

# THOMAS COLE

NATIONAL  
HISTORIC  
SITE



2018 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.

Thomas Cole, *The Clove, Catskills*, 1827, New Britain Museum of American Art

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Betsy Jacks at our Top of the Met party

Photo by Adam T. Deen

Dear Friends,

2019 was the year of Thomas Cole. The bicentennial of Cole's arrival in America from England was celebrated on the world stage with a major exhibition that opened at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and traveled to the National Gallery in London. *The New York Times* declared the show "politically right for right now," and the *London Times* confirmed, "Ravishing — and still resonant."

In Catskill, we presented a companion exhibition in partnership with Yale University. *Picturesque and Sublime: Thomas Cole's Trans-Atlantic Inheritance* was curated by a dream team of five scholars from Yale led by Dr. Tim Barringer, and included works by Thomas Cole and British artists including J.M.W. Turner and John Constable.

We held our very first New York City benefit dinner on the top floor of The Met looking over Central Park. Back in Catskill, we hosted a packed opening party for *Spectrum*, our third OPEN HOUSE contemporary art exhibition, which grew out of conversations between our curator Kate Menconeri and artist Kiki Smith.

The first-ever children's book on Thomas Cole came out this year, created by beloved author and illustrator, Hudson Talbott, and published by Penguin Random House. A companion story is available on our website as part of a new education section featuring free lesson plans for teachers and other resources.

I am so excited by all the wonderful things happening here, and I want to thank each and every one of you for being a part of our community and making achievements like this possible. I can't wait to share with you our plans for another exciting season ahead.

Elizabeth B. Jacks  
Executive Director

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Katherine Pratt-Thompson, Research Fellow





Thomas Cole's Old Studio



Ned Sullivan of Scenic Hudson giving the Beecher Lecture



Visitors in the East Parlor



Stuart's room





Photo © Peter Aaron/OTTO



Decorative wall painting in the West Parlor

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site in Catskill, NY marks the place where the Hudson River School began. The historic site is an affiliate of the National Park Service and operates as a forward thinking non-profit organization with a significant and growing impact. Our core purpose is to regenerate Cole's revolutionary creativity so that it touches people's lives today. As the birthplace of American art, the Thomas Cole Site has the potential to serve as the first stop for the exploration of America's cultural landscape. We are moving toward a fuller realization of that vision by contributing to the conversation at the highest level with four main focuses:

#### SCHOLARSHIP

- Partnering with leading scholars and museum professionals to create top-level arts programming
- Organizing major exhibitions and publishing new scholarship
- Presenting lecture series on American art and the environment

#### EDUCATION

- Developing new educational lesson plans, using American art to engage students with curriculum themes
- Hosting educational programming for schoolchildren at the historic site and in classrooms
- Launching the next generation of scholars with the Cole Fellowship
- Offering new education resources at [thomascole.org](http://thomascole.org)

#### INTERPRETATION

- Pushing the bounds of what a historic house museum can be with digital storytelling within the authentic historic spaces
- Creating experiences that let the artist speak through his own words and images
- Collaborating with contemporary artists to offer new perspectives and create art installations in response to Thomas Cole's art, ideas and historic home

#### PRESERVATION

- Researching and restoring Thomas Cole's interior designs in the historic Main House
- Uncovering Cole's own hand-painted decorative borders on the walls of his home from beneath layers of modern paint
- Reconstructing Thomas Cole's New Studio, a building designed by Cole but demolished before the site became a museum



