

Historic Homes & Properties



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Thomas Cole Site Project Marries Historic Restoration, New Technology



Thomas Cole House, spring 2017. —All photographs ©Peter Aaron/OTTO.



Thomas Cole House, post-restoration.



Thomas Cole House, parlor post-restoration.



Thomas Cole House, Gifford exhibition.

CATSKILL, N.Y. — The Thomas Cole National Historic Site, which opened for the season in early May, recently introduced its newly restored parlors in the 1815 home of Thomas Cole (1801–1848), founder of America’s first major art movement, the Hudson River School of landscape painting.

The opening event unveiled a new immersive installation combining technology and meticulous historic restoration of the rooms where the Hudson River School was born. The restoration includes recently discovered elaborate borders that Cole painted in the parlors and that constitute the earliest-known interior decorative painting by an American artist. They have been hidden for more than a century under layers of

modern paint.

Through audio and moving-graphics presentations, visitors are now able to hear the thoughts of Thomas Cole and the historic conversations that took place in his home. The restoration has transformed the first floor of his home to his original design, as visitors in his day would have experienced it.

When Cole moved into the main house in 1836, he overhauled the East and West parlors and the foyer, connecting them with a new decoration scheme to transform them into a suitable space to show off his paintings. He painted the ornate decorative borders around the circumference of both parlors using special pigments and paints not readily

available to most. Over the years, the borders had been painted over and were not seen again until fall 2014 when they were uncovered under a century of paint. The East Parlor’s original hue of bright grass green walls — and its original border — have been brought to life again in this restoration as in the West Parlor.

Opening simultaneously in Cole’s 1846 “New Studio” building is the exhibition “Sanford R. Gifford in the Catskills.” San-

ford Robinson Gifford (1823–1880) was inspired by Cole to become a landscape painter and emerged as a leading member of the Hudson River School. This exhibition of his work — curated by Kevin J. Avery, senior research scholar at the Metropolitan Museum of Art — is the first of this magnitude to be held in the region that these paintings celebrate.

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site preserves and interprets the home and studios

of Thomas Cole. Located on six acres in the Hudson Valley, the site includes the 1815 Main House, 1839 Old Studio, the newly reconstructed 1846 New Studio, and several other buildings. It is a National Historic Landmark and an affiliated area of the National Park System.

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is at 218 Spring Street. For more information, <http://thomascole.org/parlors> or 518-943-7465.



If your organization is the steward for a noteworthy historic house or property that is open to the public, *Antiques And The Arts Weekly* would like to hear from you.

Please contact Andrea Valluzzo to have your house be considered for a feature article on this page at:

Boscobel House And Gardens Publishes First Annual Report

GARRISON, N.Y. — Steven Miller, executive director of Boscobel House and Gardens, 1601 Route 9D, has announced the publication of the organization’s first annual report. Covering the year 2016, it illustrates the historic house museum’s wide array of accomplishments in service of its mission to share the history, culture, and environment of the Hudson River Valley.

Widely attended programs and events such as Military Reenactment Day provide visitors with a historically accurate and sensorial experience of the region’s history.

The museum’s exhibitions make the past resonate. Boscobel’s 2016 exhibition, “Hudson Hewn: New York Furniture Now” juxtaposed centuries-old pieces of furniture with new masterworks by current Hudson Valley craftsmen. The

sion holds a renowned collection of New York Neoclassical furniture.

The house was first built in Montrose, N.Y., between 1804 and 1808. Its original owner, States Morris Dyckman, was a wealthy Loyalist descended from one of the early Dutch families of New Amsterdam.

By the 1950s, the federal government had built a veterans’ hospital on the property, and

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Open six days a week April to December, it serves the local and international community with guided house tours of its admired interiors, programming for children, lectures by experts in design and architecture and gallery exhibitions.

son valley craftspeople. The exhibition, "Make-Do's Curiously Repaired Antiques," features objects that were damaged, but deemed too precious to discard. Considered one of the leading historic house museums in the United States, Boscobel's man-

dated the house for demolition. Dedicated preservationists recovered as many architectural fragments as possible with a goal toward rebuilding Boscobel elsewhere. For information, 845-265-3638 or www.boscobel.org.