

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



Fall 2022 Newsletter



Franklin Kelly with exhibition visitors

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COLE'S LAST BRUSHSTROKE

The artwork that Thomas Cole left behind in his studio, when he died suddenly at age 47 at the peak of his artistic abilities, shaped the course of art in the United States. Our once-in-a-lifetime exhibition, *Thomas Cole's Studio: Memory & Inspiration*, re-assembled many of those significant works in the studio and explored how Thomas Cole's example so powerfully affected the evolution of art in this country. The exhibition was researched and curated by Franklin Kelly, Senior Curator and Christiane Ellis Valone Curator of American Paintings at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

Thomas Cole's death shook the American art world. The poet William Cullen Bryant wrote that it was as if one of the "grandest summits" of the Catskill Mountains had suddenly disappeared. Cole's family preserved his studio intact and the leading artists of the day visited to seek inspiration. Artists including Asher B. Durand, Frederic Church, Susie Barstow, Jasper Frances Cropsey, and others, would go on to become known as the Hudson River School painters and bring American landscape painting to a remarkable level of accomplishment and importance. Dr. Kelly

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Cole Center design by Stephen Shadley

Illustration by M.K. Tan

BREAKING GROUND ON THE COLE CENTER

The 20th Anniversary campaign is complete and work is underway on the Cole Center, a cornerstone of our strategic master planning initiative. The initiative began in 2017 with a comprehensive look at the physical campus and the infrastructure needs of our top-tier exhibitions and educational programs, as well as our growing number of visitors. The Cole Center will serve as a multi-purpose open-concept space to not only host visitor orientation, a gift shop, a café, and a public terrace, but also events, talks, students, and creative activities. A portion of the 1839 Old Studio barn on campus that previously housed visitor services and the gift shop will be retrofitted into the Education Zone, our first-ever dedicated indoor space for hosting hands-on activities for our annual school programs. Students can go from seeing Thomas Cole's Old Studio space to creating their own art in the Education Zone next door.

The new Cole Center is designed pro-bono by the internationally renowned designer Stephen Shadley, who is also a member of the Thomas Cole Site Board of Trustees. The Project Team includes Jere Tatich of Elan Planning, Design and Architecture

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CREATING LEARNING ADVENTURES

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CONTEMPORARY ART INSPIRED BY COLE

Our partnership with MASS MoCA resulted in a major two-state exhibition with the acclaimed artist Marc Swanson that was inspired by Thomas Cole. Swanson's work is in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art in NYC and the Smithsonian American Art Museum in DC, and he also lives here in Catskill. The two-venue exhibition entitled, *A Memorial to Ice at the Dead Deer Disco*, features an entirely new body of work by Swanson – his most ambitious to date – installed in the domestic home and studio of the historic artist and the industrial spaces of MASS MoCA in North Adams, Massachusetts. The exhibition is curated by Denise Markonish, Senior Curator and Managing Director of Visual Arts at MASS MoCA, and organized at the Thomas Cole Site with Kate Menconeri, Chief Curator, Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

Swanson's compelling exhibition explores the deep connection that he has experienced in the nightclubs of his youth and in nature, as well as the threats to these places: the AIDS crisis and climate change. Swanson is inspired by Thomas Cole's writing on the negative effects of industrial development on the Catskill landscape. The exhibition caused a stir in the media with artist interviews and curator conversations on WAMC's Round Table, New England Public Media and WGXC-FM, as well as deeply moving reviews. Reviewer Jennifer Huberdeau wrote, "Great art evokes an emotional response. Standing here, I was overwhelmed with joy and grief at the same time," and reviewer Chloe Pigeon wrote that it was "an exhibition that will stick with me forever." *The Arts List* observed that *A Memorial to Ice* allowed "viewers to sit within the stark re-



Marc Swanson installation view in the Old Studio

© Peter Aaron/OTTO

ality of the present, and perhaps find some community within the shared reality that the space creates."

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and MASS MoCA. The publication includes an essay by curator Denise Markonish, installation views from both museums, an interview between Marc Swanson and Kate Menconeri, and new writing by Susannah Sayler and Ed Morris (Sayler/Morris), founders of Toolshed, and performer Jack Ferver.

The exhibition is part of the Cole Site's annual series, *OPEN HOUSE: Contemporary Art in Conversation with Cole*, an annual series of curated contemporary art installations sited within and in response to the historic home and studios of Thomas Cole.

