

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



Fall 2023 Newsletter



Visitors viewing work by Wendy Red Star

@steven_draws

WOMEN REFRAME AMERICAN LANDSCAPE

“Striking,” “Powerful” and “Unmissable” reflect the broad critical acclaim for our groundbreaking two-part exhibition, *Women Reframe American Landscape: Susie Barstow & Her Circle / Contemporary Practices*. The exhibition presented the first retrospective of the great American landscape painter Susie M. Barstow (1836-1923) on the 100th anniversary of her death, and the work of thirteen internationally acclaimed contemporary women artists who are rethinking landscape today: Teresita Fernández, Guerrilla Girls, Marie Lorenz, Tanya Marcuse, Mary Mattingly, Ebony G. Patterson, Anna Plesset, Jean Shin, Wendy Red Star, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Cecilia Vicuña, Kay WalkingStick and Saya Woolfalk. The exhibition was curated by Dr. Nancy Siegel, Professor of Art History at Towson University; Kate Menconeri, Chief Curator; and Amanda Malmstrom, Associate Curator, at the Thomas Cole Site. The exhibition is the centerpiece of our site-wide 2023 Women, Land + Art Initiative across interpretation, collections, programming and publications.

The Washington Post hailed the show as

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Cole Center under construction

Jessica Goon

ARRIVING THIS SPRING: THE COLE CENTER

The new Cole Center building is nearing completion. Look out for a ribbon-cutting this spring! The building will give visitors a new arrival experience that sets the scene for this world-class historic landmark with award-winning programming. Visitors will enter on a new path at the highest elevation of the campus and come upon the forest-green Cole Center building amidst the trees. They will step through the doors of the building, which will serve as our new four-season Visitor Center, and be met with a breathtaking view of the historic campus through the western

facade of floor-to-ceiling windows. In one panoramic view, visitors will see the historic Main House, Old Studio building, New Studio building and the flowering gardens and grounds, all against the backdrop of the majestic Catskill Mountains. Visitors will be able

to walk through glass doors out onto a stone patio with tables and chairs, where they will have the opportunity to enjoy refreshments before or after they explore all that the historic campus has to offer.

The new energy-efficient Cole Center building is the centerpiece of our \$1.8 MM Master Plan. The

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**NEW PBS
SERIES ON
THOMAS COLE**
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OPENING A NEW SPACE REVEALS NEW HISTORY

This year we researched, restored and opened a new historic space to visitors in the 1815 Main House. The Ground Floor space, identified as the “Foot of the Stairs” in the 1846 inventory, was recorded as having contained one cot bed and curtains, one table, and one mat on the floor. Someone, likely a live-in laborer, slept here. But who?

To help answer this question, we turned to the 1840 census, conducted during Thomas Cole’s residency (1836-1848). In that census, the recorded population of the town of Catskill was 5,339. Of that total, 11 free Black women were listed as between the ages of 55 to 99. Based on the household listing, we now know that one of those women lived here



Foot of the Stairs space in the Main House

Jon Palmer

alongside the artist and his family. It is possible that she slept in the Foot of the Stairs. Based on her age range and New York State laws at the time, she was very likely born enslaved.

With a project team led by the Director of Visitor Engagement Heather Palmer, trustees and advisors, including Myra Young Armstead, Professor of Historical Studies at Bard College, we explored the question “who was she?” The project took flight from a research report on the free Black woman conducted by Adaeze Dikko, Class of 2022 Cole Fellow. The restoration of the historic space was led by historic interiors experts Jean Dunbar and Carrie Feder, and the interpretation design, including a new immersive soundscape, was led by designers Jude Ray and Paul Trepido. New interpretation, primary sources and objects were incorporated throughout the entire house to bring attention to this previously unrepresented member of the household who, along with other laborers, made it possible for Thomas Cole to pursue his artistic career. To learn more about our ongoing research and the full list of project team members visit thomascole.org/who-was-she and thomascole.org/enslavement.

