



THOMAS COLE

NATIONAL
HISTORIC
SITE



Fall 2025 Newsletter



Thomas Cole's first trip to Catskill in 1825 Illustration by Hudson Talbott



Sailboat excursion on the Schooner *Apollonia*

COLE 200: THE TRIP THAT CHANGED AMERICAN ART

This year marks the 200th anniversary of Thomas Cole's first trip to Catskill, New York (1825–2025), which changed the course of American art. The paintings he made of the Hudson River Valley and Catskill Mountains launched not only his career, but the major art movement of the United States known as the Hudson River School of American landscape painting.

Celebrations included a spotlight exhibition on Cole and Georgia O'Keeffe exploring the power of place in American art (page 4), sailboat excursions on the Hudson River in partnership with the Schooner *Apollonia*, a professional development teacher workshop supported by the Warner Foundation (page 7), a new Hudson River School Art Trail panel connecting people with the places Cole painted, a curated travel itinerary, and the paperback launch of *Picturing America: Thomas Cole and the Birth of American Art* by Hudson Talbott, a Penguin Random House acclaimed author and illustrator. We produced an anniversary video with our new Executive Director Maura O'Shea at thomascole.org/cole200, and the anniversary was featured on ABC News and in *The New York Times*.

Thomas Cole's momentous trip inspired him to paint three significant works which elevated

American landscape to iconic stature: *Lake with Dead Trees*, *Kaaterskill Falls*, and *View of Fort Putnam*. Cole's paintings and impassioned writings advocated for the preservation of the natural landscape and gave rise to the country's identity of "America the beautiful."

Reflecting on that trip, Tim Barringer, Yale University's Paul Mellon Professor of the History of Art, says, "Thomas Cole's first visit to Catskill is an event whose significance resonates through the history of American art to the present day." Betsy Kornhauser, Curator Emerita at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, states, "When Cole took his first trip up the Hudson River in 1825 and took sketches of the Catskill region, his early wilderness scenes launched a new paradigm for American art." Franklin Kelly, former Deputy Director and Chief Curator at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C, says, "If landscape painting in America can be said to have a 'big bang' moment, that was surely it."

Find more statements from American art leaders across the country on Cole's pivotal trip and learn more about the anniversary celebrations at thomascole.org/cole200.

Funded in part by the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Support provided by Art Bridges.

BUSINESS LEADER JOINS COLE SITE BOARD



Sean Moulton, Cathy Lockyer Moulton, and Chief Curator Kate Menconeri with Thomas Cole's *Study of Fallen Columns*, on loan from the collection of Bob and Carol Lockyer

Cathy Lockyer Moulton is the organization's newest board member. She is President of the property management company Thomas Wynne, LP, and a member of Vistage Worldwide, the largest CEO peer advisory and executive coaching organization. She has served on the Chestnut Hill College Board of Directors since 1999 and launched their Alumni Ambassador Program in 2024. Two Thomas Cole paintings from Cathy's family, the collection of Bob and Carol Lockyer, are on loan to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and on view in the artist's home for visitors to see today: *Landscape with Clouds* and *Study of Fallen Columns*.

TWO 19TH-CENTURY COLE FAMILY PAINTINGS GIFTED

Susan Clark Livingston has made two gifts to the collection in two consecutive years. In 2024, Susan gifted a work by Sarah Cole (1805–1857), Thomas Cole's sister, entitled *Ancient Columns Near Syracuse*, c. 1848, and in 2025, gifted a work attributed to Mary Bartow Cole (1839–1894), Thomas Cole's daughter, entitled *Distant Hills*, c. 1863–65. Both works are on display in the Main House. *Ancient Columns*, completed in 1848, was likely inspired by Thomas Cole's painting *Column of Ancient Syracuse*, which was displayed after his death at the memorial exhibition also in 1848. Susan Clark Livingston is a collector of Hudson River School paintings since 1975. She is a Partner and serves as global ambassador and client liaison at Brown Brothers Harriman. The gifts were purchased from an auction at Hawthorne Fine Art in New York City.



Associate Curator Amanda Malmstrom and Susan Clark Livingston with Sarah Cole's *Ancient Columns Near Syracuse*, gift of Susan Clark Livingston

DECORATIVE ARTS ORIGINAL GIFTED



Emily Cole tureen, gift of Judy Carl Knoll

Judy Carl Knoll, a member of the local community, gifted an original hand-painted tureen by Emily Cole (1843–1913), Thomas Cole's daughter, who was a prominent artist and the subject of a major exhibition this year (page 5). The unfired porcelain tureen offers a rare glimpse into the artist's process. Painted with yellow dog roses, the piece exemplifies Emily's signature naturalistic style, which was applauded by critics in the papers of her day. The tureen was gifted to Judy's mother-in-law, Virginia Reardon Knoll, by Thomas Cole's great-granddaughter, Edith Cole Silberstein.

