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## **Thomas Cole National Historic Site Announces Launch of New Audio Tour Created with Area Teens**

CATSKILL, NY: At the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, visitors now have the chance to tour Thomas Cole's home and studios on their own with a narrated audio guide. The audio guide is free for all ticket-holders attending the special "explore at your own pace" hours, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 2-5 pm, and was created as part of the site's educational outreach with area teens, who worked with the staff to develop the tour. The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is honored to be able to offer this guide and program, made possible with support from AT&T.

"AT&T is proud to support the Thomas Cole Center and this innovative audio guide project, which will empower high school students in the community to have a real-life stake in a vibrant, high-profile regional landmark," said Marissa Shorenstein, president of AT&T New York.

During their record-breaking 2015 season and again in 2016, the Thomas Cole site opened its doors in a whole new way by offering visitors the option to "Explore at Your Own Pace." During these special hours, all of the historic buildings are open and guides are stationed in the rooms to answer questions as visitors come and go on their own. The new "Explore" option proved to be highly popular and admission to the historic site soared. During this time, the staff noticed that visitors wanted more information about the spaces they were walking through – information that normally would have been delivered by a guide during guided tours. To address this need, the Thomas Cole staff developed the audio tour and decided to use this opportunity to engage local teens at the same time. During the summer of 2016, local teens came to the site to learn about Cole and play an active role by participating in the creation of the audio tour.

# THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The new audio tour can be accessed by all visitors on their own mobile devices via the internet, and free Wi-Fi is available at the site. There is no additional charge for the audio tour to any visitor who has purchased admission to the historic site.

On view at the Thomas Cole National Historic site through October 30, 2016:

+ *Thomas Cole: The Artist as Architect*

+ *MIND UPON NATURE: Thomas Cole's Creative Process*

+ JASON MIDDLEBROOK: *Nature Builds / We Cover*

The inaugural exhibition in the series OPEN HOUSE: Contemporary Art in Conversation with Cole

## VISITING INFORMATION:

Thomas Cole's home, studios, and special exhibitions are open May–October, Tues–Sun, 10am–5pm.

## About the Thomas Cole National Historic Site

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is the place where American art began, as it is the home of Thomas Cole (1801-1848), the founder of the Hudson River School – the first major art movement of the United States. Cole's landscape paintings encompassed a new-found awe for the majesty of the American landscape, and they sparked the longest running art movement in American history, including more than 100 artists in the period between 1825 and about 1870. Today, the National Historic Site welcomes thousands of visitors each year. Thomas Cole's original easels and art-making tools are on view in his "Old Studio", and visitors can tour his 19<sup>th</sup>-century home and grounds, and watch a film about Cole and the Hudson River School in the visitor center. Guests especially enjoy the panoramic view from the west porch to the Catskill Mountains, which remains strikingly similar to Thomas Cole's paintings of the same view. The site is located at 218 Spring Street in Catskill, New York. Current programs and events can be found on the website, [www.thomascole.org](http://www.thomascole.org).

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