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The Thomas Cole National Historic Site Announces the Exhibition “Picturesque and Sublime: Thomas Cole’s Trans-Atlantic Inheritance” – Created in Collaboration with the Yale Center for British Art and Members of the Yale History of Art Department

Opening on May 1 as Part of the 200th Anniversary Celebration of Cole’s Arrival in America, the Exhibition Will Complement the Thomas Cole Exhibition now on View at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Picturesque and Sublime: Thomas Cole’s Trans-Atlantic Inheritance

May 1 - November 4, 2018 / Opening Reception: Saturday, April 28, 4-6 pm

Catskill, NY – February 8, 2018 – The Thomas Cole National Historic Site announced today that the exhibition “Picturesque and Sublime: Thomas Cole’s Trans-Atlantic Inheritance” will open on May 1 and run through November 4, 2018. Created in collaboration with the Yale Center for British Art and members of the Yale History of Art Department, the exhibition presents masterworks on paper by major British artists, including J.M.W. Turner and John Constable, in a new exploration of the prints and drawings that were early trans-Atlantic influences on Cole’s work. The exhibition includes major paintings by Thomas Cole that demonstrate his radical achievement of transforming the well-developed British traditions of landscape representation into a new bold formulation, the American Sublime.

Landscape art in the early nineteenth century was guided by two rival concepts: the picturesque, which emphasized touristic pleasures and visual delight, and the sublime, an aesthetic category rooted in notions of fear and danger. British artists including Thomas Sandby and John Martin, and above all Turner and Constable, raised landscape painting to new heights and their work reached global audiences through the circulation of engravings. Thomas Cole, born in England, emigrated to the United States in 1818, and first absorbed the picturesque and sublime through print media. On this basis, he transformed British and continental European traditions to create a distinctive American form of landscape painting.

The exhibition draws on the rich collections of the Yale Center for British Art to examine Thomas Cole’s visual inheritance. It juxtaposes masterworks on paper by British artists with major oil-on-canvas works by Cole, showing how boldly the American painter responded to and transformed his visual inheritance. The works on paper include drawings, watercolors, etchings and engravings. Among them is one of the greatest large-scale Alpine watercolors by Turner.



Additional museums contributing to the exhibition include New-York Historical Society, New Britain Museum of American Art, and Albany Institute of History & Art.

The exhibition is curated by Tim Barringer, Paul Mellon Professor in the History of Art at Yale; Gillian Forrester, Senior Curator of European Art at the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester (and previously at the Yale Center for British Art); Jennifer Raab, Associate Professor of the History of Art at Yale; and two doctoral candidates at Yale, Sophie Lynford and Nicholas Robbins. The show will take place in the Cole Site's reconstructed "New Studio," a building designed by Thomas Cole. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated publication – by the same title as the exhibition – with essays by the curators, published by Yale University Press. Following the opening of the show, Professor Barringer will present the Curator's Lecture in Catskill on Sunday, May 13, at 2:00 pm.

The show complements the critically-acclaimed landmark international loan exhibition of Thomas Cole's work now on view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City (opened January 30th). Titled "Thomas Cole's Journey: Atlantic Crossings," the exhibition at The Met establishes Thomas Cole as a major artist of the 19th century within a global context and emphasizes Cole's response to his visit to England and Italy in 1828. Its climax is a new presentation of Cole's masterpieces, *The Oxbow* and *The Course of Empire* series. That exhibition is curated by Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser, Alice Pratt Brown Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture at The Met and Professor Barringer, with Christopher Riopelle, Curator of Post-1800 Paintings at the National Gallery in London. It will be on view at The Met through May 13, 2018 and will then move to the National Gallery in London from June 11 to October 7, 2018.

Thomas Cole (1801-1848) emigrated from industrialized northern England to America with his family in 1818. He went on to found America's first major art movement, the Hudson River School of landscape painting, after discovering the Hudson Valley and the Catskills, where he was captivated by the natural beauty and motivated by the threat posed to the region by rapidly expanding industrialization.

This year, the Thomas Cole Site and Olana will join forces with the New York State Bridge Authority to launch a new initiative to promote the region as an epicenter of American art where the nation's first major art movement began. The project entitled the Hudson River Skywalk will weave together the home and studios of Thomas Cole at the Thomas Cole Site and those of his legendary student Frederic Church at Olana with the landscape that inspired it all to create one seamless experience. With support from New York State, a continuous pedestrian walkway will connect the historic sites across the Rip Van Winkle Bridge over the Hudson River by 2019. Today, visitors can experience newly installed viewing platforms along the Rip Van Winkle Bridge that feature magnificent views of the Hudson River Valley and the Great



Northern Catskills, and visit the two historic sites that are located just two miles from one another.

