



**THOMAS
COLE** NATIONAL
HISTORIC
SITE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thomas Cole Site, Associate Director

Jennifer Greim, JGreim@thomascole.org

The Olana Partnership, Director of Advancement and Marketing

Melanie Hasbrook, mhasbrook@olana.org

Thomas Cole Site and Olana Take “Cross Pollination” Beyond the Galleries

Catskill and Hudson, NY – August 19, 2021 – The Olana Partnership at Olana State Historic Site and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site are engaging the public in a series of events in the Hudson Valley that expand on their current collaborative exhibition “Cross Pollination: Heade, Cole, Church, and Our Contemporary Moment,” which runs through October 31.

“Cross Pollination” is one simultaneous exhibition at Frederic Church’s Olana and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. It was conceived in the Hudson Valley and created by the two historic artists’ sites and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas. The exhibition, featuring 19th-century and 21st-century artists, explores themes of cross pollination in nature and ecology as well as the interplay of art and science, and the influence and relationships among artists across generations. The project stems from the artist Martin Johnson Heade’s series of hummingbird and habitat paintings, *The Gems of Brazil* (1863-64), and their unique relationship to the epic landscapes of Hudson River School artists Thomas Cole and Frederic Church, as well as their continued significance to contemporary artists working today.



Martin Johnson Heade, *Hooded Visorbearer*, ca. 1863–64, oil on canvas, 12 1/4 x 10 in. / Framed: 18 1/4 x 16 1/2 in. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas; 2006.93. Photograph by Dwight Primiano.

The exhibition connects the work of the 19th-century artists with that of 21st-century artists, whose works engage contemporary issues related to biodiversity, habitat protection, and environmental sustainability. For this project, works by the contemporary artists are presented in site-specific installations throughout, within, and across the historic artists’ homes, studios, and landscapes. The contemporary artists are Rachel Berwick, Nick Cave, Mark Dion, Richard Estes, Juan Fontanive, Jeffrey Gibson, Paula Hayes, Patrick Jacobs, Maya Lin, Flora C. Mace, Vik Muniz, Portia Munson, Lisa Sanditz, Emily Sartor, Sayler/Morris, Dana Sherwood, Jean Shin, Rachel Sussman, and Jeff Whetstone.

The upcoming public events and activities include the following:

The Great Pollinator Ramble at Olana – on Saturday, August 28 – Featuring 20 five-foot-tall pollinator puppets, the Ramble will take place free of charge from 4:00 to 5:30 pm at Olana State Historic Site in Hudson. The August Ramble, which will take place entirely on the 250-acre artist-designed landscape at Olana, is an interactive





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performance that will feature the 20 large pollinator puppets (such as butterflies and hummingbirds), as they ramble surrounded by children and adults who have created their own hand-held flower puppets. During the “puppet-scape,” visitors interested in celebrating and learning more about native pollinators and their habitats will be able to search for larger-than-life pollinators in the landscape. The event and large pollinator puppets are designed by the Processional Arts Workshop, official pageant puppeteers for New York City’s famed Annual Village Halloween Parade. A Ramble at the Thomas Cole Site in Catskill took place in June. Support for the Rambles is provided by Art Bridges.

A Self-Guided Pollinator Map – Created by Two Artists for “Cross Pollination” – Lisa Sanditz and Emily Sartor collaborated to create *The Thrilling Tales and Startling Adventures: An Unofficial Guide to Pollinators*, which celebrates and identifies pollinators and pollen-makers that visitors can find on the grounds of Olana and the Thomas Cole Site, and within the environs along [the Hudson River Skywalk](#), a scenic walkway that connects the two historic sites over the Hudson River via the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. The Map is available free to those with tickets to the exhibition.



