

# THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 15, 2018**

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## CALL FOR NEW WRITING

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How is the American landscape changing? Is there something you see, do, or experience now that you hope will be around for future generations? In honor of Thomas Cole's *Essay on American Scenery*, The Thomas Cole National Historic site is calling for new writing on the topic of the changing landscape.

We invite writers to send writing that reflects on the landscape and the changes within, which may span the natural world, climate, physical strata or the shifting social and political landscapes, or the changes seen in your neighborhood, city block, or a single building or natural feature. To read Thomas Cole's *Essay on American Scenery* visit our website: [thomascole.org/events](http://thomascole.org/events). For complete guidelines and entry form go to: [thomascole.org/events](http://thomascole.org/events)

On the occasion of this Call for new writing, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site is pleased to announce a new multi-media exhibition with Albany International Airport presented at the Airport that will bring together Cole's *Essay on American Scenery* with artwork by contemporary artists, historic objects and materials, and selected writing from this Call.

### **Selected texts will be**

- + Featured in a multi-media group exhibition at the Albany International Airport Gallery, September 29, 2018 – February 25, 2019.
- + Printed in a limited edition publication
- + Published on the Thomas Cole website

### **Entries will be read by a panel of art historians, curators, and environmentalists, including:**

- J. Jeffrey Anzevino, Land Use Advocacy Director, Scenic Hudson
- Kathy Greenwood, Director, Art & Culture Program, Albany International Airport
- W. Douglas McCombs, Chief Curator, Albany Institute of History and Art
- Kate Menconeri, Curator, Thomas Cole National Historic House
- Nancy Siegel, Professor of Art History, Towson University
- Allan Wallach, Ralph H. Wark Professor of Art and Art History and Professor of American Studies Emeritus, Professorial Lecturer in Art History, George Washington University

**WHAT** *Essay on American Scenery* was a piece of persuasive nonfiction writing by Thomas Cole. In addition to being an essayist, he produced poetry, fiction, and creative work of all kinds in his lifetime. In that spirit, we welcome nonfiction writing, fiction, and poetry in response to this prompt.

### **GUIDELINES**

- Please download guidelines and complete an entry form for each text submitted, available for download at [thomascole.org/events](http://thomascole.org/events)
- Texts should be between 1,500-5,000 words. Exceptions to word minimum will be made for poetry.

- Submissions may be nonfiction, fiction, or poetry. While the prompt can be interpreted broadly, essays must address in some way a change to the American landscape (environmental, physical, societal, cultural) and how the author feels about it.
- Eligibility: Open to all.
- PLEASE NOTE: THE OPEN CALL IS FOR WRITING ONLY. We are not at this time reviewing unsolicited entries for visual artwork.

**WHEN Writing will be accepted through May 1, 2018**

**WHERE**

Send writing via PDF file to [mconley@thomascole.org](mailto:mconley@thomascole.org)

Or mail copy to: Madeline Conley

Thomas Cole National Historic Site

207 Spring Street, Catskill, NY 12414

Questions? Call: 518.943.7465 xt 108

**Background**

Thomas Cole (1801-1848) was an English-born painter who began America's first major art movement, the Hudson River School—a group of artists whose paintings paid homage to American wilderness even as it was being dramatically altered by industrialization. Cole wrote about both his appreciation of but also his worry for the American landscape in an essay called *Essay on American Scenery*, published in the first edition of American Monthly Magazine in January 1836. At a time when American natural scenery was commonly thought of as inferior to the beauty of European landscapes, Cole argued that the wilds of America were just as, if not more, beautiful than any other place in the world. Moreover, in the face of mounting industrialization, he pleaded readers to value and preserve its quickly disappearing wilderness.

At the time of his writing, the American landscape was changing rapidly. The advent of railroads, factories, mills, and steamships brought dramatic change to Catskill, New York, where Cole made his home, as well as to much of the Hudson River Valley and the United States as a whole. As he observed his beloved town of Catskill and its surrounding environs transformed by industry, Cole wrote, "I cannot but express my sorrow that the beauty of such landscapes is quickly passing away... another generation will behold spots now rife with beauty desecrated by what is called 'improvement.'"

**MORE**

In 2018, **The Albany International Airport's Art & Culture Program** celebrates 20 years of presenting regionally and nationally acclaimed temporary exhibitions and installations throughout the terminal. The Albany International Airport Gallery is located on the third floor before the security checkpoint. Its curated exhibitions reflect the Program's mission to showcase the artists and cultural institutions that reside within the broader Capital Region. [www.albanyairport.com/art](http://www.albanyairport.com/art)

**THE THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE** is a forward-thinking organization that presents special exhibitions of 19<sup>th</sup>-century landscape paintings, contemporary art installations, and immersive video presentations that bring to life the original 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 panoramic views of the Catskill Mountains. It is a National Historic Landmark and an affiliated area of the National Park System. The Cole Site's activities include innovative public programs such as the Hudson River School Art Trail—an interactive map and website that enable visitors to visit the places and see the very same views that Cole and Church 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.