This project was funded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Telling the Full History Preservation Fund, with support from National Endowment for the Humanities and the Gerry Charitable Trust. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this project do not necessarily represent those of the National Trust or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

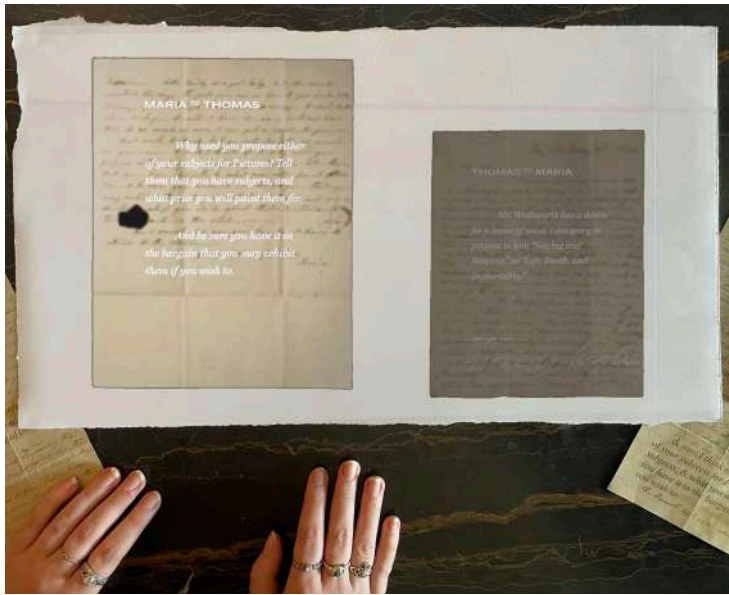
HOSTING EDUCATIONAL & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This year, the site hosted its first teacher workshop for New York State Master Teachers. The program, entitled “Thomas Cole, the Hudson River School, Environmentalism and Contemporary Land Use” introduced K-12 Biology and General Science teachers to Thomas Cole, who was one of the earliest advocates for the preservation of this nation’s landscapes. The program supported teachers with practical ways to incorporate the Hudson River School artists into classroom teaching and draw connections between the past and present. Over the summer, the Museum Association of New York hosted a Meet-Up discussion at the Thomas Cole Site, gathering together museum professionals from across the state here in Catskill. The event facilitated discussions on how to advance museums in a post-pandemic world.



Executive Director Betsy Jacks with museum professionals in the East Parlor

REINTRODUCING MARIA BARTOW



Maria Bartow digital installation appears on a tabletop in the West Parlor

A new digital installation in the West Parlor of Maria and Thomas Cole's home brings out their conversations in historic letters, in which Maria demonstrates an astute business sense. When discussing negotiations with patrons, she advises, "Why need you propose either of your subjects for Pictures? Tell them that you have subjects, and what price you will paint them for. And be sure you have it in the bargain that you may exhibit them if you wish to." The exchange raises the question: how many people does it take to make a successful artist? In an earlier letter, Thomas writes to Maria from Europe, "But how can I paint without you with me to praise or to criticize?" Upstairs, don't miss a new installation of Maria's original wedding dress in their bedroom. For more about Maria, visit thomascole.org/maria-bartow-cole.

SAVING THE PAINTINGS OF SARAH COLE

Sarah Cole (1805-1857) was a professional artist who exhibited and sold her paintings at the American Art-Union and the National Academy of Design in New York City, as well as the Western Art Union in Cincinnati and the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore. The artist Thomas Cole was her brother, and the Cole Site collection includes several surviving paintings attributed to Sarah Cole. This year, three of those works are newly conserved and on display in the Main House with two additional works by Sarah on loan from the Albany Institute of History & Art. Sarah's paintings on view include both original compositions and two paintings from 1848, the year her brother died, that expertly copy Thomas' famous *A View of the Catskill Mountain House* and *Voyage of Life: Old Age*.

