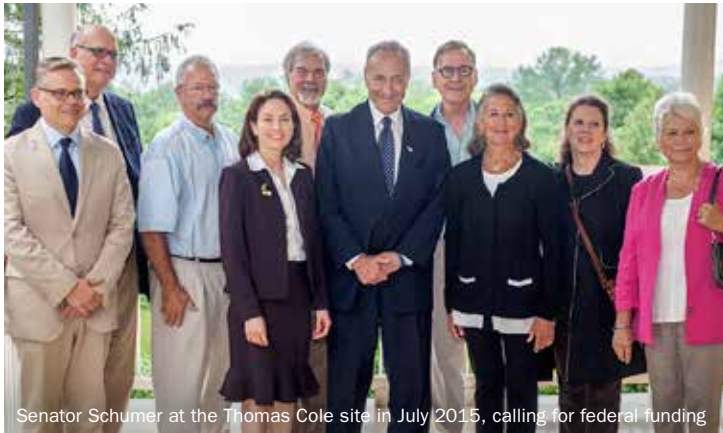
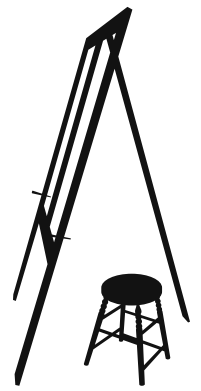


THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Fall 2015 Newsletter



Senator Schumer at the Thomas Cole site in July 2015, calling for federal funding



Left: New Studio c. 1900 with Cole's daughter Emily.
Right: New Studio in August 2015

OVER \$600,000 AWARDED FOR RESTORATION AND EXHIBITS

A red and gold carpet with pyramids and exotic birds, lavender walls, and hand-painted borders by Thomas Cole himself... These are some of the elements of the original décor of Cole's 1815 home that will be restored as a result of two major federal grants that were recently awarded to the Thomas Cole Historic Site: \$460,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities and \$150,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. As an integral part of the project, the first-floor rooms will be infused with interactive exhibits that enable visitors to enter and engage with the story of Thomas Cole. In July 2015, Senator Charles Schumer visited the Cole site to call for federal funding for the restoration project and to announce the discovery of the decorative painting. We are delighted to announce that the funding has now come through.

Around the time of his 1836 marriage, Thomas Cole began decorating the first-floor rooms of his home, creating a carefully orchestrated setting in which to display his paintings. It was a project that he was well prepared to do, as he had extensive formal training and experience in the decorative arts. As a young man, he designed and printed cotton fabric, wallpaper and floor cloth; painted

NEW STUDIO RECONSTRUCTION NEARLY COMPLETE

The reconstruction of Thomas Cole's New Studio is now nearly complete and we are excited to announce that the building will officially open to the public in the spring of 2016. Built in 1846 according to Thomas Cole's own design, the New Studio stood 75 yards from Cole's home in Catskill for over 125 years. Tragically, it was torn down in 1973 after falling into disrepair. Now, following many years of research and a successful capital campaign, the building is being reconstructed on its original footprint. The reconstruction of the New Studio will provide the Thomas Cole National Historic Site with a museum-quality interior exhibition gallery that can double as a lecture hall for a variety of programs and events. The building will enable this historic site to serve as an outstanding destination for visitors to and residents of the Hudson Valley, and a resource and inspiration for future generations of scholars, collectors and artists.

We invite you to become a part of this exciting success story and donate to the campaign at www.thomascole.org/new-studio.

NEW HIRES

DAVID BARNES

David Barnes has been hired for the newly created position of Associate Director. For the last ten years, David has served



David Barnes

as a Trustee of the Thomas Cole site while working at J.P. Morgan Asset Management. On July 6, 2015, he made the transition to working at the Thomas Cole site full time. David's passionate dedication to the mission of this organization is abundantly clear to all who know him, as are his truly outstanding abilities as a communicator and ambassador to the communities that we serve.