Photo by Adam T. Deen

Photo by Adam T. Deen





Jennifer Raab, Nicholas Robbins, Sophie Lynford, Tim Barringer & Betsy Jacks

## SCHOLARSHIP AND IDEAS

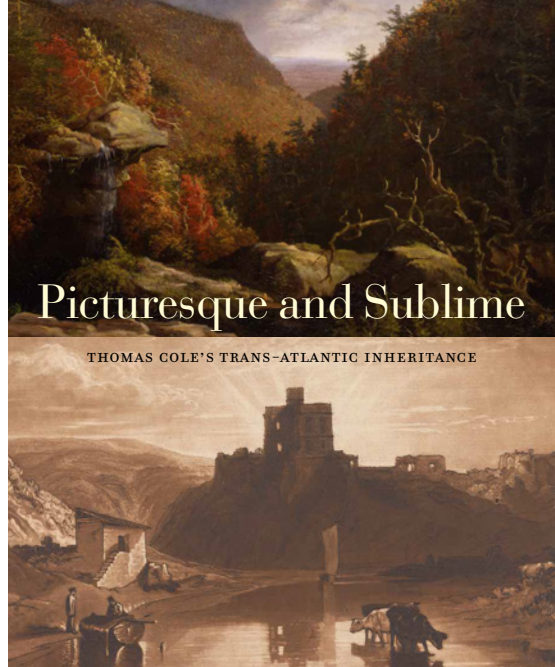
This year, Cole and his British colleagues including Turner and Constable were together in the New Studio in our exhibition, *Picturesque and Sublime: Thomas Cole's Trans-Atlantic Inheritance*. The exhibition was organized as a companion to the major Thomas Cole show at The Met and National Gallery, and it shared a co-curator: Tim Barringer, Paul Mellon Professor in the History of Art at Yale University. For our exhibition,

Dr. Barringer engaged his fellow professors at Yale, Gillian Forrester and Jennifer Raab, and their PhD students, Sophie Lynford and Nicholas Robbins, to research the British landscape traditions that Cole would have been exposed to growing up in Northern England. They traced how Cole took those artistic conventions with him when he immigrated to America and established something new: the American Sublime. The exhibition

was accompanied by a 192-page catalogue debuting new research on Thomas Cole by each of the curators. The book was organized by the Thomas Cole Historic Site and published by Yale University Press.

Leading up to the big year of Cole, our annual Raymond Beecher lecture was delivered by Elizabeth Kornhauser, Alice Pratt Brown Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture at The Metropolitan





Tim Barringer in the New Studio at the Cole Site



Betsy Kornhauser giving our supporters a private tour of the Cole exhibition at The Met

Photo by Lisa Fox Martin

Museum of Art and co-curator of The Met's exhibition, *Thomas Cole's Journey: Atlantic Crossings*. Their exhibition explored in depth the influence of Cole's first trip back to Europe after immigrating to the United States. Dr. Kornhauser gave our community a sneak peek into the exhibition, months before it opened to the public. The Met's exhibition revealed new research on Thomas Cole, establishing him as a proto-environmentalist.

We hosted our 15th annual Sunday Salon series, bringing new ideas and conversations to Thomas Cole's New Studio in Catskill, New York. Presenters included three of our exhibition curators from Yale: Jennifer Raab, Sophie Lynford, and Nicholas Robbins, as well as Shannon Vittoria, Research Associate at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, who also worked on *Thomas Cole's Journey*. Dr. Raab illuminated Cole's influence

on Frederic Church; Ms. Lynford discussed the impact of landscape tourism in Cole's time; Mr. Robbins explored Cole's artistic development through early works on paper; and Dr. Vittoria took us on a trip to Italy in Cole's footsteps.

To open our exhibition in May, we welcomed Professor Tim Barringer to present the annual Curator's Talk and give us a behind-the-scenes look into the making of our exhibition.





School programs at the historic site



Class of 2019 Cole Fellows: Maeve McCool, Katherine Pratt

## EDUCATION AND ACCESS

2018 brought the first children's book on Thomas Cole, introducing children across the nation to the father of American art. The picture book entitled *Picturing America: Thomas Cole and the Birth of American Art*, was created by beloved children's book author and illustrator, Hudson Talbott, and published by Penguin Random House. The story follows Cole's journey from England to America

and explores the same trans-Atlantic themes as the Bicentennial exhibitions this year. In partnership with Talbott and Penguin Random House, the Thomas Cole Site published a free excerpted story, with the addition of several original illustrations not included in the book, on [thomascole.org/story](http://thomascole.org/story).