See more collection items at thomascole.org/collection.

RICK SHARP MAKES TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFT



Rick Sharp

Joann Arruda

Leading Cole collector and long-time supporter Rick Sharp donated \$175,000 to enhance the 2nd-floor gallery in the Main House of the Thomas Cole Site. The funding will be used to create a new visitor experience, including redesign and physical upgrades to the space, as well as future programming to engage and inspire new generations. The donation comes amid the 200th anniversary of Cole's first visit to Catskill.

Sharp's donation continues and extends his longstanding support. He has gifted to the Cole Site the largest amount of artwork and objects by Thomas Cole from a private individual outside of the artist's family. The objects include Cole's guitar and guitar case, reflected in the artist's painting *A Pic-Nic Party*, 1846. In addition, Sharp has made long-term loans of still more Cole artworks, including the earliest artwork known to be painted by Cole. Sharp's donation has already proven transformational—not only in concept but in practice. At the Summer Party this year, the announcement of the donation

inspired others present to donate a comparable amount, doubling its financial impact to just over \$350,000. (page 9)

The donation is also inspiring leading experts to become involved in the gallery project. Helping envision the new space are such nationally renowned authorities as Betsy Kornhauser, Curator Emerita at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Stephen Shadley, an AD100 acclaimed designer and board member of the Cole Site; Dan Kershaw, the Senior Exhibition Designer at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; and Carrie Feder, Independent Curator, who spearheaded the restoration of the interiors of the Main House alongside Jean Dunbar.

The new gallery space will be formally named The Richard Sharp Gallery. It is already affectionately known simply as the "Rick." The space will open in April 2026 with a major exhibition of Thomas Cole's work. Rick Sharp, a retired Milbank partner who lives in New York City and Chatham, NY, is the majority owner of *The Magazine Antiques*, and the former Chairman of the Board of The Olana Partnership.



Thomas Cole, *Diagram of Contrasts*, on loan from the collection of Richard T. Sharp

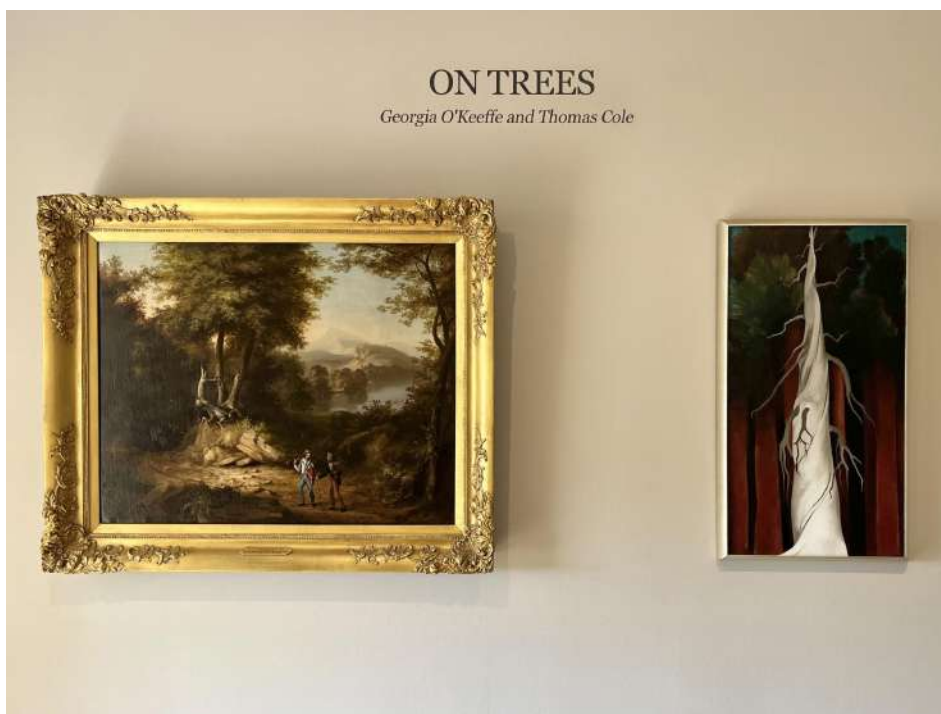
THANK YOU! The Thomas Cole Site programs and operations are supported by the National Park Service, Enoch Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, The Educational Foundation of America, The KHR McNeely Family Foundation, Kevin, Rosemary, and Hannah Rose McNeely, Evelyn D. Trebilcock & Douglas Hammond, Warner Foundation, The Estate of James T. Lewis IV, The Aven A. Kerr Trust, Patti Matheney & Michael Schrom, Bumblebee Fund, The Cranshaw Corporation, James LaForce & Stephen Henderson, Jenny & Campbell Levy, The May Family Foundation, Tianaderrah Foundation, and Illiana van Meeteren & Terence Boylan.