TAYLOR METZING

We are happy to welcome Taylor Metzting to the Thomas Cole staff as the Assistant to the Director. Taylor received a



Taylor Metzting

Master of Arts in Museum Studies in January 2015 at the Marist College/Istituto Lorenzo de' Medici, Florence, Italy. Previously, she worked at the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, Liberty, NY. Taylor grew up in the Hudson Valley and now lives in Highland, NY.

SEASONAL STAFF

Joining our seasonal staff this year are Carrie Tuccio as Assistant Visitor Center Manager and Gail Wolczanski as tour guide. Welcome!

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»continued from page 1»

scenes on window blinds; and ornamented painted chairs and household objects. On a visit to Herculaneum and Pompeii in 1832, he saw buildings with elaborately decorated walls. Enthralled, he purchased John Goldcutt's book, *Specimens of Ancient Decorations From Pompeii*. Its colored illustrations helped inspire his scheme for his Catskill home.



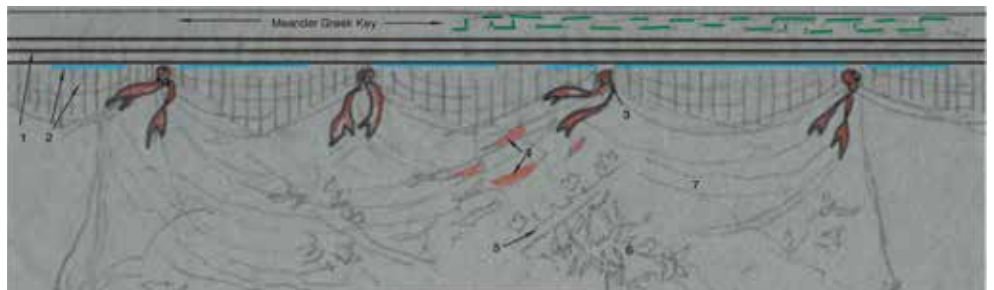
A surviving fragment of the original West Parlor carpet

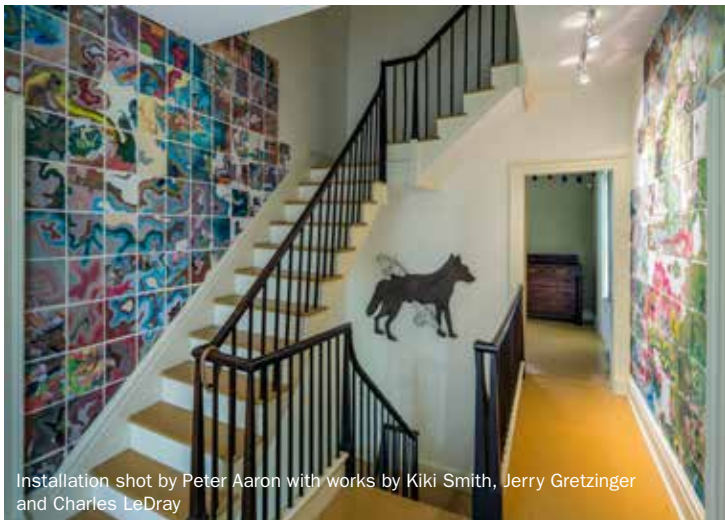
In the West Parlor, Cole combined luminous lavender walls with a painted frieze depicting folds of fabric in blues and greens. A gold carpet with a repeating pattern of white stepped pyramids and exotic red birds completed the effect. In the adjacent pantry, the same carpet was paired with Pompeian red walls and a black meander border. The East Parlor featured green walls and an even more elaborate painted border, featuring swags of drapery, ribbons, and a branch with thorns and roses. The full extent of the painted design is not yet known, as only a small portion of it has been uncovered. With the new funding, the careful exposure work will now resume.