As part of our education initiative, we continued offering free in-classroom school programs

with Cole Site educators for schools that do not have funds for bus trips to the historic site. The classroom programs use American art to teach American history and curriculum themes. We also debuted a new education section on our website with educational resources for teachers, school children and people of all ages across the country. The section includes free teacher lesson plans, the new illustrated





Thompson, Katherine Pratt-Thompson, Amanda Malmstrom & Peter Fedoryk

Photo by Kate Merconeri

Thomas Cole story, a digital gallery of Cole's paintings, videos of talks with leading scholars, and original films on the Hudson River School.

This year, we graduated the class of 2018 Cole Fellows and welcomed the new class of 2019. All of the 2018 Cole Fellows were accepted to graduate programs. Congratulations to Madeline Conley (M.A. in Art + Design Education, Rhode Island School

of Design), Rowanne Dean (Ph.D. Program in Art History, University of Chicago), Adam Grimes (M.A. in Art History, University of Delaware), and Michael Quituisaca, (M.A. in Art History, American University). The class of 2019 Cole Fellows are Peter Fedoryk, Katherine Pratt-Thompson, Amanda Malmstrom and Maeve McCool. They have become integral parts of the organization,

joining project committees and conducting primary source research that will directly inform new initiatives at the site. Their research will illuminate the stories of the women who lived here, inform the reinterpretation of the second floor, reveal new information about Cole's mineral collection, and support educational programming for schoolchildren.





Opening reception for our **SPECTRUM** exhibition

## CONTEMPORARY ART AND COMMUNITY

*SPECTRUM* marked the third annual exhibition in the series **OPEN HOUSE: Contemporary Art in Conversation with Cole**, a project that invites artists working today to engage with Thomas Cole's art and ideas to create a site-specific installation at his historic home in Catskill, New York. The exhibition grew out of conversations between our curator Kate Menconeri and the artist Kiki Smith and explored relationships

between Cole's use of color and that of 11 contemporary artists: Polly Apfelbaum, Ann Veronica Janssens, Valerie Hammond, Anne Lindberg, Laura Moriarty, Portia Munson, Jackie Saccoccio, Lisa Sanditz, Julianne Swartz, Mildred Thompson, and Linda Weintraub. The installation created a visual dialogue across centuries, drawing particular attention to Cole's painting, *Diagram of Contrasts*, on loan to us from the collection

of Richard Sharp. The project was accompanied by a catalogue with an original essay by Jesse Bransford, Professor of Visual Arts at NYU, and installation views by renowned photographer Peter Aaron. The artist Linda Weintraub organized a harvest potluck dinner called "Let Us Eat the Colors of the Spectrum," where the local community gathered together to explore color at the intersection of taste and nature and have fun together.





Photo by Chad Kleitsch



Photo by Jennifer Morse



Photo by Jennifer Morse



SPECTRUM installation view

Photo © Peter Aaron/OTTO

For our annual Community Day we offered free admission, art-making activities, food and live music, in conjunction with the second annual Skywalk Arts Festival. The Skywalk is a new initiative at the birthplace of American landscape painting to create a scenic walkway from the Thomas Cole Site to Olana via the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. It is a collaboration between the New York State Bridge Authority,

Thomas Cole National Historic Site, The Olana Partnership and Olana State Historic Site, with many additional partners from our community. The project will support our community with a newly accessible river-front experience and increased walkability, as well as economic benefits from tourism. In October, we hosted Scenic Hudson president Ned Sullivan, who presented the annual Raymond Beecher Lecture

on landscape preservation work in the region and Scenic Hudson's role in the Skywalk initiative.