TWO ICONIC AMERICAN ARTISTS

In celebration of COLE 200, we presented a spotlight exhibition pairing two paintings by two titans in American art of the places that inspired them. *ON TREES: Georgia O'Keeffe and Thomas Cole* explores how trees captured the attention and creativity of two legendary painters at the time of their first visits to the landscapes that would define their work thereafter—and have a lasting impact on American art.

The show, which is on view through December 14, explores how Thomas Cole (1801–1848) depicted trees in the year of his transformational first visit to Catskill, New York, in 1825 and how Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) did so in her pivotal first visit to New Mexico in 1929. Additional paintings by Cole from the museum collection augment the show's exploration. The exhibition was organized by curators Kate Menconeri and Amanda Malmstrom and accompanied by a talk by Vassar professor H. Daniel Peck, who has published on both artists. The talk was presented in collaboration with Upstate Art Weekend.

Generous support for this project provided by Art Bridges. Funded in Part by the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.



Left: Thomas Cole, *Hunters in a Landscape*, Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Gift of Dr. Susan Gates Austin Warner; Right: Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986), *Dead Tree Bear Lake Taos*, 1929, Art Bridges

ACTIVATING THE STOREHOUSE EDUCATION CENTER



Visitors enjoying the Storehouse

Beth Wynne

With the opening of the Cole Center building for visitor operations, the organization was able to repurpose a portion of the 1839 Storehouse building into its first education center. Visitors of all ages and school groups now have a dedicated drop-in space

to gather and get creative. The space offers tables, chairs, paints, and sketching materials during all museum open hours.

The Storehouse was activated by a grant from Art Bridges awarded to the Thomas Cole Site in conjunction with their loan of the Georgia O'Keeffe painting in the spotlight exhibition *On Trees*. The support from Art Bridges allowed the Cole Site to develop classroom lesson plans that use the original artwork in the exhibition to teach American history and science ecology curriculum, and organize and present a student exhibition of tree artwork together with a puppet performance art presentation by the Arm-of-the-Sea theater group.

The Hudson River Bank & Trust Foundation awarded a grant to underwrite free admission for K-12 school groups in Greene and Columbia County, which included support for the entire third grade class from the local Catskill public school to visit the historic site for free this year.

Book a visit at thomascole.org/teacherresources.

PROFOUND FLORA IN BLOOM

The artwork of Emily Cole (1843–1913) and eight, internationally celebrated contemporary artists filled the historic site in our critically acclaimed exhibition *EMILY COLE: Ceramics, Flora, & Contemporary Responses*. Emily Cole was a professional artist who called this property home and worked in the studio of her late father, Thomas. She studied at the National Academy of Design and was a founding member of the New York Society of Ceramic Arts, an organization that advocated for ceramics to be exhibited in museum galleries. A 19th-century newspaper observed, “Her careful studies from nature leave nothing to be desired in the way of truth.” Unlike many ceramic designs of the period that depict static, serial flowers in full bloom, Emily’s paintings on porcelain, as well as watercolors on paper, demonstrate a meditation on the full cycle of life from bud to wilting petals. Her father explored the same theme in his iconic series, *The Voyage of Life*, the studies for which were exhibited as part of the show.

The exhibition marks the largest presentation of Emily Cole’s work since the 19th century with over forty pieces alongside and in conversation with contemporary works by Ann Agee, Jacqueline Bishop, Francesca DiMattio, Valerie Hegarty, Courtney M. Leonard, Jiha Moon, Michelle Sound, and Stephanie Syjuco, including new site-specific installations. The exhibition was curated by Kate Menconeri and Amanda Malmstrom. The project advisors were Jenni Sorkin, Amy Meyers, Kiki Smith, Lisa Sanditz, and Nicole Hayes.