This year, our Chief Curator Kate Menconeri reimagined two previously curated *OPEN HOUSE* solo exhibitions with Kiki Smith (*From the Creek*, 2017) and Shi Guorui (*Ab/Sense-Pre/Sense*, 2019) as traveling exhibitions that will be presented at the Albuquerque Museum in Albuquerque, NM, through February 12, 2023 in conjunction with *Thomas Cole's Studio: Memory and Inspiration*.

A Memorial to Ice at the Dead Deer Disco at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, a Humanities New York SHARP Grant with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the federal American Rescue Plan, New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and the Kindred Spirits Society of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. The exhibition and publication are also supported by Louise L. Arias, Susan Ball & John Brigham, Randy Correll, Ginnie Gardiner, Shi Guorui & Wenling Zhao, Jesse Moore & David Gaizo Yellin, Nannette Sloan, and Dawn Watson.



Installation view of our traveling exhibition Kiki Smith: *From the Creek*, 2022, Albuquerque Museum

Photo by Nora Vanesky

CREATING DIGITAL LEARNING ADVENTURES

Building on our classroom lesson plans that use American art to teach American history, we developed a working prototype of a new digital education platform called the Jack Warner Gateway to Learning. The first adventure module, Exploring A River in the Catskills, transforms Cole's painting, *River in the Catskills*, 1843, into a digital world that students can explore and learn about diverse perspectives on industrialization and land development. Users can visit different areas of the landscape, access primary source documents, meet a variety of historic figures, and have conversations that lead to different outcomes. The experience is inspired by documented accounts of historic individuals, including the president of the Canajoharie & Catskill Railroad, Thomas Cooke (1778-1853), and a young local resident, Peter van Vechten Jr. (1827-1913).

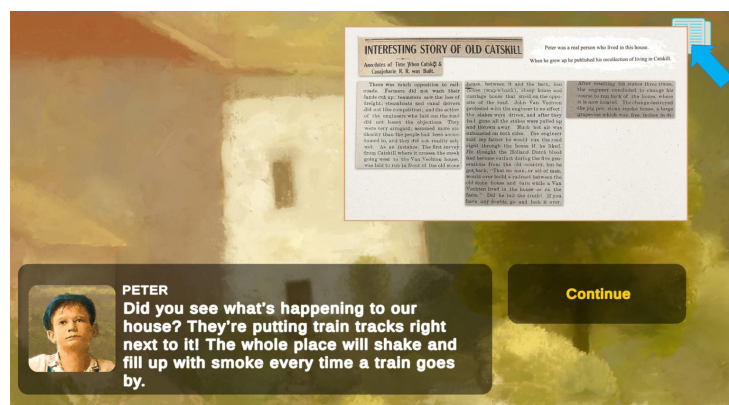
ter van Vechten Jr. (1827-1913).

Exploring A River in the Catskills is a program of the Jack Warner Gateway to Learning: Exploring American History Through American Art, produced by the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. We are currently seeking additional teachers to partner with us and test the prototype with students. Email Gabby at education@thomascole.org to learn more.

Made possible by the Warner Foundation. Additional support provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and The Bay & Paul Foundations. Dialogue text by Hudson Talbott; Design and Production by Andrés Laracuente and Todd Anderson; Researchers, Advisors, and Planning Team: Miranda Barry, Kathleen Brousseau, David Bury, Heather Christensen, Anne Comer, Madeline Conley, Lisa Dolan, Lisa Fox Martin, Tracy Fullerton, Jennifer Greim, Adam Grimes, Betsy Jacks, Brooke Krancer, Maeve McCool, Amanda Malmstrom, Kate Menconeri, Mark Mitchell, Jonathan Palmer, Heather Paroubek, Nancy Siegel, Hudson Talbott, Alan Wallach, and Susan G. A. Warner



Thomas Cooke (1778-1853)



Peter van Vechten Jr. (1827-1913)

RESTORING THE ARTIST'S HOME

The restoration of Thomas Cole's interior designs has continued with major support from the Henry Luce Foundation and the Gerry Charitable Trust. The Library Gallery decorative wall painting by Thomas Cole and hand-painted doors have been fully restored, along with the carpets, wallpaper, and wall colors in the Sitting Room, Library Gallery and the Bedroom. Thank you to our team of experts: Carrie Feder; Jean Dunbar, Ph.D., historic interiors expert; Margaret Saliske, conservator; and David Singleton, painter specializing in historic interiors.