The hand-painted decoration was covered over during the 20th century, and its existence was unknown until internationally renowned paint analyst Matthew Mosca, under the direction of historic interiors specialist Jean Dunbar, discovered it as part of a comprehensive paint analysis throughout the building. During 2014, Mosca painstakingly uncovered a fragment of approximately 12 square inches in size in each parlor. The painting is believed to continue around the entire perimeter of each room, up near the ceiling, as a frieze.

To design and implement the interactive exhibits, the Thomas Cole Historic Site has engaged Riggs Ward Design, a multidisciplinary firm located in Richmond, VA. The firm specializes in visitor engagement in museums and cultural centers through experiential exhibit design and interactive media. Rather than create a roped-off interior that visitors are excluded from entering, the Thomas Cole site intends to take visitors on a journey into a specific time and place in American history to explore why Cole would paint images that look the way they do, what he was trying to communicate, what forces were at work in America that enabled these images to become so influential, and how these images came to profoundly shape American attitudes. The historic interiors and the interactive exhibits will be implemented in phases over the next two years.

Matthew Mosca's conjectural reconstruction of the East Parlor decoration





RIVER CROSSINGS: CONTEMPORARY ART COMES HOME

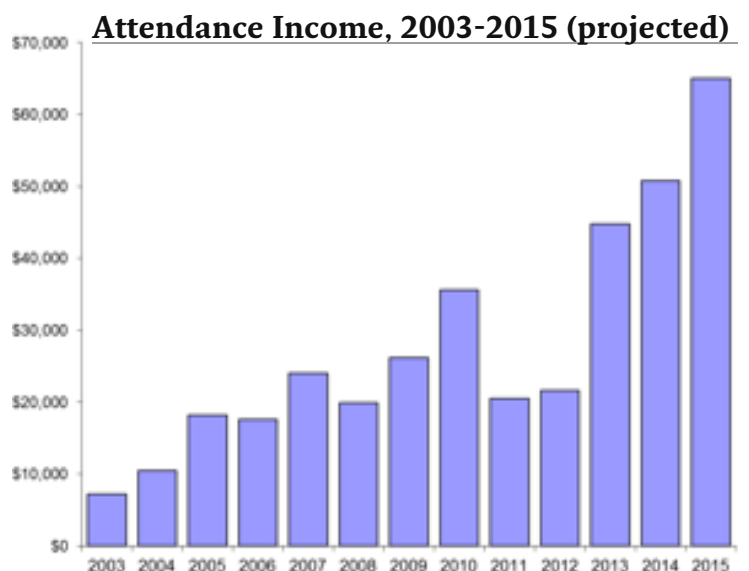
On view now through November 1st is a special exhibition featuring 28 artists and over 50 works of art inside the historic rooms and outside in the landscapes at both the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and the Olana State Historic Site, which are just two miles apart and linked by the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. A free shuttle bus runs on Saturdays from the Amtrak station in Hudson.

Selected by the co-curators, artist Stephen Hannock and art historian Jason Rosenfeld, the artists in the exhibition include some of the most celebrated names in the 20th and 21st centuries: Romare Bearden, Elijah Burgher, Chuck Close, Will Cotton, Gregory Crewdson, Lynn Davis, Jerry Gretzinger, Don Gummer, Kara Hamilton, Duncan Hannah, Stephen Hannock, Valerie Hegarty, Angie Keefer, Charles LeDray, Maya Lin, Frank Moore, Elizabeth Murray, Rashaad Newsome, Thomas Nozkowski, Stephen Petegorsky, Martin Puryear, Cindy Sherman, Sienna Shields, Kiki Smith, Kianja Strobert, Joel Sternfeld, Letha Wilson, and Elyn Zimmerman. The exhibition provides an unprecedented opportunity to consider these historic spaces from a completely new vantage point, expanding the dialogue between art of the past and present. The companion book is published by The Artist Book Foundation, and includes entries by Rosenfeld on all artworks as well as reflections by such preeminent writers and historians as Maurice Berger, Ken Burns and Marvin Heiferman.

