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Contact: Communications Manager, Jennifer Greim JGreim@thomascole.org



The Thomas Cole National Historic Site Opens a Unique Site-Specific Exhibition by Internationally Acclaimed Contemporary Artist Kiki Smith

***KIKI SMITH / From the Creek* is Inspired by Smith's Experience in the Very Same Landscape that Captivated Cole and Led him to Create America's First Major Art Movement**

KIKI SMITH / From the Creek

SOLO exhibition in conjunction with the series *OPEN HOUSE: Contemporary Art in Conversation with Cole*
August 12-October 29, 2017

Right: The entrance hall featuring *Congregation*, 2014, cotton jacquard tapestry, from an edition of 10, 116 x 76 in. Courtesy Pace Gallery and Magnolia Editions
Photo © Peter Aaron/OTTO

Catskill, NY – August 15, 2017 – *Kiki Smith / From the Creek* is now open at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. The opening reception was held on Saturday, August 12 and was attended by over 400 guests. The internationally acclaimed contemporary artist Kiki Smith created a new multidisciplinary exhibition inside and outside the historic home where the groundbreaking American artist Thomas Cole lived and worked almost two centuries ago. The solo exhibition, which includes 27 works by Smith, will run through Sunday, October 29, 2017.

For the first time, Smith's work is presented in direct conversation with that of Thomas Cole, exploring shared fascinations with the natural world. Across time, both artists are responding to the very same landscape around Catskill Creek, which so captivated Cole and inspired America's first major art movement, the Hudson River School of landscape painting. The Catskill Creek, which flows near the Village of Catskill, was depicted by Cole in at least ten major paintings, more than any other subject. The fact that these two iconic artists walked on the same land and created art that responded to the experience produces a connection spanning 200 years.

The unique, site-specific artist's installation features 9-foot-tall jacquard tapestries, fabric multiples, prints, and sculptures in bronze, aluminum, and glass. Kiki Smith worked with curator, Kate Menconeri, to choose and site the artworks both inside the intimate spaces of Cole's historic home and outside on the grounds.

"Almost all of the works in the exhibition *From the Creek* were inspired by the natural surroundings of Catskill, New York," said Kiki Smith. "Since moving there, I have been enthralled by the Mawignack, the

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



low lands where the Catskill and Kaaterskill Creeks converge."

"It is incredible to see Thomas Cole's house and landscape transformed through the vision and work of Kiki Smith," said Cole Site Curator Kate Menconeri. "With Smith's work, we have filled the inside of Cole's home with, among other things, saplings, crystals and a wild kingdom of animals – deer, bats, birds – many of which can still be spotted roaming the Catskill terrain or inside a Cole painting. It was exciting to discover that Kiki has been making things that draw inspiration from the same places that propelled Cole. Her artworks have me thinking a lot about our interconnection with nature and the regenerative power it holds. Both artists share an interest in cycles, decay, rebirth, and the fragility of the environment."

"We are thrilled that Kiki Smith created this unique installation at the historic home of Thomas Cole," said Elizabeth Jacks, Executive Director of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. "Cole's relevance continues to expand as contemporary artists grapple, as he did, with humanity's complex relationship to the environment."



Cole's Bedroom with *The Falls I*, 2013 pigmented inkjet with hand-coloring on Entrada Natural Rag paper, Edition 5/10, 33 1/2 x 35 in. Photo © Peter Aaron/OTTO

KIKI SMITH / *From the Creek* is a unique installation created by the artist in conjunction with *OPEN HOUSE: Contemporary Art in Conversation with Cole*. It is curated by Kate Menconeri in collaboration with the artist. It will be on view now at the **Thomas Cole Site through October 29, 2017**. The outdoor installation can be visited between dawn and dusk, free of charge. The indoor installations can be viewed as part of a guided tour of the historic buildings offered Tuesday through Sunday, or during "explore at your own pace" hours on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 2-5 pm.



Kiki Smith at the opening with contemporary artist Jason Middlebrook (left) and Curator Kate Menconeri (right) Photo by Jennifer Lynn Morse

ABOUT the ARTIST / KIKI SMITH was born in 1954 in Nuremberg, Germany, and lives and works in Catskill and New York City. The artist is internationally celebrated and has a career that spans more than three decades. Smith is known for works that explore the human body, time, the cosmos, myth, and the interconnections between nature and human nature. Since 1982, her work has been exhibited in more than 150 exhibitions at museums and galleries worldwide, including significant group exhibitions such as the Whitney Biennial, NYC (1991, 1993, 2002), La Biennale di Firenze, Florence, Italy (1996-1998), and La Biennale di Venezia (1993, 1999, 2005, 2009, 2017), as well as solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern

Art, the Brooklyn Museum, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, The Kitchen, Carnegie Museum of Art, Barbara Krakow Gallery, MIT List Visual Arts Center, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore College, Walker Art Center, Henry Art



Gallery, Williams College Museum of Art, Wexner Center for the Arts, and PACE Gallery, which has represented her work since 1985. Smith has also created installations in the historic Palazzo Querini Stampalia in Venice, and in spiritual spaces in New York, including St. John's and the Eldridge Street Synagogue on Manhattan's Lower East side where she created a 16-foot glass window. Accolades include the U.S. State Department Medal of Arts; Women in the Arts Award, Brooklyn Museum; and the 50th Edward MacDowell Medal. Smith was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York in 2005. In 2006 *TIME* Magazine named her one of the "TIME 100: The People Who Shape Our World."

ABOUT OPEN HOUSE | *Contemporary Art in Conversation with Cole* is an annual series of curated contemporary artist installations that are sited within and around the historic home of the artist Thomas Cole. Operating from the concept that all art is contemporary, the program activates conversations between artists across the centuries and is collaborative by nature. Each year the Thomas Cole site invites one contemporary artist to create a site-specific project that engages with the art, writings, home, and story of Thomas Cole. Projects may take the shape of an installation, a performance, a guided walk, or other format reflecting the artist's practice and ideas. This program seeks art and ideas of the highest artistic merit, drawn from newly created or relevant pre-existing works, that shed light on the connections between 19th-century American art and contemporary times, and that specifically speak to the historic environments in which they are presented.

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 major art movement. Located on 6 acres in the Hudson Valley, the site includes the 1815 Main House; Cole's 1839 Old Studio; the recently reconstructed New Studio building; and gardens. It is a National Historic Landmark and an affiliated area of the National Park System. The Cole Site's activities include guided tours, exhibitions, printed publications, extensive online programs, activities for school groups, free community events, lectures, and innovative public programs such as the Hudson River School Art Trail—a map and website that enables visitors to see the nearby views that Cole painted. The goal of all programs at the Cole Site is to enable visitors to find meaning and inspiration in Thomas Cole's life and work. The themes that Cole explored in his art and writings—such as landscape preservation and our conception of nature as a restorative power—are both historic and timely, providing the opportunity to connect to audiences with insights that are highly relevant to their own lives.

ALSO on VIEW through October 29, 2017

- + *Sanford R. Gifford in the Catskills*, an exhibition in the New Studio, curated by Kevin J. Avery.
- + *The Parlors*, an immersive experience combining technology and meticulous restoration of Cole's interior designs in his 1815 home, including the earliest-known interior decorative painting by an American artist.
- + *Mind Upon Nature: Thomas Cole's Creative Process*, an exhibition in the Main House featuring Cole's paintings and sketches.

VISITOR INFORMATION | The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is located at 218 Spring Street in Catskill, New York. Thomas Cole's home, studios, special exhibitions, and grounds are open May – October, Tuesday – Sunday 10-5 pm. For details see: www.thomascole.org.