



Imaginary Wilds

Architectural Interventions for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site

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- Through the lens of Thomas Cole's artistic legacy, **Imaginary Wilds** showcases student-designed architectural interventions at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site campus in Catskill, NY
- With regard to American landscape art, the book presents a series of new essays addressing how Thomas Cole's thinking on landscape, and the relations between humans and nature, have a continuing impact on contemporary architecture and landscape design
- With regard to architectural education, the book presents five unique pedagogical perspectives, from five different design instructors, on relationships between a carefully defined architectural program and conceptual territories framed by Thomas Cole's paintings
- With regard to architectural design in general, the book presents a series of speculative student designed architectural projects reflecting the complexities and ambiguities of Thomas Cole's legacy of landscape thinking

The myth of a wild, untouched landscape is persistent in American history. Imaginary wilds helped define an American identity in the early nineteenth century when Thomas Cole produced a series of masterwork paintings of American landscapes. And today the myth of imaginary wilds continues to have a major influence on attitudes toward landscape, nature, and the use of resources extracted from the earth. This book presents a series of student-designed architectural projects for a new gallery building sited within the landscape of Cedar Grove, Thomas Cole's historic home and studio in Catskill, New York. Cole's artistic legacy can be interpreted in different ways because he was concerned with landscapes and nature as both material and ideal conditions. Complexities arising from considering landscapes and nature as both real and ideal create a productive frame for exploring how architects might design buildings in relation to landscapes and nature. Throughout the book, these relationships are seen to play out in five different directions under the guidance of five different design studio instructors. The architectural projects presented here are contextualised in relation to landscape, nature, and Thomas Cole's artistic legacy in a series of essays by a distinguished group of designers and thinkers.

Adam Dayem is an architect and educator based in Brooklyn, NY. He is Assistant Professor of Architecture at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute School of Architecture, and principal of Actual Office Architecture, a design practice that has received numerous awards for theoretical and built architecture.

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