Major funding for *River Crossings* was provided by The Moore Charitable Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, New York State's Empire State Development and the I Love NY Division of Tourism under Governor Andrew Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Council Initiative, Tiger and Caroline Williams and The Bay & Paul Foundations. Additional support is provided by Ed Herrington, Inc., the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, the Village of Catskill, the CIP of the Greene County Legislature administered by the GCCA, the Columbia County Tourism Department, Jennifer Krieger, and Chas Miller. The companion book and related public programs were funded by Tiger and Caroline Williams, Furthermore: a program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

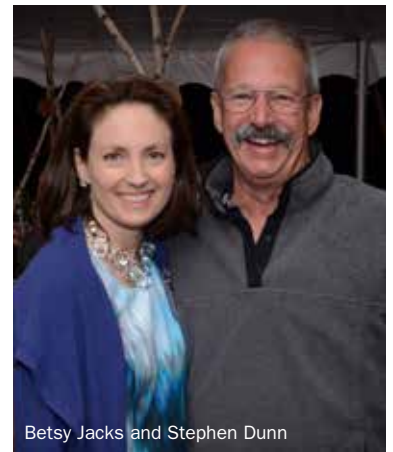
2015 ATTENDANCE BREAKS PREVIOUS RECORD

Attendance at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site continues to climb, with 2015 projected to be another record-breaking year. Attendance income surged in 2013 with a popular exhibition on Albert Bierstadt curated by Annette Blaugrund, increased again in 2014 with the exhibition *Master, Mentor, Master: Thomas Cole & Frederic Church* curated by John Wilmerding, and is now on track to far surpass that record for 2015. Publicity for the historic site has been especially strong this year, for example including three articles in *The New York Times* in the space of two months: one on the current exhibition *River Crossings: Contemporary Art Comes Home* presented in partnership with Olana, the second one a full-page article on the newly discovered decorative painting on the walls of Cole's home (see article on p.1), and a third on the reconstruction of the New Studio. Anticipating an increase in demand for tours this year, we increased our hours of operation for the 2015 season, and we are now open every day except Monday. In addition, we have been testing a new way to be open to the public - "explore at your own pace" - on Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 2 to 5. During these hours, the 1815 Main House is staffed with docents who are available to offer insights and answer questions, while visitors are free to enter and move about the rooms in any order and at whatever pace they wish. The new structure enables us to accommodate many more people per hour than the guided tour format. Audience reaction to date has been extremely positive, and we plan to continue offering "explore at your own pace" hours next year.





Matthew Brown and Lisa Fox Martin



Betsy Jacks and Stephen Dunn

THANK YOU TO OUR 2015 SUMMER PARTY SPONSORS

The staff and trustees of the Thomas Cole site would like to thank the many contributors to our annual summer fundraiser event, hosted by Lisa Fox Martin and designed by Greg Feller and Richard Bodin of Hudson Home. The success of the event was greatly boosted by both a live and silent auction that were made possible by the generous individuals listed below. Save the date for the 2016 Summer Party: Saturday June 25th!

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FIG. 1. THOMAS DOUGHTY, *Land Storm*, 1822. Oil on canvas, 21 x 31 inches. David and Laura Grey Collection.

DOUGHTY TO COLE – A DISCOVERED LINK

David P. Grey

Scholars have long wondered how Thomas Cole, with no formal training, showed such remarkable development in the short period of time from his pre-1825 work to his dramatic explosion onto the New York City art scene in late 1825.¹ How did a self-taught artist suddenly emerge with such accomplished works that caught the immediate attention of the most eminent artists and patrons of the day? Although the true talents of Thomas Cole manifested after his 1825 trip up the Hudson River, this article will suggest that the accomplishments of Cole emanated from his exposure to Thomas Doughty while in Philadelphia from 1823-1825. In his

