

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

The Poetry of Nature: Hudson River School Landscapes from the New-York Historical Society

On view at Worcester Art Museum from September 8 through November 25

July 26, 2018, Worcester, MA – A stunning array of over 40 paintings from the New-York Historical Society’s collection by renowned Hudson River School artists, including Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, Albert Bierstadt, Jasper Cropsey, John F. Kensett, and William T. Richards, will be on view at the Worcester Art Museum from September 8 through November 25, 2018. Painted between 1818 and 1886, the works illustrate America’s scenic splendor as seen through the eyes of some of the country’s most important painters.

In the first decade of the 19th century, the expansive landscapes of the Hudson River Valley and adjacent areas, such as the Catskills and the Adirondack Mountains, inspired an elite group of American artists known as the Hudson River School. Coming together under the influence of British émigré painter Thomas Cole (1801–1848), they shared a philosophy and appreciation for the natural landscape. Today their collective works are considered the first uniquely American art movement. In their idyllic depictions of the landscape, these artists conveyed not only the majesty of America, but an image of man living in harmonious balance with nature.

The Poetry of Nature: Hudson River School Landscapes from the New-York Historical Society opens with seminal works by Thomas Cole and Asher B. Durand (1796–1886). Cole first traveled up the Hudson in 1825, where he captured the wildness of the American landscape in his paintings. Durand, who frequently worked alongside Cole, was instrumental in leading the group after the latter’s untimely death in 1848. Cole’s romantic interpretations of the American landscape—represented in the exhibition by his painting, *Catskill Creek, New York*, depicting a tranquil sunset view on the Catskill Creek—demonstrate his mastery of perspective; he is able to convey vast open spaces and create rich atmospheric effects.

Durand favored tighter views and closely observed details of nature. Paintings in the exhibition will present his vivid compositions, from majestic mountain ranges to tranquil woodland interiors and studies of trees. Durand’s influential *Letters on Landscape Painting* (1855–1856), promoted the movement for plein air painting, calling such excursions, “hard-work-play.” As president of the National Academy of Design, he advocated for the landscape paintings by

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his Hudson River School colleagues at that institution and facilitated the patronage and rise of the Hudson River School.

Coinciding with an increase in leisure travel, the Hudson River painters also journeyed to regions noted for their beauty outside of New York State. New Hampshire, coastal New England, and even the mountains of Virginia were among the areas featured in their works.

“Worcester is centrally located to many of the regions represented in these paintings and will likely be familiar sights to many visitors,” said Erin Corrales-Diaz, assistant curator of American art at WAM. “We are delighted to share with the Worcester community these important and exquisite American landscape paintings on loan from the New-York Historical Society. We hope visitors will enjoy these artworks as a respite from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and celebrate America’s natural wonders.”

The exhibition was organized by the New-York Historical Society, which holds one of the most renowned collections of Hudson River School paintings. Dr. Linda S. Ferber, the museum director emerita of New-York Historical and a leading authority on Hudson River School artists, is the curator for this extraordinary exhibition. Lead Supporting Sponsor is Imperial Distributors, Inc.

The Poetry of Nature: Hudson River School Landscapes from the New-York Historical Society is sponsored by Cole Contracting, Inc. Supporting sponsor is Imperial Distributors, Inc.

Exhibition Opening Party

The public is invited to an exhibition opening party on Friday, September 7 from 6:30 to 8pm. A special Members-only preview will take place from 5:30 to 6:30pm. Admission to the event is free for WAM Members at the Salisbury and Benefactor levels and for Business Partners; \$10 for Single, Double and Triple Members; and \$20 for the general public.

About the Worcester Art Museum

Founded in 1896, the Worcester Art Museum’s encyclopedic 38,000 piece collection covers 51 centuries of art. Highlights include the Medieval Chapter House, Renaissance Court, and Worcester Hunt Mosaic, as well as the recently integrated John Woodman Higgins Armory Collection of arms and armor. The Museum is internationally known for its collection of European and American art. It was the first in America to acquire paintings by Monet and Gauguin and

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one of the first to exhibit photography as fine art. As the one of the first U.S. museums to focus on collaborating with local schools, it has been at the forefront of engaging audiences and giving them a meaningful and personal experience for over a century.

The Worcester Art Museum, located at 55 Salisbury Street in Worcester, MA, is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and every third Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is \$16 for adults, \$6 for children 4-17, \$14 for seniors 65+, and \$14 for college students with ID. Members and children under four are free. Parking is free. For more information, visit worcesterart.org.

About the New-York Historical Society

The New-York Historical Society, one of America's preeminent cultural institutions, is dedicated to fostering research and presenting history and art exhibitions and public programs that reveal the dynamism of history and its influence on the world of today. Founded in 1804, New-York Historical has a mission to explore the richly layered history of New York City and State and the country, and to serve as a national forum for the discussion of issues surrounding the making and meaning of history. New-York Historical is also home to the Patricia D. Klingenstein Library, one of the oldest, most distinguished libraries in the nation—and one of only 20 in the United States qualified to be a member of the Independent Research Libraries Association—which contains more than three million books, pamphlets, maps, atlases, newspapers, broadsides, music sheets, manuscripts, prints, photographs, and architectural drawings. To learn more, visit nyhistory.org

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