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Contemporary Art, Acclaimed 19th-Century Paintings, and Ecology Collide at the Opening of a Major Collaborative Exhibition “Cross Pollination” in June at both the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and Olana State Historic Site in New York’s Hudson River Skywalk Region

The National Project was Conceived in the Hudson Valley and Stems from the Artist Martin Johnson Heade’s 19th-Century Series of Hummingbird Paintings, *The Gems of Brazil*, 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.

Co-Organized by the two Historic Sites in New York and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas, the Exhibition will also Feature Work by Contemporary Artists Including Nick Cave, Mark Dion, Jeffrey Gibson, Paula Hayes, Patrick Jacobs, Maya Lin, Dana Sherwood, Jean Shin, Rachel Sussman, and Vik Muniz.

Cross Pollination: Heade, Cole, Church, and Our Contemporary Moment

June 12 - October 31, 2021

Olana State Historic Site and Thomas Cole National Historic Site

Catskill and Hudson, NY – March 1, 2021 – The Olana Partnership, Olana State Historic Site, and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site announced today that “Cross Pollination: Heade, Cole, Church, and Our Contemporary Moment” will open on June 12 at the two historic sites – the only opportunity to see the unique presentation of the exhibition in New York, in the landscapes and historic spaces that so dramatically influenced and continue to influence the evolution of art in America. For the first time in over two decades, 16 paintings from the influential series of hummingbirds and habitats – *The Gems of Brazil* (1863-64) – by Martin Johnson Heade (1819-1904) will be on view in New York for public audiences. The project uses the metaphor of cross-pollination inspired by Heade’s paintings to explore interconnections in art and science, between artists, and across the 19th and 21st centuries. Paintings, sketches, sculpture, and natural history specimens will be displayed in provocative juxtapositions.



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.

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,



Martin Johnson Heade, "Tropical Orchid,"
c. 1871-74, Oil on canvas, 21¼ x 17½ in. /
Framed: 25¼ x 21¾ inches. Olana State
Historic Site, NYS Office of Parks,
Recreation, and Historic Preservation,
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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.

The exhibition will also include paintings by Thomas Cole and Frederic Church, as well as botanical works on both paper and porcelain by Emily Cole, Cole's daughter, and Isabel Charlotte Church, Church's daughter, which will be shown together here for the first time. The exhibition highlights natural specimen collections amassed by Thomas Cole and Frederic Church, including Cole's

mineral and herbarium collections and a sampling of the Church family's extensive collection of bird eggs.

"Cross Pollination" positions these 19th-century artists in a call and response with 21st-century American artists, whose works engage contemporary issues related to biodiversity, habitat protection, and environmental sustainability. 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 joint project will be presented simultaneously as one exhibition at both Olana State Historic Site in Hudson, NY, and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in Catskill, NY, from June 12 to October 31, 2021. The two historic sites are connected by the Hudson River Skywalk, a scenic walkway across the Hudson River – with sweeping views of the Hudson Valley and the Catskill Mountains – that opened in June 2019.

"Cross Pollination" is the second major collaborative project between Olana and the Thomas Cole Site and builds upon the success of the inaugural "River Crossings: Contemporary Art Comes Home" exhibition in 2015.



Nick Cave, *Soundsuit*, 2006–12, found sequined and beaded materials, hand-sewn, mannequin, and armature, 72 x 30 x 30 in. Collection of Carol McCranie and Javier Magri, © Nick Cave. Photograph courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

The "Cross Pollination" exhibition was created by The Olana Partnership at Olana State Historic Site, Thomas Cole National Historic Site, and Crystal Bridges Museum



of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas. The exhibition was originally scheduled to open in May 2020 at the two historic sites in New York but was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The exhibition tour is presented at a total of five venues: Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens in Jacksonville, FL, Reynolda House Museum of American Art in Winston-Salem, NC, Thomas Cole National Historic Site and The Olana Partnership at Olana State Historic Site in New York’s Hudson Valley, and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas. The exhibition tour is organized by Crystal Bridges.

The exhibition will include site-specific artwork created expressly for this occasion and inspired by *The Gems of Brazil*, the natural environment, and the landscapes, historic homes, and studios of Cole and Church. The following artists made new work for these specific settings: Rachel Berwick, Mark Dion and Dana Sherwood, Lisa Sanditz and Emily Sartor, and Jean Shin. In addition, Sayler/Morris, Portia Munson, and Paula Hayes drew from existing works to create new site-specific installations for “Cross Pollination.” *The Pollinator Pavilion*, for instance, is a major public artwork by Mark Dion and Dana Sherwood created for the exhibition at the Thomas Cole Site; it is designed so that pollinators and humans may share the same space. Nationally renowned artist Jean Shin will create a site-specific installation at Olana titled “FALLEN,” a memorial artwork created from a much-beloved hemlock tree that died of natural causes. “FALLEN” creates an opportunity to reflect on the sadness of both this hemlock and the wider history of environmental loss in the Catskills region. The installation is in process and will open on May 1.

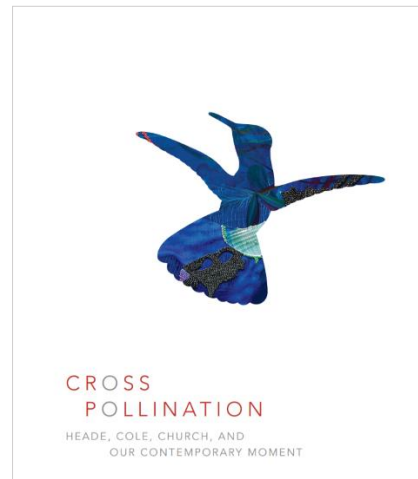


Mark Dion and Dana Sherwood, *The Pollinator Pavilion*, at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, 2020, Photography © Peter Aaron/OTTO

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 information and tour details are available at the historic sites’ websites (below).

“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 and Chair of Art History & Visual Culture, Bard College, and former Director of Research & Publications at The Olana Partnership; Mindy N. Besaw, Curator of American Art & Director of Fellowships and Research at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and William L. Coleman, Director of Collections & Exhibitions at The Olana Partnership. The exhibition was created collaboratively by the partner museums and in conversations with leading American artists, scholars, scientists, and historians.

A richly illustrated companion book – also titled “Cross Pollination”





– accompanies the exhibition and features new original essays by the exhibition curators. The book is published by the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and The Olana Partnership.

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

Made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art. The exhibition is supported in New York in part by The National Endowment for the Arts, Market New York through I LOVE NY/New York State's Division of Tourism as part of the Regional Economic Development Council awards, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, and the New York State Legislature; the Robert Lehman Foundation; The Bank of Greene County Charitable Foundation; Greene County Legislature through the County Initiative Program of the Greene County Council on the Arts; The Olana Partnership's Novak-Ferber Exhibitions Fund, the Kindred Spirits Society of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Charina Foundation, The Stainman Family Foundation, Anne Miller & Stuart Breslow, Kristin Gamble, and Deedee & Barrie Wigmore. Support for the catalogue is provided by Furthermore: a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund.

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.

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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