
MARIA + THOMAS



THOMAS COLE, *Maria Bartow Cole (1813–1884)*, c. 1838, pencil on paper, Albany Institute of History & Art, gift of Mrs. Florence Cole Vincent, 1958.28.18 (left); FREDERIC CHURCH, *Thomas Cole*, 1846, pencil and ink on paper, National Portrait Gallery (right)

Maria and Thomas frequently corresponded about his negotiations with patrons.

*Luman Reed commissioned *The Course of Empire*, then suddenly died.*

Thomas to Maria, December 9, 1843

Mrs. Reed would not let me have “Course of Empire” to exhibit which, you know, is a great disappointment, as it diminishes the effect of my Exhibition.

Maria to Thomas, January 6, 1844

I feel sorry that there should be any unfriendly feeling from so respectable a source. Would it not be well for you to see some other member of the Reed family?

Another frequent patron was Daniel Wadsworth.

Thomas to Maria, January 15, 1844

Mr. Wadsworth has a desire for a series of mine. I am going to propose to him “Sowing and Reaping,” or “Life, Death, and Immortality.”

Maria to Thomas, February 12, 1844

Why need you propose either of your subjects for Pictures? Tell him that you have subjects, and what price you will paint them for. And be sure you have it in the bargain that you may exhibit them if you wish to.

Maria and her family provided Thomas with a household of support.

How many people does it take to make a successful artist?