In a special once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, visitors to the Cole Site this year were able to see Sarah Cole's, *A View of the Catskill Mountain House*, 1848, on loan from the Albany Institute of History & Art; Thomas Cole's *A View of the Catskill Mountain House*, 1845-48, on loan from the Warner Foundation, and a work about Sarah's canvas made

by the contemporary artist, Anna Plesset, entitled *Value Study 1: A View of the Catskill Mountain House / Copied from a picture by S. Cole copied from a picture by T. Cole / 1848*, 2020, which is on view as part of *Women Reframe American Landscape*. Research to support the new installation was completed by Kristen Marchetti, Class of 2023 Cole Fellow, with Site curators, Amanda Malmstrom and Kate Menconeri. For more about Sarah, visit thomascole.org/sarah-cole.

The conservation was supported through the NYS/GHHN Conservation Treatment Grant Program administered by Greater Hudson Heritage Network. This program is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.



Installation view of work by Anna Plesset (left) and Sarah Cole (center) & Thomas Cole (right)

THANK YOU! The Thomas Cole Site programs and operations are supported by the National Park Service, a grant awarded to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site by New York State's Empire State Development and the I LOVE NY Division of Tourism, Warner Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, David Bury and The Bay & Paul Foundations, Enoch Foundation, The Manitou Fund, The Educational Foundation of America, The J. M. Kaplan Fund, Tianaderrah Foundation, and the Kindred Spirits Society of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

PRESENTING NEW PERSPECTIVES AT THE SUNDAY SALONS

This year marked the 20th anniversary of our Sunday Salons series, presenting new ideas in American art. The 2023 series featured leading curators and historians at the top of their fields and presented new research by the Class of 2023 Cole Fellows. Thank you to our speakers: Stephanie Sparling Williams, Andrew W. Melon Curator of American Art at the Brooklyn Museum; Heather Bruegl, Historian and citizen of the Oneida Nation; Virginia Anderson, Curator of American Art and Department Head of American Painting & Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Baltimore Museum of Art; and Cole Fellows Sofia Thieu D'Amico, Kristen Marchetti, and Beth Wynne. Free recordings can be found at thomascole.org/perspectives.

The 2023 Sunday Salons were made possible by the estate of James T Lewis IV. This program is supported by a grant awarded to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site by New York State's Empire State Development and the I LOVE NY Division of Tourism. Additional support provided by New York State Council on the Arts with 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.



Stephanie Sparling Williams giving her talk in the New Studio

Adam T. Deen

GATHERING FOR OUR CURATORS' TALK & ARTIST PANEL



The Thomas Cole National Historic Site and Foreland presented a Curators' Talk + Artist Panel at Foreland in Catskill to accompany our exhibition, *Women Reframe American Landscape*. Foreland is a campus for art and gathering on the banks of the Catskill Creek. Exhibiting artists Anna Plesset, Jean Shin and Saya Woolfalk joined the exhibition curators Nancy Siegel, Kate Menconeri and Amanda Malmstrom to discuss the exhibition themes and hear from our community. The generous conversation sparked an audience discussion on incomplete historical narratives and access and representation in the art world today.

The event was made possible by a Humanities New York Vision/Action Grant. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Images left to right: Jean Shin via jeanshin.com/bio, Anna Plesset via Patron Gallery and Saya Woolfalk via sayawoolfalk.com/bio photo by LaMont Hamilton.

MEMBERS SUPPORT FREE PROGRAMMING

Thank you to our members, who provide critical support for free programming for children and community members in need. Members receive unlimited free admission, invitations to opening events, program & shop discounts and more. Become a member at thomascole.org/membership or by connecting with Caroline at cwilliams@thomascole.org.

STEWARDED FUTURE LEADERS

This spring, we welcomed the Class of 2024 Cole Fellows. Now in its thirteenth year, the Cole Fellows Program is unique in stewarding talented young people into the field by providing them the opportunity to take an active role in a museum and do rewarding work. Each year, the program invites four aspiring museum professionals to live and work for twelve months at the historic site. Fellows take part in researching, planning and implementing programs across the site, from realizing exhibitions and publications to leading educational events.