monograph, *The Art of Thomas Cole: Ambition and Imagination*, Ellwood C. Parry III addresses Cole's early years in his preface, writing, "because this artist's earliest images survive in such limited numbers and are so uneven in quality, it made sense to eliminate a halting first chapter on Cole's juvenilia and start, instead, with his being 'discovered' late in 1825, an event that marked the true beginning of his career..." On the other hand, a biographical sketch of Cole written during his lifetime by William Dunlap in *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* (1834) – an account for which Cole himself submitted much of the ma-

terial – states that Cole was inspired, in substantial part, by the paintings of Doughty and Thomas Birch while living in Philadelphia, and this developmental episode prior to late 1825 should also be considered. Indeed, had Doughty's painting *Land Storm* been available to Parry, he may have designated the Philadelphia experience from 1823-1825 as the true beginning of Cole's career.

Cole, born in England, did not reach America until he was seventeen years old. While there is no evidence that he did any fine art painting in England before he left in 1818, in Dunlap's book Cole is quoted as saying,



FIG. 2. THOMAS COLE, *Moonlit Landscape with Two Figures*, 1824. Charcoal and white chalk on colored paper. Private collection.

“My school opportunities were very small; reading and music were among my recreations, but drawing occupied most of my leisure hours.” Some time prior to 1822 Cole acquired an “English work on painting...it was illustrated with engravings, and treated of design, composition, and color.” Per Cole, “This book was my companion day and night...my ambition grew, and in my imagination I pictured the glory of being a great painter.”²

One of the only ways American artists could earn a livelihood at the start of the nineteenth century was to attempt to satisfy the prevailing desire for portraits. Cole tried his hand at portrait painting for a short time although he never attained success in genre or figure painting.

Prior to 1823 Cole experimented with drawing from nature. In Philadelphia, from 1823-1825, although suffering from inflammatory rheumatism, he enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts for the purpose

of learning how to translate into paint his concept of American nature with special emphasis on his view that the handiwork of the Creator was to be found in the landscape. Prior to 1859, when Darwin’s theory of evolution was first published, it was generally believed that nature had been unchanged from the time of creation and that it evidenced God’s design.

Although the temper of the time for artists was to admire the Old Masters, Cole’s intense interest was in the then secondary school of Landscape and, in particular, artists beginning to make a name for themselves in it, like Doughty and Birch. In 1820, Thomas Doughty became the first American-born artist to designate himself a landscape painter (landscape as distinguished from topographical representation).

Of course, American landscape art as well as much of American history and tradition cannot be divorced from its European heritage. Doughty and Cole

were both strongly influenced by late eighteenth-century English landscape theory; however, they were at the inception of a landscape tradition that was native to America, and were attempting to establish something new. Doughty distinguished himself by offering exciting, immediate and recognizable portrayals of America.

In the two years before moving to New York City to rejoin his family in 1825, Cole lived in Philadelphia, studying and absorbing whatever paintings he could see at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. According to Dunlap, the young Cole’s heart sank, “as he felt his deficiencies in art, when standing before the landscapes of Birch and Doughty.” Presented here (fig. 1) is an image of an 1822 painting by Thomas Doughty which makes a strong case that in Doughty’s earliest works, Cole found inspiration for the style of landscape painting that would later make him famous. Entitled *Land Storm*, it was exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1823 and 1825, both of which Cole attended. It includes the very same compositional features as exist in one of the few documented works by Cole before 1825, *Moonlit Landscape with Two Figures* (1824) (fig. 2), which include a prostrate tree across the foreground, a dramatic mound of earth in the middle ground from which trees reach out in different directions, with slightly oversized figures in the foreground. The dependency of the Cole upon the Doughty appears clear, especially considering Cole’s acknowledged admiration for Doughty.

There is an 1825 Cole painting – this writer cannot determine whether it was before or after the Hudson River trip – which contains similar features, with the addition of a nearly identical

passage to the Doughty mountain on the right side (see fig. 3).

