

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



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The Thomas Cole National Historic Site Announces Pop-Up Exhibition and Book with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's School of Architecture

The Project "Imaginary Wilds: Architectural Interventions for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site" Presents Imaginary Designs for the Museum Campus that Address Real and Ideal Relationships Between Architecture and Landscape

Imaginary Wilds:

Architectural Interventions for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site

March 9-April 7, 2024: Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Catskill, NY

Sunday, March 24: Student Presentations & Book Reception

**Catskill, NY –
February 13, 2023**
– The Thomas Cole National Historic Site announced today the upcoming pop-up exhibition and book *Imaginary Wilds: Architectural Interventions for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site* with Rensselaer



Digital Illustration by Kyra Gregorie

Polytechnic Institute's School of Architecture. The exhibition will open on March 9 and run through April 7, 2024. The book is published by ORO Editions.

The exhibition and book present a series of student-designed architectural projects completed throughout the Fall 2022 semester that imagine a new gallery building sited within the landscape of Thomas Cole's historic home and studio in Catskill, New York. Ten student projects will be exhibited, comprised of three-dimensional models and digital illustrations. The exhibition will be presented at the Thomas Cole site in the reconstruction of a building that Thomas Cole designed, his 1846 New Studio, which was rebuilt on its original foundation in 2015.

“The aspiration of Thomas Cole’s art was ultimately to convey an idea about nature, and humans’ relationship to it; a pursuit at the core of architectural practice,” says Adam Dayem, Exhibition Curator and Assistant Professor, Rensselaer School of Architecture. “What better place to explore the relationship between the built and natural world than the historic home of Thomas Cole, who identified as an architect and whose enduring legacy of American landscape painting is recognized the world over.”

The conceit of a new building for the cultural institution offered a framework for the students to consider the complexities of landscapes and nature as both real and ideal in the architectural design process. The museum is comprised of the historic home and studio buildings of the artist and early environmentalist Thomas Cole (1801-1848), who founded the influential art movement known today as the Hudson River School of American Landscape painting. Cole’s art and writings explore humans’ relationship with landscape. He was also an architect and designed several buildings, including the 1846 New Studio and the Ohio State Capital.

Evan Douglass, Dean, Rensselaer School of Architecture, asserts: “In the bold designs brought to life by the students at the hallowed Cole Historic Site, we discover a creative odyssey of speculative futures: subterranean structures that deftly conceal themselves within the picturesque terrain, amorphous architectural bodies that seemingly meander like imaginary flora figures across the landscape, and unassuming edifices that, beneath their surface, function as memory machines, recalling the timeless beauty of the Hudson River Valley in a bygone era.”

The exhibition is curated and the book is edited by Adam Dayem, Assistant Professor at Rensselaer School of Architecture. He is a registered architect in New York State and received his Master of Architecture from Columbia University. Dayem is the founder and Principal of Actual Office Architecture, a design practice that has received numerous awards for both theoretical and built architecture. He recently designed a new 1600-square-foot concept store in New York City for famed Japanese fashion designer Yohji Yamamoto. The exhibiting students are Alan Aguilera, Stephanie Coraisaca, Kyra Gregorie, Sarah Ishida, Jillian Lin, Katarina Napoli, Helly Rana, Alan Rosas, Scott Sigmund and Javier Torres.

“The subject of Thomas Cole’s painting and writing was humans’ relationship with land—and isn’t that ultimately the role of architecture, to mediate between the two?” said Elizabeth B. Jacks, Executive Director of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. “How lucky we are that the architect and professor Adam Dayem brought his students to the Thomas Cole site in 2022 and began imagining a partnership, and that the Dean of the School of Architecture Evan Douglass would not only embrace it but run with it, resulting in this spectacular collaboration.”

The book features new texts and original essays by acclaimed architects and art historians including: Evan Douglass, Dean, Rensselaer School of Architecture; Elizabeth B. Jacks, Executive Director, Thomas Cole National Historic Site; Adam Dayem, Assistant Professor, Rensselaer School of Architecture; David Salomon,

Associate Professor, Ithaca College; Cathryn Dwyre-Perry, Adjunct Associate Professor, Pratt Institute; and William L. Coleman, Curator, Brandywine Museum of Art. Additional contributors: Jillian Crandall, Lecturer, Rensselaer School of Architecture; David Bell, Associate Professor, Rensselaer School of Architecture; Gustavo Crembil, Associate Professor, Rensselaer School of Architecture; and Leandro Piazza, Lecturer, Rensselaer School of Architecture. ORO Editions publishes a wide range of highly acclaimed, award-winning illustrated books specializing in architecture, urbanism, landscape, art photography, academia & applied research. The book is available for presale at store.thomascole.org.

Admission to the exhibition will be included with all weekend guided tour tickets from March 9 through April 7. Tickets are available via thomascole.org/imaginarywilds. The project is accompanied by student presentations and a book reception hosted at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site on Sunday, March 24, as part of the museum's "Sunday Salons" speaker series. Participants will see what it's like to attend architecture school and hear student presentations and expert critique from professors and other project participants. The ticketed presentations take place in the New Studio at 2 and 4 pm with a public book reception in between at 3 pm. Tickets are available at thomascole.org/events.

Rensselaer School of Architecture

The Rensselaer School of Architecture takes pride in preparing students to become future leaders in the profession. Beyond offering a comprehensive education that leads towards licensure within two NAAB accredited professional programs the School aspires to creating an environment and culture throughout the School that rewards the nobility of ideas, the roots of theoretical inquiry, the merits of social responsibility, the resounding effects of innovative design and the impressive achievement of realizable proposals that are thoughtfully conceived as benevolent gifts to the world at large.

In response to a transdisciplinary approach to education, the School is uniquely structured as a constellation of preeminent research areas (architectural acoustics, lighting and built ecologies) that have the capacity to realign in favor of a variety of potential collaborative arrangements. Seeking to build a more robust set of graduate study concentrations in support of our internationally renowned undergraduate program the beginning student of architecture resides within a dynamic and inspired interdisciplinary environment prepared to take on the many exciting challenges facing our profession today.

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is an international destination presenting the original home and studios of the artist and early environmentalist Thomas Cole (1801-1848). Cole founded the influential art movement of the United States, now known as the Hudson River School of American landscape painting. Located on 6 acres in the Hudson Valley, the site includes the 1815 Main House; Cole's 1839 Old Studio; the reconstructed 1846 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. Activities include special exhibitions of both 19th-century and contemporary art, print publications, lectures, extensive online programs, school programs, the Cole Fellowship, free community events, and innovative public programs such as the Hudson River School Art Trail—a map and website that enable people to visit the places in nature that Cole painted—and the Hudson River Skywalk, a scenic walkway connecting the Thomas Cole Site with Frederic Church’s Olana over the Hudson River via the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. 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 and our conception of nature as a restorative power—are both historic and timely, providing the opportunity to connect to audiences with insights that are highly relevant to their own lives.

Visitor Information

The hours of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site vary by season. For details see: www.thomascole.org/visit. The grounds are open every day for free from dawn to dusk. Keep in touch on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter at [@thomascolesite](https://www.instagram.com/thomascolesite).