



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Director of External Relations, Jennifer Greim, JGreim@thomascole.org

In Celebration of Women’s History Month, the Thomas Cole NHS Presents *The Art of Emily Cole*, the First Exhibition of Her Work in Over a Century

Daughter of Iconic Landscape Painter Thomas Cole, Emily was the Only One of His Children to Become an Artist

The Art of Emily Cole
March 2 – July 7, 2019

Catskill, NY – February 19, 2019 – The Thomas Cole National Historic Site announced today that the exhibition *The Art of Emily Cole* will open on March 2 in celebration of Women’s History Month. The project marks the first solo exhibition of Emily’s artwork on both paper and porcelain, revealing her exquisitely painted botanicals. Emily Cole (1843-1913) was the daughter of renowned artist Thomas Cole (1801-1848) who founded America’s first major art movement, now known as the Hudson River School. The exhibition will be presented in the 1815 Main House where both Thomas and Emily Cole lived and worked in Catskill, New York.

Despite limited opportunities for women to pursue an artistic career in the 19th century, Emily studied at a New York City art school and was a charter member of the New York Society of Ceramic Arts, an organization founded in 1892 with the objective to promote the appreciation of ceramic arts. Emily’s painted porcelain was exhibited in Catskill and New York City, and was acquired by New York City collections of china painting. A newspaper review of an exhibition of Emily’s porcelain calls her work “unrivalled” for its “delicacy, purity of color, and transparency.”

Exhibition Overview

Emily Cole created an extensive oeuvre of botanical illustrations, which includes over one hundred watercolors on paper and painted porcelain objects that now reside in the collection of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. American flower painting emerged as a distinct genre in the mid-nineteenth century as scientists and artists were influenced by European still life painting traditions and scientific discoveries.

Emily Cole’s botanicals can be considered in the context of the established and conflicting ideas of the time from scientists Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) and Charles Darwin’s (1809-1882). While Linnaeus’ scientific systems for naming plants advocated the rational and unchanging design of nature, Darwin’s revolutionary theory of evolution encouraged artists to instead focus on naturalism and a species’ relationship to its surrounding environment. Both theories are evident in Emily’s visually compelling flora that stand alone in isolated backgrounds, yet also possess an organic ephemerality in that they leave out scientific names and categorization.

The exhibition will feature 12 original sets of painted porcelain works c. 1900-1910, and 13 works on paper c. 1870-1880s. The works on paper will include both originals and select works presented in reproduction due to the extreme light sensitivity of the original works on paper. All artwork in the

exhibition is from the collection of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. The project is curated by 2019 Cole Fellow Amanda Malmstrom in conversation with Thomas Cole Site Curator and Director of Collections, Kate Menconeri.

Programs

The exhibition will be accompanied by a new guided tour also developed by 2019 Cole Fellow Amanda Malmstrom entitled *The Women of Cedar Grove* at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. The 45 minute custom tour will be offered on weekends in March, 2019 at 11 am and 1 pm. Thomas Cole Site Educators will lead guests through the 1815 Main House, bringing to light the stories of five women who called the property, historically known as Cedar Grove, home. This includes Thomas Cole's wife Maria Bartow Cole (1813-1884) who's family owned the property, his sister Sarah Cole (1805-1857) who was also an accomplished artist, Thomas and Maria's daughter Emily Cole (1843-1913) whose work will be on exhibition as part of the tour, and their descendants Florence Cole Vincent (1876-1961) and Edith Cole Silberstein (1919-2016) who served as essential stewards of the property that opened to the public as a museum in 2001. Tickets are available at thomascole.org.

The exhibition will be featured on the Thomas Cole Site's [website](#), as well as on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). Supported by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo.

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 Thomas Cole Site's activities include guided and self-guided tours, special exhibitions of both 19th-century and contemporary art, printed publications, lectures, extensive online programs, activities for school groups, the Cole Fellowship program, free community events, and innovative public programs such as the Hudson River School Art Trail—a map and website that enables people to visit the places in nature that Cole painted. The goal of all programs at the Thomas 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 the 1815 Main House from March 2 through July 7, 2019

- *The Art of Emily Cole*, an exhibition of Emily Cole's painted botanicals which marks the first solo exhibition of her work in over a century.

On view in Thomas Cole's New Studio from May 4 through November 3, 2019

- *Thomas Cole's Refrain: The Paintings of Catskill Creek*, an exhibition revealing new research on Thomas Cole's Catskill Creek paintings, considering them as an integral series for the very first time.

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.

VISITOR INFORMATION: The hours for Thomas Cole’s home, studios and special exhibitions vary by season. For details see: www.thomascole.org/visit.

###