Sitting Room

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THANK YOU Major support for the Thomas Cole Site programs and operations is provided by the Henry Luce Foundation, National Park Service, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, The Bay & Paul Foundations, Enoch Foundation, the Warner Foundation, The Manitou Fund, Brown Foundation, a Humanities New York SHARP Grant with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the federal American Rescue Plan, The Educational Foundation of America, The J. M. Kaplan Fund, Tianaderrah Foundation, and the Kindred Spirits Society of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

TELLING THE FULL HISTORY

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is a historic place that is largely associated with one male artist, as described in the site's 2003 General Management Plan. Since that time, our board and staff have expanded that narrative as part of our Whole History initiative, seizing the unique opportunity to utilize this historic site and the artwork of Thomas, Sarah, and Emily Cole as a lens through which to explore the issues that shaped the trajectory of the nation, both then and now.

The histories of the individuals that lived and labored here intersect with national and enduring events and topics, including the Industrial Revolution, the Andrew Jackson presidency, slavery in New York, the Trail of Tears, a woman's right to own property, and mental health treatment. Their histories illuminate themes that are both historic and timely, providing the opportunity to connect to audiences with insights that are highly relevant to their own lives.

To further this work, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site was awarded a grant of \$50,000 from the Telling the Full History Fund, a grant program from the National Trust for Historic Preservation made possible through the National Endowment for the Humanities' American Rescue Plan, Humanities Grantmaking for Organizations. The

project is to create new installations in the historic Main House that shine a light on the histories of two women in particular: an unnamed free, Black woman, recorded on the 1840 census, who lived with Thomas and his family, cited as being between 55-99 years old, and therefore was very likely born enslaved, and Maria Bartow Cole, the woman who married Thomas and whose family owned the property that now bears his name.

2022 Cole Fellow Adaeze Dikko conducted the initial research on the unnamed free, Black woman, and 2023 Cole Fellow Beth Wynne is continuing that work. As part of the research, we are tracing the history of enslaved persons that lived on the property.

Letters reveal that Maria was deeply involved in art and business decisions. Thomas wrote to her, "But how can I paint without you with me to praise or to criticize?" Maria advised Thomas on patron negotiations in a letter she wrote to him in February 1844: "[W]hy need you propose either of your subjects for Pictures, tell them that you have subjects, & what [price] you will paint them for & be sure you have it in the bargain that you may exhibit them if you wish to."

The new installations will open in Spring 2023.



Old Studio with Thomas Cole's son Theodore and three unidentified farm workers, c. 1910, Thomas Cole Site Archives

2022 BEECHER LECTURE

Dr. Myra Young Armstead delivers our 2022 Beecher Lecture entitled "Transitioning to Freedom in New York's Upper Hudson Valley" on Sunday, November 13. Dr. Armstead is the Vice President for Academic Inclusive Excellence; Lyford Paterson Edwards and Helen Gray Edwards Professor of Historical Studies at Bard College, and an advisor to the Thomas Cole Site's Whole History initiative.

With the passage of a law prohibiting importation of African captives into New York in 1785, the state entered a period of abolitionist activity that eventuated in the passage of the Gradual Manumission Act of 1799 and a formal end to slavery by 1827. The program takes place in Thomas Cole New Studio at 2 pm, followed by a reception on the porch of the Main House. Visit thomascole.org/events for more events.

COLE FELLOWS UNCOVERING NEW RESEARCH

This year, we welcomed the new class of Cole Fellows to live and work at the site and advance their careers. The annual Cole Fellowship offers four recent college graduates the opportunity to gain professional experience by becoming part of the museum staff. The Fellows serve on project committees, attend professional development museum visits, engage with the public, and conduct significant research that is immediately put into action to advance mission-based initiatives.

Vicente Cayuela received his B.A. in Studio Art from Brandeis University. Vicente is researching Indigenous land use, place names, and 19th-century industry in the Hudson Valley. Sofia Thieu D'Amico recently received her Master's from the Center for Curatorial Studies (CCS) at Bard College, with research that has focused on the intersections of carceral and creative industries and prison labor histories of New York state. Sofia's research will focus on unacknowledged labor on site, post-emancipation histories, and local abolitionist activities. Kristen Marchetti received her B.A. in the History of Art & Architecture and Visual Art from Brown University. Kristen is researching Sarah and Maria Cole to continue expanding the story of the women who lived and made art at the historic site. Her project will shed light on Sarah's career as a professional artist. Beth Wynne received her B.A.