The New York Times called the curation “a lively pairing” and *Artnet News* declared “Emily Cole, daughter of Hudson River School icon, shines

in overdue museum show.” The exhibition was accompanied by a printed catalogue, with contributions by the curators, Dr. Sorkin, Misty Cook, and exhibiting artists, and extensive programming including a Curator’s Talk and Tea, an Artist Roundtable, and china painting workshops with ceramics studio Cone Zero.



Catalogue cover designed by Rita Skingle



Top left: Valerie Hegarty, Maura O’Shea, Amanda Malmstrom, Jacqueline Bishop, Ann Agee, Kate Menconeri, Michelle Sound, and Francesca DiMattio. Catskill Photo Studio

Emily Cole: Ceramics, Flora, & Contemporary Responses is made possible through support from Terra Foundation for American Art. Major support is provided by Gerry Charitable Trust. The exhibition and publication are also supported by Wyeth Foundation for American Art; NYSCA/GHHN Conservation Treatment Grant Program administered by Greater Hudson Heritage Network, a program 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; Dr. Lee McCormick Edwards Charitable Foundation; Jennifer Krieger and Eric Siegel; Felicia Fund; Hickory Foundation; Athens Fine Art Services LLC; Funded in Part by the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area; National Trust Insurance Services, LLC; Bank of Greene County Charitable Fund; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

THE ART OF EMILY COLE AND STEAM

Funded in part by a grant from the Dorothy C. Radgowski Learning Through Women’s Achievement in the Arts Grant Program, provided through the Where Women Made History and the Historic Artists’ Homes and Studios programs of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Cole Site used Emily Cole’s 19th-century botanical paintings and the historic gardens on campus to create dynamic educational programs studying botany, ecology, and pigment making. We partnered with a local herbalist, Dina Falconi, to support young families in looking closer at native plants on nature walks and developed a new plant identification guide of flowers and perennials depicted in Emily’s 19th-century paintings and in bloom in the gardens today. The grant will also result in an Emily Cole lesson plan for grades K–3 developed with regional art and science teachers, a Four Sisters plant audio by Stockbridge-Munsee educator Lucy Grignon, and a natural pigment-making guide developed with the teaching artist Leslie Ruckman. The materials will be made available for free for broad audiences on thomascole.org/teacherresources upon launch.

WEDDING IN VOGUE



voguemagazine

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143K



581



2,672



Congratulations to the artist Tschabalala Self and the gallerist Michael “Mike” Mosby who were married at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site this July. The wedding of the summer was featured in *Vogue Magazine*, which reported: “It was a meaningful location for the artistic couple: Not only do they live in the region, but Thomas Cole founded the Hudson River School, the 19th-century American art movement that focused on landscape painting and cemented the country as an emerging creative force.”

Learn how to start planning your celebration at thomascole.org/rentals.

WHERE DO OUR VISITORS COME FROM?



...45 STATES & AROUND THE WORLD

HOLIDAY SHOPPING & DESIGNER JOHN DERIAN COLLAB



Museum gift shop in the Cole Center

Stop in the Cole Center and coffee bar anytime to shop unique items, catch up with friends, and enjoy the view of the Catskill Mountains from the outdoor Forecourt. Tickets are never required to visit the Cole Center. In time for the holidays, shop a new line of Hudson River School decoupage items by the world-renowned designer John Derian exclusively for FINCH Hudson. The Thomas Cole Site and Frederic Church’s Olana receive 10% of collection sales as a donation. Find these special items in the Cole Center, as well as new exclusive museum merchandise, one-of-a-kind antiques sourced by AD100 designer Stephen Shadley, and additional items donated by Warren Battle of Battle Brown. Additionally, find artisanal ceramics and paintings by Paula Greif, Mary Breneman, a custom line of Cole candles, teas, and more from Stinging Nettle Botanics, and prints by ARTEQUE.

COLE FELLOWS

In June, we welcomed the Class of 2026 Cole Fellows, Maya Junkins and Peyton Masilun, to live and work on the historic campus as part of our 12-month research and professional development program. Now in its fifteenth year, the Cole Fellowship 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 aspiring museum professionals to take part in researching, planning, and implementing programs across the site, from realizing exhibitions and publications to leading educational events and supporting visitors. Maya Junkins received her B.A. in Art History and Visual Culture from Bard College. Her projects include Thomas Cole's legacy and mapping the many generations of artists influenced by his work. Peyton Masilun received her B.A.s in Art Studies and Design Studies from North Carolina State University. Her projects include enhancing visitor and educational experiences on site, including new audio tours, and a forthcoming publication on the site's history.