Olana and the Thomas Cole Site in Upstate Art Weekend – Both Olana and the Thomas Cole Site are part of Upstate Art Weekend taking place August 28-29. Upstate Art Weekend is a three-day, self-directed, accessible event connecting people with art and the outdoors, celebrating the cultural vibrancy of Upstate New York on both sides of the Hudson River. The Pollinator Map described above will also be available free at NADA x Foreland, a collaborative exhibition happening that same weekend. NADA is the New Art Dealers Alliance, and Foreland is a new arts campus in an historic industrial building in downtown Catskill.

“Cross Pollination” and “The Hudson Eye” Art Festival – In collaboration with the New York State Bridge Authority, Olana State Historic Site, The Olana Partnership, and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, The Hudson Eye has worked to activate the Hudson River Skywalk walkway via the Rip Van Winkle Bridge with a new art installation by acclaimed contemporary artist Jeffrey Gibson titled, “The Spirits are Laughing.” The installation explores the spiritual histories within the region and works to personify the landscape of the Hudson River Valley. Gibson’s work is also featured prominently in “Cross Pollination,” where visitors can see “Protects the Land” at Olana and “Camouflage” at the Thomas Cole Site. The opportunity to experience his artistic perspective in all three settings is unique and adds dramatically to the exploration of cross pollination. “The Spirits are Laughing” will debut on the Hudson River Skywalk on August 27 and remain through October 14.

A Virtual Discussion: *Living with Pollinators: Biodiversity and Artistic Practice in the Hudson Valley* with Lisa Sanditz, Paula Hayes, and the Fox Farm Apiary – on September 15. Join artists Lisa Sanditz and Paula Hayes and beekeeper Chris Layman from Fox Farm Apiary on Wednesday, September 15, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm for a virtual conversation that will explore the timely artistic and ecological connections between art, environmental stewardship, and our role in local habitats. Both artists, whose



work is included in “Cross Pollination,” explore human interactions with and within the natural world. Fox Farm Apiary, a honeybee rescue and sanctuary in the Hudson Valley, maintains an apiary at Olana’s farm complex. The discussion will be co-moderated by Amanda Malmstrom, Assistant Curator at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, and Carolyn Keogh, Director of Education and Public Programs at The Olana Partnership. More information on events at both historic sites is available [here](#) and [here](#).

Watch Online: A Virtual Discussion: *Fragility and Resilience: Art, Ecology, and Our Contemporary Moment* – with Saylor/Morris, Rachel Sussman, and Dr. Scott Manning Stevens. This discussion of the connections between art, ecology, and climate change is now available online. Through their artwork, which is featured prominently in “Cross Pollination,” the artists Saylor/Morris and Rachel Sussman examine the fragility of life and the question of balance between humans and the natural world. During this discussion, they are in conversation with Dr. Scott Manning Stevens, Associate Professor and Director of Native American and Indigenous Studies at Syracuse University. The panel is co-moderated by “Cross Pollination” Co-Curators Kate Menconeri, Curator & Director of Collections & Exhibitions at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, and Will Coleman, Director of Collections & Exhibitions at The Olana Partnership. The virtual discussion is available [here](#).

Artist Audio Guide: On the occasion of “Cross Pollination,” artists and curators created a series of audio clips so listeners can hear directly from the artists, who speak about their work and inspiration. They are available on-site or online at any time [here](#).

ABOUT “Cross Pollination: Heade, Cole, Church, and Our Contemporary Moment”:

Artist Martin Johnson Heade has long been associated with the Hudson River School of landscape painting, which is characterized by the epic landscapes of the artists Thomas Cole (1801-1848) and Frederic Church (1826-1900). Heade, though, with his series *The Gems of Brazil*, was making a different kind of “landscape” that magnified the intricate operations within nature itself. Heade traveled to Brazil in 1863, so that he could study the hummingbirds in their natural habitat. Heade’s focus in *The Gems* and his related writing, which decries the overhunting of bird species, aligns with the proto-environmentalism of Thomas Cole, who wrote against deforestation in his own time. Heade’s own Brazilian journey was inspired by Frederic Church’s travels in Latin America. The environmental awareness and advocacy of these 19th-century artists connect thought and conversations taking place today, as concern for preservation and protection of the environment reaches critical urgency.