Sofia Thieu D'Amico, Kristen Marchetti, Beth Wynne, Vicente Cayuela in English with a concentration in Creative Writing and minors in Art Studio and Art History from SUNY New Paltz. She formerly worked at the site as a Museum Educator and researched the lives of Frances Bartow and an unnamed woman of color who is represented on an 1840 census as living in the home. Beth is presently expanding the story of the Thomson family, who built the Main House, and the systems of labor, commerce, trade, and agriculture that saw the development of the historic property as we know it today.

Their research will advance our Whole History initiative and interpretation on site.

PRESENTING NEW PERSPECTIVES AT THE SUNDAY SALONS

Our nineteenth annual Sunday Salons featured conversations once a month from January through April with inspiring individuals including artists, writers, community members, scholars, and the next generation of leaders in the field. The conversations explored the contemporary resonance of the artist and early environmentalist Thomas Cole, including the stories behind his traveling trunk and the myths perpetuated by his depictions of Indigenous figures. Thank you to our featured speakers: Marc Swanson, acclaimed artist; Denise Markonish, Senior Curator

and Director of Exhibitions at MASS MoCA; Kate Menconeri, Chief Curator at the Thomas Cole Site; Pippa Biddle and Benjamin Davidson, Contributors to *The Magazine Antiques*, and founders and Owners of Quittner Antiques; Dr. Scott Manning Stevens, Associate Professor and Director of Native American Studies and Associate Professor of English Department, Syracuse University; and our 2022 Class of Cole Fellows Isabelle Bohling and Brooke Krancer.

Watch the series at thomascole.org/perspectives.



Marc Swanson studio visit



Pippa Biddle & Benjamin Davidson



Dr. Scott Manning Stevens



2022 Class of Cole Fellows

PUBLISHING COLE'S WRITING

This year, we transcribed and published Thomas Cole's private journal, making this primary source document available to the public for the first time. Cole titled the journal, *Thoughts & Occurrences*, in which he wrote from 1834 until his sudden death in 1848. This period encompasses the peak of his artistic career, including the years when he painted his most iconic works: *The Oxbow*, 1836; *The Course of Empire*, 1836; and *The Voyage of Life*, 1842. *Thoughts & Occurrences* reveals his perspective on life in the United States in the early 19th century. The book is the third installment in our ongoing publication series, an initiative of the Thomas Cole Site to transcribe and publish Thomas Cole's original writing. The text was transcribed by Peter Fedoryk, 2019 Cole Fellow, in consultation with Dr. Alan Wallach, leading Cole scholar and member of our National Council. All three books are available for purchase at store.thomascole.org.



Photo by Jessica Goon



@cheyannadenicolaphoto

HOST YOUR EVENT AT THE THOMAS COLE HISTORIC SITE

Located in the Village of Catskill in the Hudson Valley near the Catskill Mountains, the Thomas Cole Historic Site is a picturesque place for your special event. With 19th-century charm, stunning mountain views, and beautiful grounds, we offer the ideal venue for any celebration. If you are interested in hosting your wedding or special event with us, please reach out to Jessica at jgoon@thomascole.org to start the conversation.

Cole Center continued from page 1

PPLC; and forester Jimmy Bulich, who is also donating his expertise pro-bono and serves on the Thomas Cole Site Board of Trustees.

The Master Plan is supported by \$592,300 in project support from the National Park Service and a \$360,000 grant from Empire State Development, as well as significant support from The Bay & Paul Foundations, Hudson River Valley Greenway, Nina Matis & Alan Gosule, Brown Foundation, Evelyn Trebilcock & Douglas Hammond, Christopher Buck & Dr. Hara Schwartz, Anne Miller & Stuart Breslow, the Warner Foundation, The Educational Foundation of America, Robert Miller & Kathy Klingenstein, The J. M. Kaplan Fund, the Hudson River Bank & Trust Foundation, Lisa Fox Martin, Kristin Gamble, Jimmy & Micaela Bulich, Alison Lankenau, Carolyn B. MacDonald, Betsy & Al Scott, Stainman Family Foundation, and many other generous individuals and foundations. Thank you for making this project possible.

REMEMBERING RAY BEECHER

Raymond (Ray) Beecher was the Greene County Historian and the leader of a community campaign to save the Thomas Cole site from being lost to history twenty years ago. His advocacy, support, and bequest transformed a beloved property into the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and protects its future.

If you have already included the historic site in your estate plans, or would like to find out how, please let us know. We cannot wait to thank you. You can reach Jennifer at jgreim@thomascole.org to start the conversation.

writes that, "Cole's vital 'presence'—the way he lived on in memories of him and in the inspiring example of his works—was essential to those same artists as they guided landscape painting to national prominence."

