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**THOMAS COLE SITE PRESENTS *SPECTRUM*, A SITE-SPECIFIC CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION THAT EXPLORES RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THOMAS COLE'S USE OF COLOR AND THAT OF 11 CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS**

**ARTWORKS WILL BE SITED THROUGHOUT AND IN CONVERSATION WITH THE HISTORIC HOME AND STUDIOS WHERE COLE FOUNDED AMERICA'S FIRST MAJOR ART MOVEMENT**

**THE EXHIBITION ENGAGES OTHER ARTISTS IN A VISUAL DIALOGUE WITH THOMAS COLE AND EXPLORES HOW ARTISTS USE COLOR IN THEIR PRACTICE ACROSS CENTURIES, AND BETWEEN ART AND SCIENCE.**

***SPECTRUM*** is an exhibition of contemporary artworks installed throughout the historic home, studios, and grounds at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and is part of the ongoing series **OPEN HOUSE: *Contemporary Art in Conversation with Cole***. The exhibition is on view August 14 through November 18, 2018 and grew out of conversations between the Cole Site curator Kate Menconeri, the artist Kiki Smith, and exhibiting artists who include Polly Apfelbaum, Valerie Hammond, Ann Veronica Janssens, Anne Lindberg, Laura Moriarty, Portia Munson, Jackie Saccoccio, Lisa Sanditz, Julianne Swartz, Mildred Thompson, and Linda Weintraub.

**ON VIEW AT THOMAS COLE SITE** August 14 - November 18, 2018  
+ Opening Reception with Artists: Saturday, August 25, 2018, 4-6 pm

**Catskill, NY – August 1, 2018** – The [Thomas Cole National Historic Site](#) announced today a new contemporary art exhibition ***SPECTRUM***, opening August 14, that brings together the work of 11 contemporary artists that will be installed throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>-century historic home, studios, and grounds of the artist Thomas Cole (1801-1848).

The project is inspired by and in dialogue with Thomas Cole's own work, spanning the interior colors he carefully chose for the house, his own color wheel painting titled *Diagram of Contrasts*, and his extensive writing on the topic of color, which details his desire to invent an instrument that could play the sound of color. The historic site's 1815 Main House also contains the earliest-known interior decorative painting by an American artist, and its bold features reveal an added dimension to Cole's use of and thinking about color.

**SPECTRUM** will feature more than 30 new and existing artworks and installations, alongside Cole's work, that are made by 11 contemporary artists: Polly Apfelbaum (Elizaville, NY and New York City); Ann Veronica Janssens (Brussels, Belgium); Valerie Hammond (New York City); Anne Lindberg (Ancramdale, NY); Laura Moriarty (Rosendale, NY); Portia Munson (Catskill, NY); Jackie Saccoccio (West Cornwall, CT); Lisa Sanditz (Tivoli, NY); Julianne Swartz (Stone Ridge, NY and New York City); Mildred Thompson (deceased; Atlanta), and Linda Weintraub (Rhinebeck, NY). Many of the exhibiting artists have international careers but maintain deep local ties to the Hudson River Valley, as did Cole.

All works will be presented in a new site-specific context, in which they have never-before been shown, and carefully placed to be in conversation with Cole and the unique historic rooms and grounds of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century artist's home and studios. The diverse projects on view examine color in relation to smell, sight, and taste, as well as music, emotion, science, abstraction, and the natural world.

The contemporary artworks will include an immersive site-specific light installation by Ann Veronica Janssens, a garden designed by Portia Munson, woodblock prints by Polly Apfelbaum, Camera-Less-Videos by Julianne Swartz, an outdoor

rainbow by Valerie Hammond, vibrant *Radiation Explorations* by Mildred Thompson, and monumental scaled works on linen by Jackie Saccoccio. The artist Lisa Sanditz is creating for the occasion an installation of sculpture and painting, combined with works from the Cole Site's collection by Emily Cole (Thomas Cole's daughter), and Anne Lindberg is presenting a new site-specific thread installation and works on paper that respond to Thomas Cole's periwinkle wall-color choice. Laura Moriarty created a "*Tableau for Thomas Cole*" with pigmented beeswax, and Linda Weintraub will present an installation of home-preserved food in the order of the color spectrum.

"Thomas Cole was fascinated by how color connects to music, to emotion and the natural world," said Kate Menconeri, curator. "This exhibition explores that fascination through contemporary eyes – those of artists who are expanding our experience and understanding of color two centuries later. Simultaneously they, like Cole, explore color at the intersection of art and science, and as both light and pigment."

