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Thomas Cole Site Celebrates 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Frederic Church

Church, the Legendary Landscape Artist, Was a Student and Protégé of Cole

Catskill, NY – March 10, 2026 – The Thomas Cole National Historic Site, announced today a series of initiatives in celebration of FREDERIC CHURCH 200, a program launched by The Olana Partnership to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederic Church. A student of Thomas Cole, Church was one of America’s greatest artists and a legendary figure in landscape painting. Thomas Cole (1801-1848) taught Frederic Church (1826-1900) from 1844 to 1846. During that period, they often sketched together on the hill where Church later chose to build his home, Olana.

This period launched a life-long friendship between the two artists and catapulted American art onto the world stage. Thomas Cole launched the first major art movement of the United States, now known as the Hudson River School of landscape painting, and Frederic Church continued and extended Cole's legacy after his mentor's early death in 1848. That friendship is one of the most impactful in the history of American art.

FREDERIC CHURCH 200 will include events throughout 2026. The initiatives at the Thomas Cole Site include the following:

- On Sunday, March 29, Betsy Kornhauser, Curator Emerita at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Senior Curator and Chair of The Frederic Church Bicentennial Committee, will present a Sunday Salon Lecture. Titled “Thomas Cole and Frederic Church: Mastering the Landscape Oil Sketch,” the Lecture will take place from 2:00 to 3:30 pm at the Thomas Cole Site. More information is available at <https://thomascole.org/events>.
- On April 25, the exhibition “Thomas Cole: An American Visionary” will open in the new Richard T. Sharp Gallery in the 1815 Main House. A section of this dynamic installation will include an exploration of the artistic exchange between Thomas Cole and Frederic Church. The exploration includes a loan of an original 19th-century landscape painting by Church, quotes from the two artists, and an original 19th-century photograph, or “carte de visite,” of Frederic Church that was gifted to the Thomas Cole Site Collection. The exhibition will run through December 2026.

- The Thomas Cole National Historic Site will publish in April a book titled “Thomas Cole & Frederic Church: A Legacy of Art & Friendship” – a collection of 19th-century correspondence to, from, and about Thomas Cole, Frederic Church, and their extended families and friends. The book includes letters between Frederic Church and Cole’s son Teddy, who would become Church’s farm manager and play an important role in developing the farm and landscape of Olana.
- As always, the Hudson River Skywalk offers a pedestrian walkway across the Hudson River, connecting the Thomas Cole Site with Frederic Church’s Olana – and offering stunning views of the Hudson River Valley and Catskill Mountains.

More information on FREDERIC CHURCH 200 at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site is available at <https://thomascole.org/fc200>.

FREDERIC CHURCH 200 comes one year after COLE 200, the 200th Anniversary of the first presentation of paintings of the Hudson River Valley and Catskill Mountains by Thomas Cole – a presentation that changed the course of American art. The display of three paintings took place from October 26 to November 4, 1825, in New York City – in the windows of Colman’s bookstore on Broadway near Fulton Street in Manhattan. The exhibition launched Thomas Cole’s career and gave birth to what is now known as the Hudson River School of landscape painting. Cole’s work in turn gave America a visual identity, reflected in the concept “America the beautiful” and still celebrated today.

FREDERIC CHURCH 200

Frederic Church 200, an initiative led by The Olana Partnership, will mark the 200th anniversary of the artist’s birth in 1826. It will celebrate and extend his legacy through exhibitions and programs at museums across the United States and internationally throughout 2026. Please visit www.OLANA.org/fc200 for updates and more information.

Thomas Cole National Historic Site

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site showcases the life and work of Thomas Cole (1801-1848), whose American landscape painting defines an enduring visual identity for the nation. Inspired by the natural beauty that surrounds the site, Cole founded the influential Hudson River School art movement. The site’s six-acre campus in Catskill, NY, includes Cole’s home and two studio buildings; the Cole Center, a new visitor center designed by Architectural Digest 100 Stephen Shadley; gardens and grounds with panoramic views of the Catskill Mountains; and a scenic walkway over the Hudson River connecting the site with Olana, the historic home of artist and Cole student Frederic Church. The Thomas Cole Site hosts exhibitions as well as art-making activities and innovative school and public programs. Visitors experience first-hand the themes that Cole explored, from the power of art to landscape preservation to the restorative properties of nature. The Thomas Cole Site is a National Historic Landmark and an affiliated area of the National Park System, and it operates as an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization.

Visitor Information

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is open year round, and hours vary by season. For details see: thomascole.org/visit. The grounds are open every day for free from dawn to dusk. Keep in touch on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube at [@thomascolesite](https://www.instagram.com/thomascolesite).