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**The Thomas Cole National Historic Site and Gallery 495 Announce the Joint Presentation in Two Locations in Catskill, NY, of the Exhibition “Paradise Found: Contemporary Paintings by Lauren Sansaricq”**

**The Joint Presentation Enables the Artist’s Paintings to be Viewed in Two Distinct Settings: The Historic Home of Thomas Cole and a White-Walled Gallery in the Village of Catskill**

Catskill, NY – May 12, 2026 – The Thomas Cole National Historic Site and Gallery 495 announced today the joint presentation of the exhibition “Paradise Found: Contemporary Paintings by Lauren Sansaricq.” The exhibition, which will open on June 20, includes a total of about 20 paintings by Sansaricq, a resident of the Hudson Valley whose artistry is greatly influenced by Thomas Cole. The joint presentation enables her work to be viewed in two distinctly different but highly relevant settings both in the heart of Catskill: the historic home of Thomas Cole, where the paintings will be installed in his 1839 Studio, and a white-walled gallery on Main Street.

Rooted in the same Hudson Valley setting that once shaped Thomas Cole, Lauren Sansaricq’s work carries forward a lineage of American landscape painting that understands nature not as backdrop, but as moral, spiritual, and existential ground. Cole—renowned as the founder of what is now known as the Hudson River School of landscape painting—believed the natural world to be a manifestation of the divine, a site of awe, warning, and reflection. His landscapes were never neutral; they were charged with meaning, shaped by anxiety over industrial expansion, faith in nature’s sanctity, and the belief that civilizations, like ecosystems, rise and fall in cycles of creation and decay. Sansaricq inherits this philosophical core, translating it into a contemporary practice that is both reverent and resolutely human.



*Lauren Sansaricq, Crawford Notch, 2017, oil on canvas, 23 x 33in in.  
Courtesy of The Jackson Historical Society.*

Raised in Columbia County, NY, Sansaricq grew up immersed in the natural beauty that first inspired Cole and his contemporaries. From an early age, she absorbed not only the visual language of the Hudson River School but its deeper conviction: that communion with nature is a transcendental experience, capable of revealing moral and spiritual truths. In an era increasingly mediated by AI, photography, and digital tools, Sansaricq's practice stands as a quiet resistance. Like Cole, she insists on direct encounter, on presence. She works entirely from life, without photographic or digital aids, grounding her paintings in lived experience rather than technological mediation.

"I want to make paintings with my feet upon the soil, my eyes upon the scene, and my heart open to the beauty of nature before me," Sansaricq says. "I hope my paintings convey that feeling of awe and wonderment that I so often feel in nature. By studying the simple beauty of nature, we can gain a true understanding of oneself, and moreover the spiritual tissue that connects us all. By studying nature in any manner—whether through painting, writing, or simply observing—one starts to see broader themes, such as death, rebirth, and the ever-changing cycle of all things, and that we too are a part of this beautiful cycle."

Lauren Sansaricq's paintings do not nostalgically reenact the Hudson River School; they extend its ethical and spiritual inquiry into the present moment. Like Thomas Cole, she reminds us that landscape is never just landscape—it is a mirror, an invitation to remember our place within the living world.

Sansaricq's work has been exhibited at historic institutions including the Union League Club, the National Arts Club, and the Salmagundi Club, and she has presented a solo exhibition at Hawthorne Fine Art in New York. She is a three-time recipient of the Hudson River Fellowship and the Henrietta Reiss Award. Today, her paintings are held in collections across the United States, Europe, and Australia.

The exhibition will open on Saturday, June 20, at both locations and run through Sunday, August 9. Gallery 495 is located at 495 Main Street in Catskill, NY. The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is located at 218 Spring Street in Catskill.

This year, the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nation's birth, is an appropriate time to recall the pivotal role that Cole played in creating the visual identity of the young nation—and to underscore his ongoing influence on artists to this day. 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."

## **Gallery 495**

Gallery 495 is a contemporary art gallery located at 495 Main Street, Catskill, NY, owned and directed by Mike Mosby, a Hudson Valley native. The gallery exhibits local, national, and international artists working across various artistic mediums and disciplines. Gallery 495 is pleased to welcome art enthusiasts from across the Hudson Valley and beyond to an evocative new exhibition space challenging the region's burgeoning tastes.

## **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).