



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Thomas Cole Site Announces Exhibition “Circles of Influence: Thomas Cole and the American Landscape Movement”

### The Exhibition Explores the Rapid Influence of Thomas Cole on Other 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Artists in Creating an American Landscape Movement That Would Project America’s Visual Identity to the World

Catskill, NY – May 19, 2026 – The Thomas Cole National Historic Site announced today the exhibition “Circles of Influence: Thomas Cole and the American Landscape Movement.” The exhibition will explore the rapid influence that Thomas Cole (1801-1848) and his work had on other 19<sup>th</sup>-century artists, and the role that they collectively played in extending the concept of “America the Beautiful,” still vibrant today.



Thomas Cole, *Catskill Mountain House*,  
1846, oil on canvas, 15 × 23¼ in. Warner  
Foundation Collection

The exhibition brings together the work of Thomas Cole with artists he was in direct contact with, including Frederic Edwin Church, Jasper Francis Cropsey, and Asher B. Durand; artist-members of the Cole family, including Sarah Cole and Mary B. Cole; and later painters who were shaped by his legacy and considered part of the artistic movement Cole founded, such as Ralph Albert Blakelock, Albert Bierstadt, Susie M. Barstow, John Frederick Kensett, Mary Josephine Walters, and Worthington Whittredge. The exhibition will be presented in the historic Library Gallery designed by Thomas Cole in the 1815 Main House where he

lived from 1836 until his death in 1848. The gallery features an original decorative wall painting by Cole. The exhibition will run from June 20 through December 2026.

Thomas Cole galvanized a generation of 19<sup>th</sup>-century American artists to embrace landscape painting. His depictions of the Hudson River Valley and the Northeastern United States imbued nature with picturesque grandeur and a sense of the sublime, captivating the New York City art world. Through his work and his artistic exchanges with other painters, especially his mentorship of Frederic Edwin Church, Cole inspired what is now known as the Hudson River School of landscape painting. Artists associated with the Hudson River School varied in their painterly style, ambition, travels, and commercial success, yet they shared a sustained engagement with the American landscape as a source of inspiration.

The exhibition brings to the public major works from private collections, including Thomas Cole's iconic painting, "Catskill Mountain House," 1846, from the Warner Foundation Collection. The collection was assembled by the late pioneer collector and appreciator of American Art, Jack Warner (1917-2017). The Warner Foundation Collection is also lending significant works by Albert Bierstadt and Worthington Whittredge. Susan Austin Warner is lending from her private collection works by Frederic Edwin Church, Jasper Francis Cropsey, and John Frederick Kensett. The exhibition also includes a distinctive work by Cole, "Distant View of Boston," c. 1838-39, from the Collection of J. Jeffrey and Ann Marie Fox.



Jasper Cropsey (1823-1900), *Autumn on the River*, 1877, oil on canvas, 21 x 17 in. Collection of Susan Austin Warner

"The speed and impact of Thomas Cole's influence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is remarkable, as this exhibition demonstrates," said Maura O'Shea, Executive Director of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. "But it is Cole's devotion to the American landscape—its appreciation, portrayal, and preservation—that has made his influence not only historically important but contemporary in its ongoing impact on artists today."

"Made possible by the generosity of lenders, this exhibition honors the rich history of the home—marking the first time since the Cole Site opened to the public that an exhibition of Hudson River School works is presented in the space that Cole designed within his home to display landscape paintings," said Amanda Malmstrom, Associate Curator of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. "The salon-style installation brings to light the diversity of artists associated with the major landscape movement sparked by Thomas Cole, and the intertwined complexity of their artistic exchanges. We hope visitors embrace this opportunity for reflection, a moment to reckon with the history of American national identity and the role art played (and continues to play) in shaping and disseminating it."



Susie M. Barstow (1836-1923), *Untitled*, 1868, oil on canvas, 6¾ x 9¾ in., Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Catskill, NY, Gift of Raymond Beecher, TC.2012.2

The exhibition is part of a broader initiative of the Thomas Cole Site titled "Thomas Cole: Painting the Nature of America." This year, the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, is an appropriate time to recall the pivotal role that Cole played in creating the visual identity of the young nation. From October 26 to November 4, 1825, the display of three paintings by Cole – in the windows of Colman's bookstore on Broadway near Fulton Street in Manhattan – changed the course of American art. The three paintings became an immediate success when purchased by renowned painters John Trumbull and William Dunlap and engraver Asher Durand. The display

launched Cole's career and gave birth to what is now known as the Hudson River School

of landscape painting. Cole's work gave America a visual identity reflected in the still-vibrant concept "America the Beautiful."

*Thomas Cole: Painting the Nature of America* at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site is supported by The National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom. Made possible in part by Hickory Foundation; With public funds from the Greene County Legislature through the Greene County Cultural Fund, administered in Greene County by CREATE Council on the Arts; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature; Jennifer Krieger and Eric Siegel; National Trust Insurance, LLC; Art Bridges; Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area; The Tryon Family Foundation; Anne and Fred Osborn III / The EASTER Foundation; Bank of Greene County Charitable Fund; Columbia Memorial Health; BST & Co. CPAs, LLP; and Eli Wilner & Company.



Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

### **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](http://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).