Catherine Augustyn received a B.A. in Art History and Economics with a minor in French from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Catherine is working on exhibitions and collections, as well as primary research on Maria Bartow and her sisters, Emily, Frances and Harriet, who lived here and owned the historic property during the latter part of Thomas Cole's tenure. Their life experiences intersect with major national events in history, including the women's rights movement.

Michaela Davidson received a B.A. in Art History and minors in Creative Writing and History from Marist College. Michaela is involved with publications, touring exhibitions, programs and primary research that focuses on what a day in the life was like at the historic property during Thomas' tenure from five different perspectives and how those daily experiences resonate with us today.

Ryan Munasinghe received a B.A. in History at



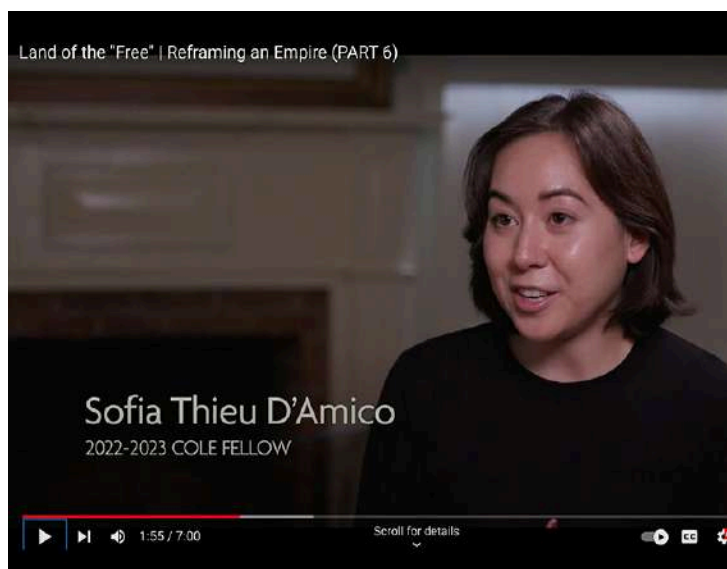
Brandon Vanbach, Ryan Munasinghe,
Michaela Davidson & Catherine Augustyn

Kate Menconeri

the University of Connecticut. Ryan is working on projects in education and collections and will conduct primary research on the lives of laborers on the historic property as part of the site-wide W/hole History initiative.

Brandon Vanbach received a B.A. in Studio Art from Bard College. Brandon is working on education and collection initiatives, as well as primary research on the history of the land where the museum is now located, with a focus on Indigenous perspectives. This project will also examine best practices around land management today and help us rethink, rehabilitate and restore the land on which the Cole Site resides.

