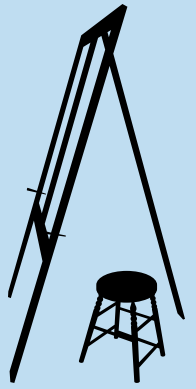


THOMAS COLE

NATIONAL
HISTORIC
SITE

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Where American Art Was Born



VISION STATEMENT

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site will be the leading source for education and scholarship that inspires cultural and environmental awareness of the American landscape and the continuing impact of Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School.

MISSION STATEMENT

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 innovative educational programs that are relevant today.

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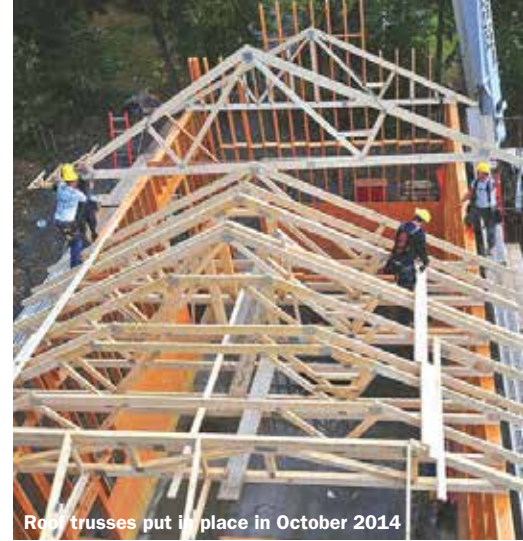


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 Kate Menconeri, Collection & Exhibition Manager
 Peter & Tone Noci, Caretakers
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 Alice Tunison, Program Manager



Elizabeth Jacks in the New Studio in September 2014



Roof trusses put in place in October 2014

Dear Friends,

This historic site in the year 2014 saw the kind of growth that we only dreamed of a few years ago. You, as a reader of this Annual Report, are part of the community that cares, which is what makes such things possible. Thank you! The trustees, staff and volunteers of this organization are overjoyed at the transformation that we are witnessing here. In 2014, our attendance income topped \$50,000 for the first time. To put this in perspective, the number just two years ago was \$21,000. When I started in 2003 it was \$7,200. Shop sales in 2003 were zero – we had no shop. This year it was nearly \$40,000. Membership is up 39% over 2013. Our overall operating budget – not including all of the income and expenses for the New Studio – is now over \$600,000. Just eight years ago it was half that. In 2014 we received our Permanent Charter from New York State, replacing the Provisional Charter that established us as a non-profit organization in 2010. These numbers and developments are cause enough for celebration, but the event that truly amazed this community occurred on July 3rd, 2014: the groundbreaking for the New Studio. For those of us whose first visit to Catskill was later than 1973, the building known as the “New Studio” existed only as a grainy black-and-white photograph on a page. The graceful curve of the bargeboard trim, the charming entry porch, the enormous north-facing window and other details that could be observed in the old photographs and drawings were mysterious remnants of the past, providing clues about the taste and interests of the building’s architect, Thomas Cole. Having been demolished over 40 years ago, the building seemed as irretrievable as Cole himself. And yet over the last six months of 2014, to our continual amazement, the ghostly image of the “New Studio” gradually became a three-dimensional reality. As Cole stated, “American Landscape is genuinely broad & grand & its Architecture ought to harmonize with it.” With the recreation of Cole’s New Studio, that harmony will exist once more within the grand landscape surrounding the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. We look forward to your arrival.

Elizabeth B. Jacks
 Executive Director



4



Kate Menconeri showing *Master, Mentor, Master:*
Thomas Cole & Frederic Church



Thomas Cole staff and fellows





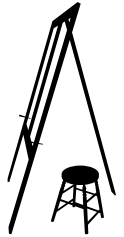
Trustees on the stairs of the Main House.
Photograph by Thatcher Keats



The New Studio c. 1940-50s.
Courtesy of Vedder Memorial Library

THOMAS COLE

NATIONAL
HISTORIC
SITE



The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is the place where American art was born in the early 19th century, as it was the home and workplace of Thomas Cole, founder of America's first major art movement, now known as the Hudson River School. The board, staff, supporters and volunteers comprise a rapidly growing organization that embraces change and continually pursues excellence. At its core, the organization's purpose is to facilitate the connection between Cole's vision and the people and ideas of our own time. We pursue this purpose by breathing new life into the historic site where such pioneering events took place, regenerating Cole's revolutionary creativity so that it touches people's lives in the present, and providing an opportunity for the public to engage with a story that sheds light on both our personal and national identity.