The exhibition presented a selection of major paintings – finished and unfinished – and artifacts to reimagine what visitors would have seen upon entering the artist's studio after his death, a building that Cole designed and called his "New Studio." *The Wall Street Journal* enthused that the "show tantalizes in unexpected ways" and declared the accompanying catalogue "splendid."

The exhibition was accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by Hirmer Publishers, Munich, Germany, and distributed worldwide. The principal essay was by Franklin Kelly with addition-

al essays by Annette Blaugrund, independent scholar and author; William L. Coleman, Director of Collections at The Olana Partnership; and Lance Mayer and Gay Myers, acclaimed painting conservators. After the debut at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, the exhibition travels to the Albuquerque Museum in Albuquerque, NM, where it will be on view through February 12, 2023.

Thomas Cole's Studio: Memory and Inspiration is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Major support is provided by the Barrie A. and Deedee Wigmore Foundation. Additional support is provided by Candace and Rick Beinecke, and Richard T. Sharp. The exhibition and publication are also supported by the Warner Foundation, The Lunder Foundation, Lisa Fox Martin, Anne Miller and Stuart Breslow, Greene County Legislature through the Greene County Cultural Fund, administered in Greene County by CREATE Council on the Arts, Stainman Family Foundation, National Trust Insurance Services, LLC, The Bank of Greene County Charitable Foundation, Stephen Hannock, Annette and Stanley Blaugrund, New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and the Kindred Spirits Society of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site.



Thomas Cole's Studio: Memory and Inspiration installation view

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Become a member to provide critical support for free programming for school groups and community members in need, all while enjoying unlimited free admission, exhibition previews, opening events, and more. Learn more at thomascole.org/membership or by connecting with Nichole at nburke@thomascole.org.

SCHOLARS' DINNER

Thank you to everyone who supported our 2022 Scholars' Dinner. We hosted the event in person at The Century Association for the first time since 2019. It was wonderful to see everyone together again to celebrate the bright future of American art. Our featured scholars were Franklin Kelly, Senior Curator and Christiane Ellis Valone Curator of American Paintings at the National Gallery of Art; Asma Naeem, The Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown Chief Curator at the Baltimore Museum of Art; Stephanie Sparling Williams, Andrew W. Mellon Curator of American Art at the Brooklyn Museum; and our 2022 Class of Cole Fellows, Isabelle Bohling, Adaeze Dikko, Brooke Krancer, and Oriana Tang. All proceeds from the event underwrite the annual Cole Fellowship at the Thomas Cole Site, a research and professional development program launching the next generation of leaders in museums.

AMERICAN ART TABLE

Lisa Fox Martin
Barbara B. Millhouse

FELLOWSHIP TABLE

Nina Matis & Alan Gosule
Anne J. Miller & Stuart J. M.
Breslow

AMERICAN ART TICKET

Michael Altman Fine Art &
Advisory Services
David B. Forer
Kristin Gamble
Alison Lankenau
Joanne D. Payson
Lois & Arthur Stainman
Evelyn D. Trebilcock
Barrie A. & Deedee Wigmore

FELLOWSHIP TICKET

Frederick W. & Candace K.
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Ann and Arthur Grey
Foundation
Meredith J. Kane
Nicholas & Lee Findlay Potter
Elizabeth J. & Alfred L. Scott
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Diamond

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Tara Sullivan
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Howard Zar



Isabelle Bohling, Brooke Krancer, Kate Menconeri & Oriana



Kate Menconeri, Stephanie Sparling Williams, Franklin Kelly, Asma Naeem, Lisa Fox Martin & Betsy Jacks



Franklin Kelly



Lisa Fox Martin & Betsy Jacks



Houston Kelly, James Krugman, Jay Lesenger, Connie Simmons & Hudson Talbott



Briana Tang



Anne Miller, Lee Findlay Potter, Robert Palmer, Nina Matis, Alan Gosule, Ginnie Gardiner & Susan Perkins

SUMMER PARTY

Thank you to everyone who supported our annual Summer Party. We are so grateful for the community behind this historic place. It was a beautiful evening on the banks of the Hudson River at the home of our Chairman Lisa Fox Martin. Proceeds from the event supported our magnificent special exhibitions this year. Under the tent, together we established the Inspiration Fund to support the future of our world-class exhibition programs, leading scholarship, and the artists and scholars of tomorrow. Thank you for being behind us every step of the way.