NOW STREAMING: TEN-PART PBS SERIES ON THOMAS COLE

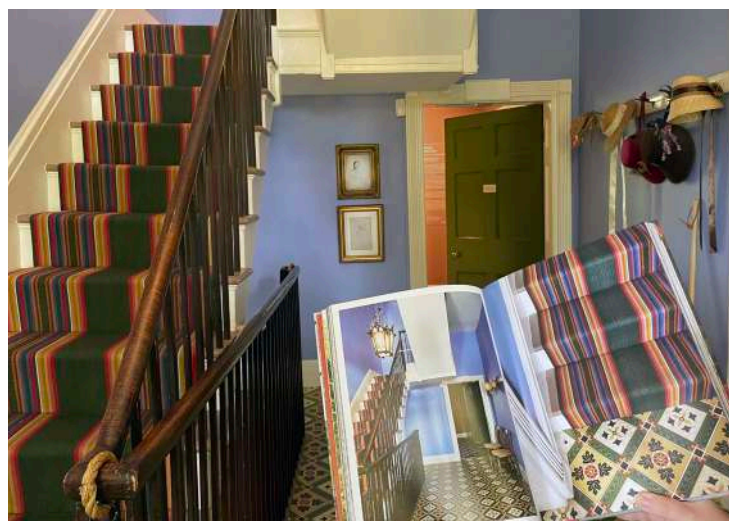


Cole Fellow Sofia Thieu D'Amico in the new ten-part series

PBS and WMHT debuted a new ten-part series, *Reframing an Empire*, on Thomas Cole and the pivotal period of American history in which he lived and worked between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Taking inspiration from our work at the museum, the series features our research into the expanded historic context of Cole's art and celebrates our exhibition, *Women Reframe American Landscape*. The series features our Director Betsy Jacks; TCNHS Curators Kate Menconeri and Amanda Malmstom; guest curator and Professor of Art History at Towson University, Nancy Siegel; and Sofia Thieu D'Amico, Kristen Marchetti and Beth Wynne from our Class of 2023 Cole Fellows. Start watching at wmht.org/nys-public-media/reframing-an-empire.

NEW DESIGN BOOK CELEBRATES COLE

The home of Maria and Thomas Cole, known today as the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, is featured in a new 272-page design book, “Country Life: Homes of the Catskill Mountains and Hudson Valley,” by world-renowned photographer William Abranowicz and published by Vendome Press. Abranowicz’s photographs regularly appear on the cover of *Architectural Digest* and his prints are in the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The National Portrait Gallery in London, among others. In October, Abranowicz teamed up with the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and local design lovers Pippa Biddle and Benjamin Davidson of Quittner to host a special event in celebration of the publication.



New book in the Entrance Hall of the Main House

HOSTING YOUR SPECIAL MOMENTS



Recent wedding at the museum

@cheyannadenicolaphoto

Cole Center continued from page 1

Cole Center is designed to improve our service to visitors, and will include ticketing, a gift shop and light refreshments in an open flexible space that can also host lectures, workshops and events. The Cole Center was designed pro-bono by the acclaimed designer Stephen Shadley, who is frequently featured in *Architectural Digest*. The western façade of the new building draws inspiration from the windows that Thomas Cole designed for his nearby 1846 New Studio building. The neutral green exterior of the Cole Center is designed to recede into the surrounding landscape, and the public patio will be surrounded by a new garden of native plants. The former visitor center space will become the museum’s first-ever dedicated educational space for

learners of all ages.

Major support for the Master Plan is provided by the National Park Service, Empire State Development, David Bury & The Bay and Paul Foundations, and the Hudson River Valley Greenway. The project is supported by Brown Foundation, Christopher E. Buck & Hara Schwartz, The Educational Foundation of America, Kristin Gamble, The J.M. Kaplan Fund Inc., Lisa Fox Martin, Nina Matis & Alan Gosule, Anne Miller & Stuart Breslow, Robert A. Miller & Kathy Klingenstein, Evelyn D. Trebilcock & Douglas Hammond, and the Warner Foundation. Additional support is provided by many generous individuals like you, and a full list of gratitude can be found at thomascole.org/colecenter.

Women Reframe American Landscape continued from page 1

“impressive,” “thoughtful,” and a “model,” noting that “Barstow’s paintings, along with the contemporary works included in this show, add complexity and nuance to the history of American landscape.” *The New York Times* featured the exhibition in two articles and described the contemporary artists as “formidable.” Major institutions including The Metropolitan Museum

of Art and The Whitney Museum of American Art joined us in sharing the news of our exhibition on their social media channels. The exhibition curators presented the project at the JFK Institute in Berlin as part of the “Home/Habitat” Terra Foundation for American Art symposium.

Susie Barstow was a force of nature. *The Magazine Antiques* decries “That Barstow fell off the art-

historical map seems inexplicable.” She graduated from Cooper Union in New York City and went on to exhibit her work alongside artists of the day, including Albert Bierstadt, Asher B. Durand and Sanford Gifford, realizing comparable prices for her paintings. Barstow traveled the world and hiked mountains fearlessly. Her obituary confirms: she was a “prominent landscape artist, whose paintings won her wide renown.” A selection of women artists from Barstow’s circle, who exhibited and sold their work as well, are also included in the exhibition.

The contemporary portion of the show features “some of this country’s best artists” as described by *The Washington Post*. The curators worked closely with the thirteen artists to create site-responsive installations of their work throughout the 1815 Main House, 1839 studio and the landscape here at the historic home and studios of the artist and environmentalist Thomas Cole (1801-1848).