As the birthplace of American art, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site has the potential to serve as the first stop and primary source for the exploration of American visual culture. In the coming decade, we imagine moving toward a fuller realization of that vision by pursuing the following:

1. **Historic Restoration and Preservation:** recreating to the greatest possible extent the physical setting where the groundbreaking and remarkable historic events took place.
2. **Exhibitions:** mounting exhibitions on American landscape painting that travel the country and open the eyes of ever-growing audiences to the startlingly beautiful paintings that launched our nation's first art movement.
3. **Publications:** producing publications – both printed and online – that can grow to serve as the worldwide source for information and inspiration on the Hudson River School.
4. **Education:** launching local and regional education programming that nurtures awareness and appreciation for the Hudson River School with children and adults alike.
5. **Scholarship:** supporting new research about the Hudson River School and the next generation of professors and curators in the field through initiatives such as the Cole Fellows program as well as a study center with a complete archive of digitally accessible research materials on Thomas Cole and the art movement that he founded.
6. **Audiences:** increasing the number of people who are touched annually by the organization from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands.



Groundbreaking for the New Studio. Left to right: Rowena Sahulee, Director of Tourism Marketing at I LOVE NY; Vincent Seeley, Mayor, Village of Catskill; Joseph Kosloski (behind Vincent), Legislator, Greene County; Stephen Dunn, Trustee; Warner Shook, Trustee; Lisa Fox Martin, Board Chairman; Stephen Shadley, Trustee; John Mesick (behind Stephen), Architect; Rose Harvey, NY State Parks Commissioner; Nina Matis (behind the shovel), Trustee; Carrie Feder, Trustee; Elizabeth Jacks, Executive Director; Linda Gentalen (behind Elizabeth), Trustee; Hudson Talbott, Trustee; Peter Lopez, NY State Assemblyman; Michel Goldberg, Trustee. Photo by James Autery. At left: The New Studio c. 1890s.

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DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH

Forty-one years after it was summarily torn down, Thomas Cole's New Studio is now being reconstructed on its original footprint at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. Built in 1846 according to Cole's own design, the building stood about 75 yards from the artist's home in Catskill for 125 years. Tragically, it was demolished in 1973 after falling into disrepair. On July 3, 2014, we

broke ground on the project to recreate this architecturally and historically important structure. Many generous people including our board chairman, Lisa Fox Martin, and our campaign committee chair, Anne Miller, made extraordinary gifts in order to ensure the project's success, and by the end of 2014 we raised \$1.4 million towards our \$1.5 million goal.

Over the last decade, every detail of the New Studio was painstakingly researched and verified by archaeologists, historians and architects, from the width of each clapboard to the pitch of the roof. The highly accomplished John I Mesick served nobly as the project's architect and the contractor Rich Rappleyea followed through on every detail of the construction. The architect Marilyn Kaplan undertook some of the critical early research. Three board members



The original foundation stones of the New Studio, revealed by archaeology



A New Studio project team meeting with Mark Dahl of Mesick Cohen Wilson Baker Architects; Elizabeth Jacks; Rich Rappleyea of Dimensions North Ltd.; Stephen Dunn, Board Vice-Chair; and Curtis Wilsey of Quantum Engineering.

took the lead in supervising the project: Stephen Dunn, Carrie Feder and Stephen Shadley, bringing an unparalleled level of expertise that would ensure its success.

Many persistent people have dreamed of this moment over the years, from the “Save the Cole House Committee” of the 1990s to the Greene County Historian, Raymond Beecher, who often sat on the porch of the Main House

looking south to where the New Studio once stood. In his will he left a legacy that became the cornerstone of the New Studio capital campaign. And because his bequest also included an endowment for maintenance of the historic buildings, we can feel secure that the new building will remain a welcoming and beautiful place for exhibitions, programs and events for generations to come.

