on a first-come-first-served basis and doors open at 1:30 pm. Following the lecture, the new exhibition in the 1815 home of Thomas Cole will be on view and the newly published catalogue will be available for sale. The catalogue includes full-color reproductions of the paintings and an essay by Dr. Manthorne.

Members Preview: Members of the Thomas Cole Historic Site are invited to a preview of the exhibition before the lecture, starting at 12 noon.

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Guest Curator Katherine Manthorne brings her expertise on traveler artists to this gem of an exhibition and accompanying catalog, which offers a fresh look at Mignot as a painter whose global journeying fed his unique artistic creativity. Specifically, at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site one may view Mignot's early Dutch landscapes, subtly nuanced snow scenes, coloristic Tropical landscapes, and painterly European pictures. To celebrate the legacy he inherited from Thomas Cole, the exhibition highlights Mignot's distinctive views of upstate New York and the Hudson River Valley. In many ways, the gallery at the Cole Site offers the perfect venue for this artist living between worlds.

Louis Rémy Mignot (1831-1870) lived between many worlds: he was a Southern artist living in New York City in the years leading up to the Civil War; a French-Catholic, he worked within a predominantly Anglo-Protestant community of artists; he traveled from the American South to South America, and painted both subtle snow scenes and fiery tropical pictures. He belonged to the inner circles of polar opposites - Frederic Church and James Whistler; and in his all too short career, his style moved from Hudson River School realism toward Aestheticism. His art and life embodied the mobility that characterized the 19th c. Atlantic world, as he moved from one busy, cosmopolitan port to another.

Mignot grew up in Charleston, S.C., where the slave-holding Low Country planter elite frequented his father's coffee house and confectionary on King Street. At age 17 he traveled to The Hague in the Netherlands for artistic training, and then moved to New York City. From there he visited tourist sites from New York's Hudson Valley to the White Mountains in New Hampshire. In 1857 he explored South America, painting the steamy lowlands and lagoons that rivaled the Andean panoramas of his traveling companion Frederic Church. With the outbreak of Civil War, his southern identity and world experiences made it difficult for him either to remain in the North or to return home to Carolina, and he took up his travels again. Mignot never reached his intended destination of India, but got as far as London. Ever restless, he spent summers in the Swiss Alps and headed for Paris in 1870, where he was trapped during the Commune and contracted small pox. He died at age 39, leaving behind one of the most diverse and sophisticated bodies of work of any American landscapist.

This is the 9th annual presentation of 19th century landscape paintings at the Thomas Cole site. The exhibition program seeks to foster discussion and understanding of the influence of Thomas Cole on American culture through a generation of artists known as the Hudson River School.

***Worlds Between - Landscapes of Louis Rémy Mignot* will be on view April 29 - October 28, 2012. On Sunday April 29th, the curator will travel to the site to present a lecture at 2 pm, to be followed by a free open house and exhibition viewing at 3 pm.**

DIRECTIONS: The Thomas Cole Historic Site is located in the scenic Hudson River Valley, at 218 Spring Street in Catskill, New York. Located near the western entrance to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, with easy access from the New York State Thruway exit 21 or Amtrak train service in Hudson, detailed directions and more information can be found at www.thomascole.org or call 518-943-7465.

218 Spring Street, PO Box 426, Catskill, NY 12414 \ 518-943-7465 \ www.thomascole.org

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HOURS: Starting May 3rd, the Main House and Old Studio are open for tours from 10 to 4pm, with the last tour at 3pm, Thursday through Sunday, through October 28th. Admission to the grounds is free and open dawn until dusk.

About the Thomas Cole National Historic Site: The Thomas Cole National Historic Site preserves and interprets the home and studios of Thomas Cole, the founder of the Hudson River School of painting, the nation's first art movement. Cole's profound influence on America's cultural landscape inspires us to engage broad audiences through educational programs that are relevant today. The organization is an independent non-profit and an affiliate of the National Park Service.

Worlds Between - Landscapes of Louis Rémy Mignot is curated by **Katherine E. Manthorne**, professor of art history, Graduate Center, City University of New York. A specialist in modern art of the Americas, Manthorne collaborated on museum exhibitions and publications including the 1996 solo - *The Landscapes of Louis Rémy Mignot: A Southern Painter Abroad*; in addition to *El Barón de Courcy: Ilustraciones de un viaje, 1831-1833*; *Creation and Renewal: Views of Cotopaxi* by Frederic Edwin Church; and *Sand and Fog: The Luminist Paintings and Collection of James Suydam*. Her interest in cross-currents across the Americas is reflected in her book *Tropical Renaissance: North American Artists Exploring Latin America, 1839-1879*, as well as *Multiple Dimensions of American Art*.

About Thomas Cole

As the founder of America's first art movement, the Hudson River School, Thomas Cole (1801-1848) is a central figure in the development of American culture. When Cole made his first trip up the Hudson River in 1825, thought-leaders were searching for something distinctly American to establish the nation's own culture as separate from that of Europe. Thomas Cole found it in the Catskill Mountain wilderness, which came to symbolize the unspoiled character of the new nation. Lionized during his lifetime and celebrated by a generation of artists who followed in his footsteps, Cole is now widely regarded as the father of American landscape painting.

About the Thomas Cole National Historic Site

The Thomas Cole Historic Site, historically known as Cedar Grove, is where the artist Thomas Cole lived, worked, was married, and where he died at the age of 47. Today the site consists of the Federal-era brick home (c. 1815) in which Thomas Cole resided with his family, as well as the artist's original studio building, on five landscaped acres with a magnificent view of the Catskill Mountains.