The artworks offer an expansive view of land, posing questions about how we see the history of American art and landscape, who lived and worked the land in this country, and our current relationship and connection with land in a moment of mounting climate crisis.

Women Reframe American Landscape is accompanied by a full-color publication printed by Hirmer Publishers, Munich. The book features original essays by the exhibition curators, texts and plates by exhibiting artists, as well as contributions by Candice Hopkins (Carcross/Tagish First Nation), Jolene Rickard (Tuscarora Nation (Turtle Clan),



Installation view of artwork by Ebony G. Patterson in the Main House

Hodinöhsö:ni Confederacy), Heather Bruegel (Oneida/ Stockbridge-Munsee) and Sofia Thieu D’Amico (Class of 2023 Cole Fellow). After its debut at the Thomas Cole Site in Catskill, the exhibition travels to the New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain, CT, from November 16, 2023 to March 31, 2024 and the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI, from May 4 to August 25, 2024.

Women Reframe American Landscape: Susie Barstow & Her Circle / Contemporary Practices is made possible by the Warner Foundation. Led by Susan G.A. Warner, Sc.D., the Warner Foundation continues the legacy of her late husband Jonathan “Jack” Warner in utilizing American art as an important vehicle for teaching American history. In addition to serving as Chairman for the Warner Foundation, she is a trustee of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. The exhibition is supported by a grant from



Susan Warner

the National Endowment for the Arts. This project is supported by a grant awarded to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site by New York State’s Empire State Development and the I LOVE NY Division of Tourism. Additional support is provided by Wyeth Foundation for American Art and Tavolozza Foundation. The exhibition and publication are also supported by Jennifer Krieger and Eric Siegel, Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, Rick and Candace Beinecke, The Coby Foundation, Ltd., Marshall Field V., Allan E. Bulley, Jr., Greene County Legislature through the Greene County Cultural Fund, National Trust Insurance Services, LLC, Suncommon, The Bank of Greene County Charitable Foundation, 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.



Installation view of historic works in the New Studio © Peter Aaron/OTTO

SCHOLARS’ DINNER

Thank you to everyone who supported our 2023 Scholars’ Dinner at The Century Association in New York City. The Scholars’ Dinner is a special night in American art for curators, collectors, philanthropists and enthusiasts alike to come together and celebrate the people who inspire us. The featured scholars were Linda Ferber, Director Emerita of the New-York Historical Society; Nancy Siegel, Professor of Art History at Towson University and co-curator of our 2023 exhibition; Sophie Lynford, the Annette Woolard-Provine Curator of the Bancroft Collection at the Delaware Art Museum; and our 2023 Class of Cole Fellows: Vicente Cayuela, Sofia Thieu D’Amico, Kristen Marchetti and Beth Wynne. 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. Save the date of November 18, 2024, for the next celebration.

AMERICAN ART TABLE

Lisa Fox Martin
Nina Matis & Alan Gosule and
Anne Miller & Stuart Breslow

FELLOWSHIP TABLE

Warner Foundation,
Susan G. A. Warner

AMERICAN ART TICKET

Frederick W. & Candace
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Elizabeth Scott
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FELLOWSHIP TICKET

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Karen Zukowski &
David Diamond



Lisa Fox Martin, Linda Ferber, Sophie Lynford, Nancy Siegel & Betsy Jacks



Kristin Gamble & Marianne Lockwood



Lisa Fox Martin & Tom de Swardt



Stephen Shadley, Warner Shook, Guy Griggs & Frank Swim



Hudson Talbott, Maura O’Shea & Shi Guorui



Kate Menconeri, Kristen Marchetti, Sofia Thieu D’Amico & Beth Wynne

Photos by Adam T. Deen

SUMMER PARTY

Thank you to everyone who supported the annual Summer Party hosted by our indefatigable chairman Lisa Fox Martin in Catskill. We are so incredibly grateful for the community behind this historic place! The event and live auction together raised over \$250,000. These critical funds make our programming possible, including world-class exhibitions and innovative programs for school children and teachers. Save the date of June 22 for the 2024 Summer Party.

