

March 18, 2021

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Thomas Cole National Historic Site Named Finalist for 2021 IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service

Catskill, N.Y.—The Institute of Museum and Library Services announced today that the Thomas Cole National Historic Site is among 30 finalists for the 2021 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is one of fifteen museums nominated across the country and one of three museums in New York State, along with the New-York Historical Society and the Queens Museum of Art, to be selected as a finalist for this award.

"The revival and reinstitution of the National Medals by IMLS is another signal of recovery and renewal in the nation's very challenging—but very hopeful—times," said IMLS Director Crosby Kemper. "We are celebrating not only the ongoing excellence of the best of our museums and libraries, but their extraordinary efforts through the pandemic, the recession, the racial justice protests, and national divisions to serve, heal, and bring together our communities. Congratulations to all 30 finalists."

The National Medal is the nation's highest honor given to museums and libraries that demonstrate significant impact in their communities. For more than 25 years, the award has honored institutions that demonstrate excellence in service to their communities.

"To be nominated as a finalist is an extraordinary honor for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site," said Elizabeth B. Jacks, Executive Director. "The Thomas Cole Historic Site opened in 2001 and this year marks our 20th anniversary! We are continually working to further our mission to draw inspiration from the artist Thomas Cole and engage broad audiences through innovative educational programs that are relevant today and meet the evolving needs of our community."

This thrilling announcement from the IMLS coincides with the launch of the Thomas Cole Site's newest innovative programming called 'Spring Lights,' an outdoor nighttime walk-through event designed to offer the local community a safe, fun and completely new museum experience now. With support from local businesses and friends, the museum is offering Free Community Fridays every week of the program run.

Additionally, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site is extremely proud of their successful, free K-12 programming for students that was developed with a network of regional teachers over the last decade. Together the team developed engaging lesson plans using American art to teach American history, both in classrooms and at the historic site. In 2020, the team persevered together through the pandemic and continued to host live 'virtual' school visits on Zoom.

To celebrate this honor, IMLS is encouraging Thomas Cole National Historic Site community members to share stories, memories, pictures, and videos on social media as part of the Share Your Story campaign, using the #IMLSmedals hashtag, and engage with IMLS on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). For more information, please visit the [IMLS website](#).

National Medal winners will be announced in late spring. Representatives from winning institutions will be honored for their extraordinary contributions during a virtual National Medal Ceremony this summer.

To see the full list of finalists and learn more about the National Medal, visit the [IMLS website](#).

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Our vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Ongoing Exhibition at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site

+ ***The Pollinator Pavilion***: A walk-in public artwork created by Mark Dion and Dana Sherwood offers visitors an opportunity to encounter local pollinators. The outdoor sculpture is free and open daily year-round from dawn to dusk.

Thomas Cole National Historic Site is an international destination presenting the original home and studios of Thomas Cole (1801-1848), founder of the Hudson River School of painting, the nation's first major art movement. Located on six acres in the Hudson Valley, the site includes the 1815 Main House; Cole's 1839 Old Studio; the reconstructed 1846 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 Thomas Cole National Historic Site operates as a forward-looking non-profit organization. It is responsible for raising over 90% of its annual operating budget to supplement ongoing government support facilitated through the National Park Service.

Thomas Cole Site's activities include guided and self-guided tours, special exhibitions of both 19th-century and contemporary art, print 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 enable the public to visit the places that Cole and others painted. The goal of all programs at the Thomas 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, the need for public art museums, and our conception of nature as a restorative power—are historic and timely, providing the opportunity to connect to audiences with insights that are highly relevant to their own lives.

Thomas Cole Visitor Information: Visit thomascole.org/events for programming available now. Keep in touch on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter at [@thomascolesite](#).

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