It has been said of *Land Storm* that with its strong contrasts, fallen tree, and dramatic sky, it is perhaps closest in Doughty's oeuvre to the wilderness views that Thomas Cole would begin to paint in 1825. Indeed, the work is Doughty's most Cole-like; the bent, anthropomorphic trees, strong diagonals, and lone human figure all became hallmarks of Cole's work in the following years. Doughty's sky in the upper third of the picture is unusual: dark, stormy clouds surround and frame a patch of blue, calmer sky. There are at least a dozen instances of Cole using this sky treatment from *Land Storm* in the next six years alone, including in two of the three paintings that heralded Cole's New York City debut in 1825. Also, note the picturesque combination of sublime and beautiful, as well as the alternating areas of dark and light known as chiaroscuro, all concepts Cole was later to expand upon.

FIG. 3. THOMAS COLE, *Landscape*, 1825. Oil on canvas, 23¾ x 31½ inches. Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, MN, bequest of Mrs. Kate L. Dunwoody.



It is hoped that additional facts will appear to further elucidate the significant development of the art of Thomas Cole between Philadelphia and the Hudson River trip, but it does appear that his debt to Thomas Doughty demands acknowledgement. The reproductions here speak for themselves as compositions by Cole dependent on the Doughty with which he would have been familiar while in Philadelphia.

Footnotes

1. Factual material in this essay has been dependent upon *History of American Painting* (Volume 3, Chapter 1) by James Thomas Flexner and the essay "Thomas Cole's Early Career: 1818-1829" by Ellwood C. Parry III, published in *Views and Visions: American Landscape Before 1830*, page 161-167, edited by Edward J. Nygren.
2. William Dunlap, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* (New York, 1834), Volume 2, p. 352.

About the Author

David Grey, with his wife, Laura, is a collector of nineteenth-century American art. *Land Storm* is in the David and Laura Grey Collection. Their collection was featured in 2007 at an exhibition organized by the New Britain Museum of American Art, and in the accompanying catalogue entitled *Poetic Journey: American Paintings from the Grey Collection*. The author would like to note that he does not have a degree in art history, and he would like to express his gratitude to David Barnes for his assistance and editing of this essay.



A CHALLENGE FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded the Thomas Cole National Historic Site a Challenge Grant for \$300,000 that must be matched with \$900,000 within the next four years, resulting in a \$1.2 million endowment that will be specifically for educational programming at the Thomas Cole site. The new endowment complements our existing endowment – currently valued at approximately \$1.1 million – which was created through a bequest in 2009 that is restricted for maintenance of the buildings and grounds. The new endowment for programming comes at a key moment in this organization's development, as we will soon open the New Studio, a building that will enable the historic site to greatly expand its educational and programmatic offerings. Each year on July 31st from 2015 through 2018, the Thomas Cole site faces a deadline to raise a portion of the overall match. We invite you to be a part of this historic campaign to create a permanently restricted fund that will support exhibitions, lectures, performances, school visits and community programs. For more information visit www.thomascole.org/challenge.

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WELCOME 2015 THOMAS COLE FELLOWS

On June 3rd we welcomed the fifth annual class of Thomas Cole Fellows, a program for recent college graduates and graduate students that runs through early November. Interested candidates for 2016 should send a letter and resume to the Thomas Cole Historic Site, attention Kate Menconeri. Details can be found at www.thomascole.org/internships.

Keith D. Lebel graduated with a BA in Art History & Philosophy from Boston College in May 2015. He has experience working with archives and curatorial matters at the Hillstead Museum in Farmington, CT and at the McMullen Museum at Boston College.

Amy LeFebvre earned her BA in Studio Art with Minors in Sociology and Anthropology from Ohio Wesleyan University in 2014. She has worked extensively with the Norman Rockwell Museum as an Education Assistant, Docent, Visitor Services greeter, and Curatorial and Archival intern.

Elena Ostock earned a BA in Museum Studies, Art, and History from Juniata College in 2014. She traveled to France to study at Université Catholique de Lille and received an endowed scholarship in History. She also worked as an Education department intern at MASS MoCA.



Elena Ostock



Keith Lebel



Amy LeFebvre