

- [Print](#)
- [Close](#)

Thomas Cole Site to Open Contemporary Art Exhibition with 11 Artists Responding to the Hudson River School Artist's Work

CATSKILL, New York -- 02 August 2018



Thomas Cole, Diagram of Contrasts, 1834, Courtesy of Collection Richard Sharp.

(ArtfixDaily.com) The Thomas Cole National Historic Site has announced a new contemporary art exhibition SPECTRUM, opening August 14, that brings together the work of 11 contemporary artists that will be installed throughout the 19th-century historic home, studios, and grounds of the artist Thomas Cole (1801-1848) in Catskill, New York.

The project is inspired by and in dialogue with Thomas Cole's own work, spanning the interior colors he carefully chose for the house, his own color wheel painting titled Diagram of Contrasts, and his extensive writing on the topic of color, which details his desire to invent an instrument that could play the sound of color. The historic site's 1815 Main House also contains the earliest-known interior decorative painting by an American artist, and its bold features reveal an added dimension to Cole's use of and thinking about color.

SPECTRUM will feature more than 30 new and existing artworks and installations, alongside Cole's work, that are made by 11 contemporary artists: Polly Apfelbaum (Elizaville, NY and New York City); Ann Veronica Janssens (Brussels, Belgium); Valerie Hammond (New York City); Anne Lindberg (Ancramdale, NY); Laura Moriarty (Rosendale, NY); Portia Munson (Catskill, NY); Jackie Saccoccio (West Cornwall, CT); Lisa Sanditz (Tivoli, NY); Julianne Swartz (Stone Ridge, NY and New York City); Mildred Thompson (deceased; Atlanta), and Linda Weintraub (Rhinebeck, NY). Many of the exhibiting artists have international careers but maintain deep local ties to the Hudson River Valley, as did Cole.

All works will be presented in a new site-specific context, in which they have never-before been shown, and carefully placed to be in conversation with Cole and the unique historic rooms and grounds of the 19th-century artist's home and studios. The diverse projects on view examine color in relation to smell, sight, and taste, as well as music, emotion, science, abstraction, and the natural world.

The contemporary artworks will include an immersive site-specific light installation by Ann Veronica Janssens, a garden designed by Portia Munson, woodblock prints by Polly Apfelbaum, Camera-Less-Videos by Julianne Swartz, an outdoor rainbow by Valerie Hammond, vibrant Radiation Explorations by Mildred Thompson, and monumental scaled works on linen by Jackie Saccoccio. The artist Lisa Sanditz is creating for the occasion an installation of sculpture and painting, combined with works from the Cole Site's collection by Emily Cole (Thomas Cole's daughter), and Anne Lindberg is presenting a new site-specific thread installation and works on paper that respond to Thomas Cole's periwinkle wallcolor choice. Laura Moriarty created a "Tableau for Thomas Cole" with pigmented beeswax, and Linda Weintraub will present an installation of home-preserved food in the order of the color spectrum.

"Thomas Cole was fascinated by how color connects to music, to emotion and the natural world," said Kate Menconeri, curator. "This exhibition explores that fascination through contemporary eyes – those of artists who are expanding our experience and understanding of color two centuries later. Simultaneously they, like Cole, explore color at the intersection of art and science, and as both light and pigment."

The genesis of the exhibition grew out of ongoing conversations between Cole site curator Kate Menconeri and artist Kiki Smith while working on Smith's 2017 solo exhibition From the Creek at the Thomas Cole Site.

"Color has baffled me. Thomas Cole's use of color, as well as his evident interest in light phenomena found in nature, is compelling to me," said Kiki Smith, who is one of the advisors to the Cole Site's series OPEN HOUSE: Contemporary Art in Conversation with Cole.

"This exhibition dives into Thomas Cole's exploration of color and brings it forward to our present moment through the work of 11 contemporary artists," said Elizabeth Jacks, Executive Director of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

"Working with richly pigmented beeswax, I approach each piece as if taking a walk through an environment of color. Taking one step after another, I am bushwhacking through the historical boundaries of what a landscape painting can be – creating adventures of the mind where matter and energy are interchangeable," said artist Laura Moriarty.

Cole once wrote in his journal that "colours are as capable of affecting thee by combination, degree, and arrangement as sound." Drawing on such ideas, the exhibition also explores Cole's use of and thinking about color through his own texts, publications of his time, and new writing by artist and NYU Art Department Chair



Lisa Sanditz, Peach Trees and CDs, 2013, Oil on canvas, 20 x 16 in. Courtesy of the artist.



Polly Apfelbaum, Atomic Mystic Aura 9, 2017, Woodblock, Hiromi Handmade DHM-11 Triple Thick Paper, 28 5/8 x 19 in., Image: 26 3/8 x 17 in. Printed and published by Durham Press, Courtesy Durham Press, © Durham Press and the artist

Jesse Bransford, that offers an overview of the historic context and color theories that Cole was exploring in the 19th century. An exhibition catalogue will feature this new text as well as artists' pages and en-situ views of the contemporary installations.

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.

ArtfixDaily.com © 2018 Wildfire Media. All rights reserved.