Thank you to the Skywalk partners: Historic Bridges of the Hudson Valley, New York State Parks, New York State Department of Transportation, Scenic Hudson, Greene County Tourism, Columbia County Tourism, Columbia County Chamber of Commerce, Greene County Chamber of Commerce, Columbia County Economic Development, Empire State Development, Columbia Memorial Health, Hudson Tourism Committee, Temple Israel of Catskill, Catskill Development Corp, Hudson Business Coalitions.





Guests under the tent at the Summer Party

## DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

Thomas Cole was everywhere this year, from Fifth Avenue in New York City to Trafalgar Square in London, from *The New York Times* to the *London Times*. The increased awareness of Thomas Cole resulted in a huge surge of interest in what we are doing here in Catskill, New York. We were introduced to a number of new supporters, our admissions revenue increased by nearly 15% and our website

visitation soared. To support long term growth, The Bay & Paul Foundations awarded us a multi-year grant of \$120,000 to build capacity and develop sustainable revenue streams for the future.

In March, we hosted our first benefit event in New York City to celebrate the Cole exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. We honored curators Tim Barringer and Betsy Kornhauser, who led our

guests on a tour of the exhibition, before proceeding upstairs to dinner on the top floor overlooking Central Park. It was a great honor to celebrate these two tremendously accomplished scholars, and the energy in the room was thrilling.

The annual Summer Party was a beautiful evening with friends hosted by Chairman Lisa Fox Martin at her home on the banks of the Hudson River. Thank





Photo by Jennifer Morse



Lisa Fox Martin, Matt Davidson, Ben Davidson  
& Pippa Biddle at the Summer Party

Photo by Jennifer Morse



Morrison Heckscher of the American Wing at the Top of the Met

Photo by Adam T. Deen

you to our party sponsors who provide critical support to this organization. Under the dinner tent, our community came together to achieve our 2018 fundraising challenge to secure matching funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities to establish a Program Endowment. As part of the annual Holiday Gathering cocktail party and private dinners, we debuted the first lantern tours

of the historic Main House on a picture-perfect snowy evening.

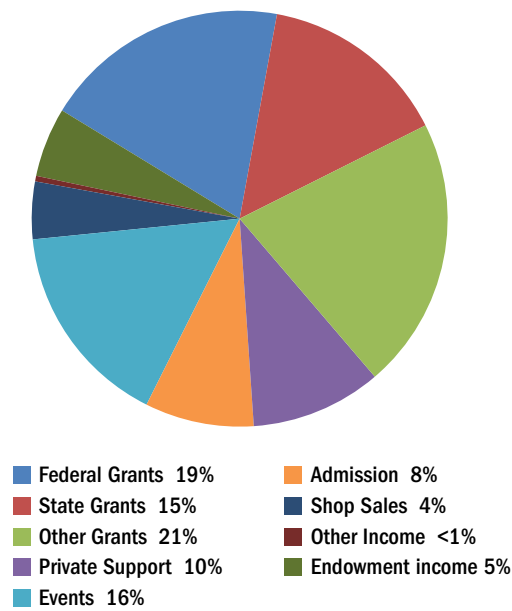
We are grateful for the many major grants that came through in 2018. We received grant funding for both specific projects and general support from a variety of sources, including Empire State Development's I LOVE NEW YORK program under the Market NY initiative, the IMLS, the National Park Service, the Gerry

Charitable Trust, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Enoch Foundation, the Educational Foundation for America, the J. M. Kaplan Fund, the Tianaderrah Foundation, and the Kindred Spirits Society of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