When it is completed, the new build-

ing will provide this organization with much-needed program space, a venue for lectures and programs of all kinds, and a state-of-the art gallery for its successful exhibition program. The organization has evolved from one paid employee in 2003 to ten employees today, and has experienced growth in every aspect of its operation. The New Studio — described in our 2004 strategic plan — caps off a decade of missions accomplished.



8 EDUCATION & INSPIRATION

The 2014 exhibition at the Thomas Cole Historic Site, entitled *Master, Mentor, Master: Thomas Cole & Frederic Church*, brought an unprecedented number of visitors to the historic site, surpassing last year's record high. The exhibition explores one of the most influential teacher-student relationships in the history of American art: that between the

founder of the Hudson River School of painting, Thomas Cole (1801-1848), and his celebrated student and successor, Frederic Church (1826-1900). Church was first introduced to the Hudson Valley as an 18-year-old when he came to live and study with Cole at the property known as Cedar Grove in Catskill, New York, from 1844 to 1846. With over 20 art-

works on view, the exhibition offered a rare chance to see Church's early works from this formative period, alongside key examples of Cole's work from the same time. The exhibition was curated by John Wilmerding, the former Deputy Director of the National Gallery of Art, with associate curator Kate Menconeri, and was supported by the Wyeth Foundation for American Art, Eli Wilner & Co., The Bay & Paul Foundations,



Installation of the 2014 exhibition *Master, Mentor, Master: Thomas Cole & Frederic Church*



Thomas Cole, *Tower by Moonlight*, ca. 1838.
Oil on canvas. Gift of David and Laura Grey



Dinner honoring John Wilmerding, curator of the 2014 exhibition, at the home of Warner Shook and Frank Swim

Furthermore Grants in Publishing – a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund, the Bank of Greene County, the Greene County Legislature through the County Initiative Program administered by the Greene County Council on the Arts, and the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.

In 2014 we welcomed a new and exciting treasure into Thomas Cole's home, the 1838 oil painting

by Thomas Cole entitled *Tower by Moonlight*, a donation from David and Laura Grey. The painting was featured in our 2008 exhibition on Thomas Cole's creative process and is an excellent example of Cole's use of classical architectural features in a landscape combined with motifs that denote the passage of time and mortality – in this case a ruined tower and a sarcophagus. The Greys have been involved with the Thomas

Cole National Historic Site and have generously lent paintings for several exhibitions over the last decade. They hope that this donation will inspire and set an example for other collectors with paintings by Thomas Cole. The staff and trustees of the Thomas Cole site wish to thank the Greys for their miraculous gift.



OUTREACH & COMMUNITY

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is nestled right in the Village of Catskill, and is an integral part of the community. Our biggest event of the year is Community Day, held each September, featuring live music from the Coxsackie Community Band and a giant art exhibition entitled “Postcards from the Trail,” to which

hundreds of artists of all ages and abilities submit a painting. This year we also celebrated the 200th birthday of the large Honey Locust Tree that stands in front of the Main House by presenting an exhibition of paintings of the tree by the beloved local artist Stanley Maltzman. At the event, we honored and thanked Robin Smith

who served as our volunteer Master Gardener for over a decade.

In 2014 we welcomed the fourth annual class of Thomas Cole Fellows, a program for recent college graduates and graduate students that runs from late May to early November. This year the program received more than 30 applicants from 12 states. Fellows commit to a five-month stay at



Community Day at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. All photos this page by Thatcher Keats.

the historic site and become part of the museum staff. They receive free housing at the site, a monthly honorarium, professional development, job-searching and resume-writing assistance, networking opportunities and field trips. The program helps to develop a new generation of scholars and museum professionals who are enthusiasts of American art.