PATRON OF THE ARTS TABLE

The Jerome and Marlene Brody Foundation
Lisa Fox Martin
James LaForce & Stephen Henderson
Nina Matis & Alan Gosule
Anne Miller & Stuart Breslow

PLATINUM TABLE

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Warner Foundation

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Samantha Butts, Stephen Shadley & Sydney Butts



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Dinner under the tent



Lisa Fox Martin & Betsy Jacks



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Susan Ball, Nina Matis & Marianne Lockwood



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Lisa Fox Martin, Penny Hudnut, Betsy Scott & Stephen Schoenfeld



Photos by Joann Arruda

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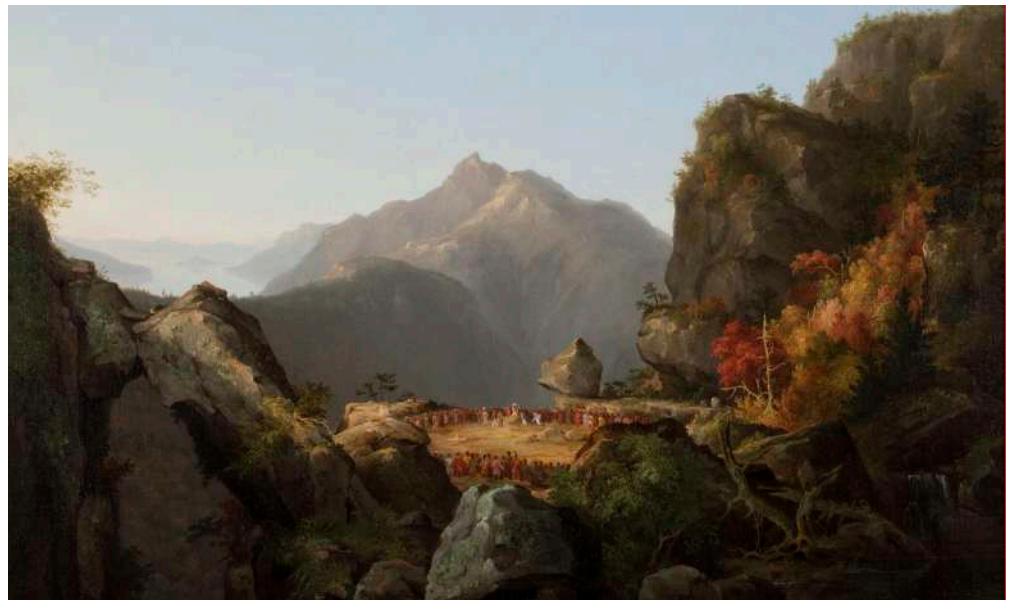
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Thomas Cole, *Landscape Scene from "The Last of the Mohicans"*, 1827, Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, New York, Gift of Stephen C. Clark. No194.1961. Photograph by Richard Walker.

2024 EXHIBITION PREVIEW

Our 2024 exhibition will debut new research in the field of American art. Dr. Scott Manning Stevens (Akwasasne Mohawk) Associate Professor and Director of Native American and Indigenous Studies at Syracuse University is curating *Native Prospects: Indigeneity and Landscape Painting*. The exhibition will present 19th-century paintings by Thomas Cole featuring Native figures, in context with Indigenous artifacts of historic and cultural value, and contemporary artworks by Indigenous artists: Teresa Baker (Mandan/Hidatsa), Truman Lowe (Ho-Chunk), Alan Michelson (Mohawk member of Six Nations of the Grand River) and Kay WalkingStick (Cherokee).

Opening May 4, 2024, at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, the project extends from Dr. Stevens' research and his celebrated lecture, "Indians in the Landscape: Painting Over Indigenous Sovereignty in the 19th Century," which he delivered at the Thomas Cole Site in 2022 and is available for free at thomascole.org/sundaysalonvideos.