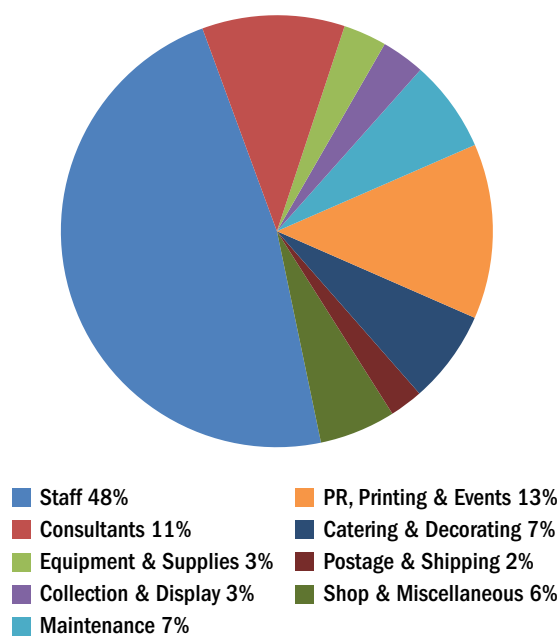


# 2018 SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS

Total Income \$1,480,763



Total Expenses \$1,215,241



Total income does not include unrealized market gains/losses. Excess of income over expenses reflects the establishment of a Program Endowment.



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Jason Acevedo & Nancy Ursprung at the Summer Party

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Janie Machiz, Jean Hamilton, Betsy Scott, Rupinder Puri, Gisèle Wertheim & Steven Schoenfeld at the Summer Party

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Guilderland Public Library  
Sylvia Hasenkopf  
Ashton Hawkins & Johnnie Moore

Jack Heller  
Gary O. Holder & Todd M. Whitley  
Hudson Area Association Library  
Pat Jason  
Jeff & Margaret Jones  
Louise Kalin-Asekoff  
Barbara Kaslow  
Richard Kathmann  
Kinderhook Memorial Library  
Philip Koch  
Carol Kohan  
Susan Kukle  
Adrienne Larys  
Elizabeth Leckie  
Ellen L. Longworth  
Dan Lowenstein  
Genevieve Lutton  
Mark A. Malley  
Andrea Mannix  
Roland J. Mantovani  
Marline Martin  
Margaret McCornock  
Ellen McKeon  
Chelsa Melo  
Carol Moccia  
Michelle Moran  
Portia Munson  
Lisa Muskat  
Kip Neale

Adalgisa Nucci  
Paul Peacock & Hollis Heimboach  
Thomas & Lys M. Pike  
Emily Plishner  
Joanna Porreca  
Norman A. Posner & Graham Farrell  
Jay Power  
Antonella T. Preve  
Telisport Putsavage  
Theresa Reynolds  
Deborah D. Richards  
Barbara Rivette  
Lois Robbins  
John Roberto  
Pat Ruck  
Ellen Ryan  
Frank Saladino  
Saugerties Public Library  
Carole Sayle  
Linden Scheff  
Neil Schofield  
Dwayne Seagraves  
David R. Seamon  
Elizabeth & Stephen Shafer  
Ave Siecinski  
Susan Simovich  
Robert H. & Sharon W. Smith  
Joan M. Starr  
Anne P. Strain

Gwen Swertfager  
Carol F. & William Tabler  
Phillip Tibbits  
Alice Timothy  
Thomas Torkilson  
Lois Vendon  
George Ward  
Lois Whealey  
Cynthia Whittaker  
Debra & John Wiedenheft  
Jean Williams  
Barbara Willner  
John Wilmerding  
Joan W. Young



Lisa Fox Martin at the Summer Party

Photo by Jennifer Morse





**Rick Sharp, James Lebenthal, Meredith Kane  
and Cheryl Lebenthal at the Top of the Met**

Photo by Adam T. Deen



**Marcus McGregor at the Summer Party**

Photo by Jennifer Morse



**Guests at the Top of the Met**

Photo by Adam T. Deen



**Dinner guests at the Holiday Gathering**

Photo by Stephen Shadley



*“A word spoken now  
recalls a word spoken  
years back.”*

—THOMAS COLE

**Thomas Cole's  
Journey**  
**Atlantic  
Crossings**

Through May 13, 2018