Trevor Tunison as Rip Van Winkle with the Thomas Cole Fellows: Jennifer Morales, Kathryn O'Dwyer and Rita Carr



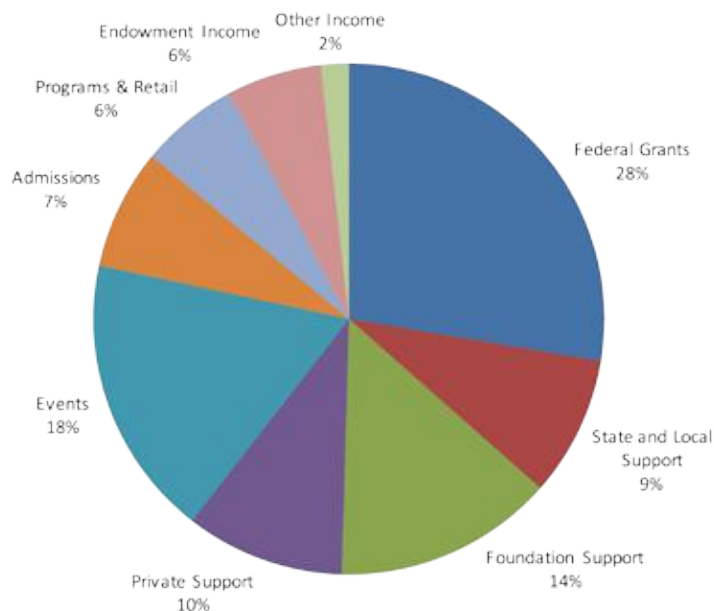
A demonstration of 19th-century metalworking techniques at Community Day



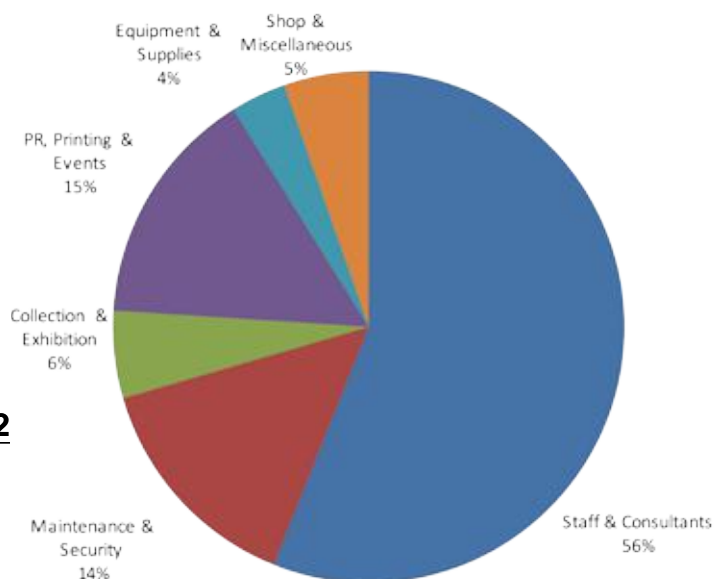
The annual "Postcards from the Trail" exhibition attracts hundreds of submissions

2014 SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS

Total Income: \$666,814



Total Expense: \$643,311



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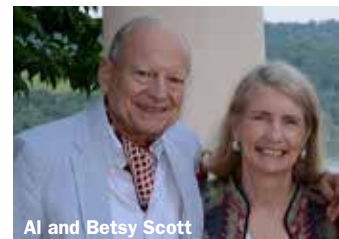
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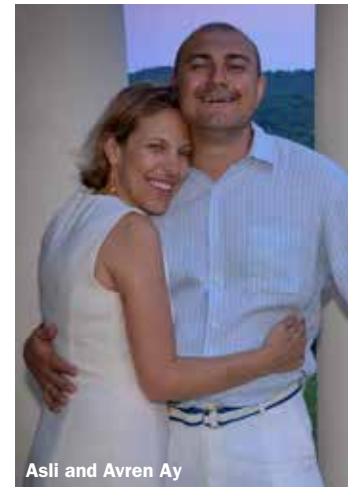
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“Nature has spread for us a rich and delightful banquet. Shall we turn from it? We are still in Eden; the wall that shuts us out is our own ignorance and folly. May we at times turn from the ordinary pursuits of life to the pure enjoyment of rural nature.”

— Thomas Cole