INSPIRATION TABLE

Lisa Fox Martin
James LaForce & Stephen Henderson
Nina Matis & Alan Gosule
Anne Miller & Stuart Breslow
Joanne D. Payson
P.J. Shelley & Patricia Pindar
The Warner Foundation

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Ricky Lark & Rickey Shaum
Camille Massey & Gillie Holme
Patti Matheney & Michael Schrom
Stephen Shadley
Dianne E. Young
Pim Zeegers & Gertjan Meijer

PLATINUM TABLE

Body Be Well Pilates, Chelsea
Streifeneder
Jimmy & Micaela Bulich
David Bury & Marianne Lockwood
MaryEllen Gallagher & Frank Cuthbert
Kristin Gamble
Ginnie Gardiner
Linda & Tom Gentalen
Cynthia & Robert Goldberg
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Tent by Cantele Tent Rentals
Fireworks by Fireworks Extravaganza



Cocktails by the pool



Frank Swim



Michael Miranda & Guia Golden



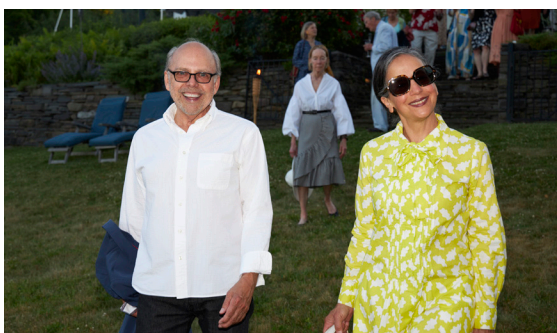
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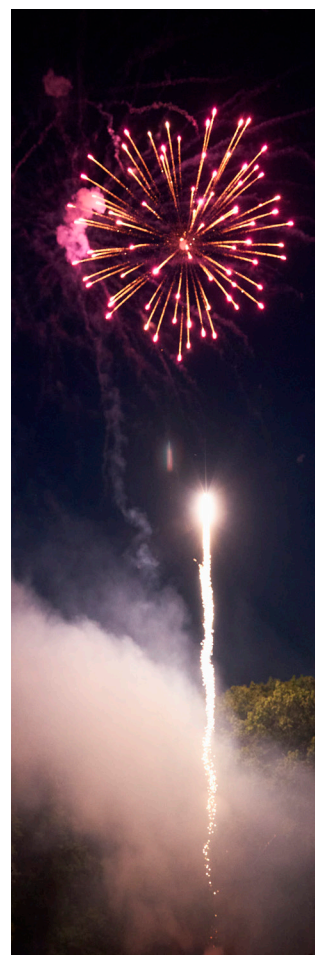
Joanne Payson, Betsy Jacks & Nannette Sloan



Beth Wynne, Vicente Cayuela & Kristen Marchetti



Anthony D'Argenzio, Hillary Zio, Pippa Biddle, Ben Davidson, Sara & Tom de Swardt



Dinner guests at the Summer Party

Photos by Adam T. Deen

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THOMAS COLE

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Susie M. Barstow, *Mountain Lake in Autumn* (detail), 1873, oil on canvas, 20 x 30 in., Private collection

2023 EXHIBITION PREVIEW

Next year, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site will present a two-part exhibition and publication that reinserts the important 19th-century American artist Susie Barstow (1836-1923) into the history of the Hudson River School and presents contemporary artists who expand and challenge how we think about “land” and “landscape” today. Engaging multigenerational perspectives, the project launches an expanded narrative around land and art that challenges and strongly recenters women in the canon of American landscape art.

Susie Barstow (1836-1922) was widely exhibited and celebrated during her lifetime, but then was erased from art history. It is long past due to bring forward this accomplished artist in the first solo show of her work. The contemporary component will feature multi-disciplinary artistic practices and diverse critical viewpoints of Teresita Fernández, Guerrilla Girls, Marie Lorenz, Tanya Marcuse, Mary Mattingly, Ebony G. Patterson, Anna Plesset, Wendy Red Star, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Cecilia Vicuña, Kay WalkingStick, and Saya Woolfalk. Curated by Nancy Siegel, Kate Menconeri, and Amanda Malmstrom, with consulting editor Annette Blaugrund, the exhibition will be at the Thomas Cole Site May 6-October 29, 2023 and travel to the New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain, CT, November 18, 2023-March 31, 2024. The project will be accompanied by a full-color book published by Hirmer Publishing.



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Please recycle again.