Maya Junkins & Peyton Masilun

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY THROUGH ART

With support from the Warner Foundation's Teaching American History through Art project, we are hosting our second annual free professional teacher development session for history teachers on Thursday, November 13, at the Cole Site as part of the COLE 200 anniversary celebrations. The session offers educators the opportunity to gain Continuing Teacher & Leader Education credits and receive training from history experts on how to use 19th-century American landscape paintings, including Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School artists, to teach the history curriculum topics of Colonial Foundations, Expansion, Nationalism, and Sectionalism, Westward Movement, and Industrialization. Learn more and sign up at thomascole.org/teacherresources.



Green County Historian Jonathan Palmer hosting the 2024 session



Adrienne Spinozzi, Amanda Malmstrom, Lansing Moore Jr. & Evelyn Trebilcock

NYC DECORATIVE ARTS GATHERING

In September, we partnered with the Salmagundi Club to host a sold-out curator's talk and reception with Adrienne Spinozzi, Associate Curator of American Decorative Arts at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Dr. Spinozzi spoke about women decorative ceramicists working in the period of Emily Cole (1843–1913), giving context to our exhibition this year. A special thank you to the Salmagundi Club in NYC and to our event advisor, Lansing Moore Jr.

SUMMER PARTY AT THE HISTORIC SITE

Thank you to everyone who celebrated the COLE 200 Summer Party with us, hosted here on the historic campus for the first time. The party sponsorships and donations raised \$155,000, which provides critical support for the ongoing operation of this national landmark. It was a fabulous soiree with cocktails on the honorary Lisa Fox Martin Forecourt of the new Cole Center building and a seated dinner on the lawn with tablescape designs by Pippa Biddle and Benjamin Davidson of Quittner. Thank you for your important generosity that makes everything possible at this national treasure.

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Tablescape Designs by Quittner

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Cocktail hour



McKinley Williamson, Adam Johnson, Frances Grace, Sarah Rigano & Victoria Finney

AN OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT

At the COLE 200 Summer Party, Executive Director Maura O’Shea announced the \$175,000 gift from Rick Sharp to enhance the second-floor gallery in the Main House, and our extraordinary community of supporters under the tent doubled this momentous gift in the direct paddle, giving an additional \$175,000 to support the continued operations of this National Historic Landmark. We could not be more grateful for the support and encouragement of our community. Thank you for your critical generosity.

- \$20,000**

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SUPPORT THE FUTURE

“I have enjoyed supporting the Cole House and watching it grow—and bloom!—during my time as a trustee and volunteer. I would like to do what I can to keep things vibrant for the future, so I have planned a financial gift from my estate.” —Linda Gentalen

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.

NEW MEMBERSHIP LEVELS AND PERKS

Become a member and receive invitations to exclusive behind-the-scenes events at least every other month. Members receive free admission all the time and help make possible everything this National Landmark achieves. Learn more about our new Neighbor Membership and Business Membership options at thomascole.org/membership.

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NATIONAL
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EXHIBITION PREVIEW: *THOMAS COLE: PAINTING THE NATURE OF AMERICA*

In 2026, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site will present three exhibitions and related programming under the initiative, *Thomas Cole: Painting the Nature of America*, in conjunction with the national America 250 celebrations and Olana's Church 200 celebrations.

Thomas Cole (1801–1848) transformed the landscape of the United States into an iconic symbol of the country, giving rise to its national identity of “America the beautiful.” The exhibitions are: *Thomas Cole: An American Visionary*, the inaugural show in the forthcoming Richard Sharp Gallery in the Main House; *Circles of Influence: Thomas Cole and the American Landscape Movement*, featuring works by Frederic Church, Jasper Cropsey, Albert Bierstadt, Susie Barstow, Ralph Albert Blakelock, Mary Josephine Walters, and more in the historic Library Gallery in the Main House originally designed by Thomas Cole; and *Contemporary Vistas: Light Atlas*, by Cynthia Daignault, presented in the New Studio building. Daignault was inspired by Cole and the legacy of American landscape to create this immersive work of 360 paintings resulting from a road trip across the United States. Related programming will include a Sunday Salon speaker series, Second Saturday creative activity series, K-12 School Programs, a Professional Development Program for Teachers, and an Artist Talk.



Designed by Jessica Goon