“Cross Pollination” is presented simultaneously as one exhibition at both Olana State Historic Site in Hudson, NY, and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in Catskill, NY. The two historic sites are connected by the Hudson River Skywalk – with sweeping views of the Hudson Valley and the Catskill Mountains – that opened in June 2019. The exhibition will subsequently be presented at the Crystal Bridges Museum in Arkansas from November 20, 2021 to March 23, 2022. More information on the exhibition is available at www.hudsonriverskywalk.org/crosspollination.

Olana and the Thomas Cole Site interpret and open their landscapes to the community for free as public parks and follow all pandemic protocols laid out by New York State. All guided tour and program participants are required to wear masks covering the mouth and nose and maintain social distancing (six



feet at all times). More details on events, programming, and tours are available at the historic sites' websites (below). Space is limited, and mid-week visits are typically less crowded.

Cross Pollination is curated by Kate Menconeri, Curator & Director of Exhibitions and Collections at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site; Julia B. Rosenbaum, Associate Professor of Art History and Visual Culture, Bard College; former Director of Research and Publications at The Olana Partnership; William L. Coleman, Director of Collections & Exhibitions at The Olana Partnership; and Mindy N. Besaw, Curator, American Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. *Cross Pollination* was developed collaboratively between the partner museums and in conversations with leading American artists, scholars, scientists, and historians.

Support for the exhibition and its national tour is provided by Art Bridges. Additional major support is provided by the Henry Luce Foundation.

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OLANA STATE HISTORIC SITE AND THE OLANA PARTNERSHIP: Olana is the greatest masterpiece of Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), a preeminent American artist of the mid-19th century and the most important artist's home, studio, and designed landscape in the United States. 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 five miles of carriage roads and a Persian-inspired house embraces unrivaled panoramic views of the Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountains and welcomes more than 170,000 visitors annually. Olana State Historic Site, administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, is a designated National Historic Landmark and one of the most visited historic sites in the state. The Olana Partnership, a private not-for-profit education corporation, works cooperatively with New York State Parks to support the restoration, conservation, and interpretation of Olana to make it accessible to all.

THE THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is an international destination presenting the original home and studios of Thomas Cole (1801-1848), 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 reconstructed historic 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 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 enable visitors to visit the places 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, our conception of nature as a restorative power and the need for public art museums—are historic and timely, providing the opportunity to connect to audiences with insights that are highly relevant to their own lives. The Thomas Cole Site’s programming and operations are continually evolving under its initiatives for Greening, and Diversity, Equity and Access.

HUDSON RIVER SKYWALK REGION: The Thomas Cole National Historic Site in Catskill, NY and Olana – across the Hudson River in Hudson, NY – joined forces with New York State to launch a new initiative to recognize the region as an epicenter of American art where the nation’s first major art movement began. The project – titled the Hudson River Skywalk Region – weaves 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 scenic walkway – the Hudson River Skywalk – connects the historic sites across the Rip Van Winkle Bridge over the Hudson River. The Region also includes the City of Hudson and the Town of Catskill. For more information, visit www.hudsonriverskywalk.org.

Olana VISITOR INFORMATION: The landscape is free and open to all every day from 8:30 am to sunset. For a current list of tours of the Main House and artist-designed landscape, visit www.olana.org/hours-and-admission. Keep in touch on social media @OlanaSHS. For more information about upcoming programs, visit www.olana.org/programs-events.

Thomas Cole VISITOR INFORMATION: Admission to the gardens and grounds is free every day from dawn until dusk. The hours for Thomas Cole’s home, studios and special exhibitions vary by season. For details, see www.thomascole.org/visit. Keep in touch on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter at @thomascolesite.

hudsonriverskywalk.org/crosspollination
#CrossPollinationShow



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