Frederic Church was a young man just beginning his career when he studied at Cole's Catskill studio. One of their sketching forays took them across the Hudson River to a promontory on the east shore upon which Church would one day compose a landscape reflective of his art and build his Persian-inspired home. The Olana State Historic Site includes that stunning home and magnificent 250-acre landscape, and Church's early pencil sketch of the view from that hill is part of the permanent collection at Olana.

"This is a landmark year for Thomas Cole, with the international loan exhibition at The Met and the National Gallery, complemented by this tightly focused exhibition at the Cole Site," said Professor Tim Barringer. "We are especially thrilled to share in Catskill works on paper from Yale's collections, including masterpieces that are rarely displayed because of their sensitivity to light. These objects give a vivid sense of what Cole might have seen in the engraver's shops where he apprenticed, first in Liverpool and then in Philadelphia, and in print sellers' windows in New York City in the mid-1820s. The magnificent oil paintings in the exhibition demonstrate how Cole transformed this inheritance, allowing us to appreciate his power and originality, not only as the founder of America's first major art movement but as an artist of international importance."

"The 200th anniversary of Cole's arrival in America is a time to reflect on Cole's pivotal role in American and international art and on our understanding of humanity's relationship with nature," said Elizabeth Jacks, Executive Director of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. "Cole was deeply concerned about our impact on the environment, and his appreciation and celebration of the landscape is as relevant today as it was in the 19th century."

The exhibition is supported by New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, Empire State Development's I LOVE NEW YORK program under the Market NY initiative, and the Greene County Legislature through the County Initiative Program of the Greene County Council on the Arts and the Kindred Spirits Society of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. The accompanying publication is supported by the Willow Springs Charitable Trust and Furthermore: a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund.

THE THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is an international destination presenting the original home and studios of Thomas Cole, the founder of the Hudson River School of painting, the nation's first major art movement. Located on 6 acres in the Hudson Valley, the site includes the 1815 Main House; Cole's 1839 Old Studio; the recently reconstructed New Studio building; and panoramic views of the Catskill Mountains. It is a National Historic Landmark and an affiliated area of the National Park System. The Cole Site's activities include guided tours, special exhibitions of both 19th-century and contemporary art, printed publications, extensive



online programs, activities for school groups, free community events, lectures, and innovative public programs such as the Hudson River School Art Trail—a map and website that enables visitors to visit the places that Cole painted. The goal of all programs at the Cole Site is to enable visitors to find meaning and inspiration in Thomas Cole’s life and work. The themes that Cole explored in his art and writings—such as landscape preservation and our conception of nature as a restorative power—are both historic and timely, providing the opportunity to connect to audiences with insights that are highly relevant to their own lives.

On VIEW in Thomas Cole’s New Studio from May 1 through November 4, 2018

+ *Picturesque and Sublime: Thomas Cole’s Trans-Atlantic Inheritance*

Ongoing Exhibitions in the 1815 Main House

+ *The Parlors*, an immersive experience combining technology and meticulous restoration of Cole’s interior designs in his 1815 home, including the earliest-known interior decorative painting by an American artist. Integrated projections enable paintings to “come to life” and letters to “magically appear” on tables to tell a story.

+ *Mind Upon Nature: Thomas Cole’s Creative Process*, an exhibition in the Main House featuring Cole’s paintings, sketches, palettes, and other unique objects.

ABOUT OLANA AND THE OLANA PARTNERSHIP: Olana is the greatest masterpiece of Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), the preeminent American artist of the mid-19th Century. Church designed Olana as a holistic environment integrating his advanced ideas about art, architecture, landscape design, and environmental conservation. Olana’s 250-acre artist-designed landscape with a Persian-inspired house at its summit embraces unrivaled panoramic views of the Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountains and, today, welcomes more than 170,000 visitors annually. Olana State Historic Site, a historic site administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Taconic Region, is a designated National Historic Landmark and one of the most visited sites in the state. The Olana Partnership, a private not-for-profit education corporation, works cooperatively with New York State to support the restoration, conservation, and interpretation of Olana State Historic Site. To learn more about Olana and The Olana Partnership, please visit www.olana.org.

VISITOR INFORMATION: The hours for Thomas Cole’s home, studios and special exhibitions vary by season. For details see: www.thomascole.org/visit. The Olana landscape is free and open daily 8:00 am - sunset. For a current list of tours of the main house and artist-designed landscape visit: www.olana.org/hours-and-admission.

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