The genesis of the exhibition grew out of ongoing conversations between Cole site curator Kate Menconeri and artist Kiki Smith while working on Smith's 2017 solo exhibition *From the Creek* at the Thomas Cole Site.

"Color has baffled me. Thomas Cole's use of color, as well as his evident interest in light phenomena found in nature, is compelling to me," said Kiki Smith, who is one of the advisors to the Cole Site's series *OPEN HOUSE: Contemporary Art in Conversation with Cole*.

"This exhibition dives into Thomas Cole's exploration of color and brings it forward to our present moment through the work of 11 contemporary artists," said Elizabeth Jacks, Executive Director of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

"Lately, I've been thinking a lot about light, and how to translate that into color – the endurance of light and how profound and timeless it can be in painting. [...] I try to make the color emerge from the feeling of a place. Other times it may be more arbitrary, especially if a place is filled with contradictions... In my work I tap into the tension of the natural and the man-made through the colors I use." – Lisa Sanditz

"In *Place (Storm)* my attempt was to have the light webbing emerge from the dark ground ... akin to the transient rolling color transformations of an impending storm cloud, finding incidences of light to hold onto. This painting is the closest to Cole's portrayal of the sublime." – Jackie Saccoccio

"Color is so connected to being alive. Colors are not fixed in time. The more you look when thinking of color, the more color you see." – Portia Munson

"*Let Us Eat the Colors of Nature's Spectrum* consists of 56 foods harvested from my gardens, preserved through canning, and arrayed according to the color continuum they suggest. ... I take no credit for their chromatic splendor; botanical life is never colorless." – Linda Weintraub

"Working with richly pigmented beeswax, I approach each piece as if taking a walk through an environment of color. Taking one step after another, I am bushwhacking through the historical boundaries of what a landscape painting can be – creating adventures of the mind where matter and energy are interchangeable." – Laura Moriarty

Cole once wrote in his journal that "colours are as capable of affecting thee by combination, degree, and arrangement as sound." Drawing on such ideas, the exhibition also explores Cole's use of and thinking about color through his own texts, publications of his time, and new writing by artist and NYU Art Department Chair Jesse Bransford, that offers an overview of the historic context and color theories that Cole was exploring in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An exhibition catalogue will feature this new text as well as artists' pages and en-situ views of the contemporary installations. The exhibition is supported by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and Empire State Development's I LOVE NEW YORK program under the Market NY Initiative.

**ABOUT OPEN HOUSE: Contemporary Art in Conversation with Cole: SPECTRUM** is the third annual exhibition in this series, which is an annual presentation of curated contemporary art 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 or more contemporary artists 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 19<sup>th</sup>-century American art and contemporary times, and that specifically speak to the historic environments in which they are presented. The program grew out of the 2015 exhibition *River Crossings: Contemporary Art Comes Home*, curated by Stephen Hannock and Jason Rosenfeld.

**THE THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE** is an international destination presenting 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 guided tours, special exhibitions of both 19<sup>th</sup>-century and contemporary art, 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 visit the places 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.

**On VIEW in Thomas Cole's New Studio through November 4, 2018**

+ *Picturesque and Sublime: Thomas Cole's Trans-Atlantic Inheritance*

**Ongoing Exhibitions in the 1815 Main House**

+ *The Parlors*, an immersive experience combining story-telling technology and meticulous restoration of Cole's interior designs in his 1815 home, including the earliest-known interior decorative painting by an American artist. Integrated projections enable paintings to "come to life" and letters to "magically appear" on tables to tell a story.

+ *Mind Upon Nature: Thomas Cole's Creative Process*, an exhibition in the Main House featuring Cole's paintings, sketches, palettes, and other unique objects.

**VISITOR INFORMATION:** The hours for Thomas Cole's home, studios and special exhibitions vary by season. For details see: [www.thomascole.org/visit](http://www.thomascole.org/visit). Keep in touch on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter at @thomascolesite.

**HUDSON RIVER SKYWALK REGION**

This year, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and Olana – across the Hudson River in Hudson, NY – have joined forces with New York State to launch a new initiative, with the leadership of Governor Andrew Cuomo, to promote the region as an epicenter of American art where the nation's first major art movement began. The project – titled the Hudson River Skywalk Region – weaves together the home and studios of Thomas Cole at the Thomas Cole Site and those of his legendary student Frederic Church at Olana with the landscape that inspired it all to create one seamless experience. With support from New York State, a continuous pedestrian walkway – the Skywalk – will connect the historic sites across the Rip Van Winkle Bridge over the Hudson River by late 2018. The Region also includes the City of Hudson and the Village of Catskill.