

**WORKSHOP FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE THEME STUDY WORKSHOP**

---

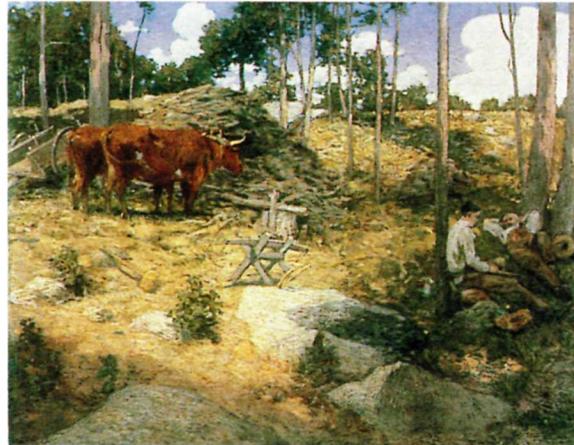
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Cover: *Twilight in the Wilderness*, a sketch, Frederic E. Church, 1856–65. Courtesy: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site.

---

*Midday Rest in New England*, J. Alden Weir, 1897. Courtesy: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

workshop  
findings and recommendations



**PAINTING AND SCULPTURE THEME STUDY WORKSHOP  
JUNE 10-14, 1991**

---

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# CONTENTS

THE PAINTING AND SCULPTURE THEME STUDY WORKSHOP 1

## **PART ONE: MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 3**

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'S ROLE IN INTERPRETING THE VISUAL ARTS 5  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTIONS 8

## **PART TWO: FRAMEWORK FOR THE VISUAL ARTS THEME STUDY 11**

THEME DEFINITION 13

SUBTHEMES: THE STORY TO BE TOLD 14

DETERMINATIONS OF SITE SIGNIFICANCE 17

KINDS OF SITES 17

CRITERIA OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE 18

EVALUATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ARTISTS 19

EVALUATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SITES 21

COMPLETING THE FRAMEWORK 26

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS 27



## THE PAINTING AND SCULPTURE THEME STUDY WORKSHOP

The Painting and Sculpture Theme Study Workshop convened a group of 26 professionals, approximately half from within and half from outside the National Park Service, for two-and-one-half days to

- define the National Park Service's role in preserving and interpreting American painting and sculpture
- develop guidelines for determining whether or not an art-related site meets the criteria for national significance
- examine the current art-related theme structure used by the National Park Service to organize and evaluate sites

The theme study work group included people with backgrounds and interests in fine art, art history (including

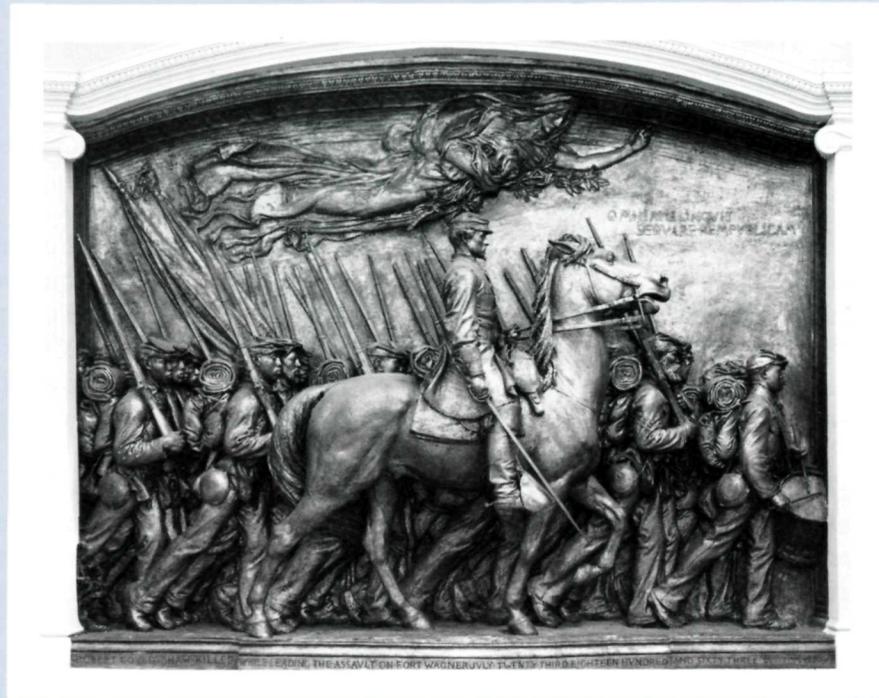
specialists in both painting and sculpture), cultural history, and American and British history. It included highly respected museum directors and managers, curators, educators, historic site managers, and city planners, along with NPS policy makers and staff knowledgeable about the national historic landmarks program and national historic site planning and management (see the list of participants at the end of this report).

The National Park Service thanks all of the agencies, institutions, and individuals who have given so much of their time to provide the extremely useful information included in this document. This participation will help preserve significant resources and heighten understanding of the contributions of American art and artists to our national heritage. Cooperative efforts can result in some of the best and most creative solutions.



---

*Shaw Memorial*, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1897. Courtesy: National Park Service,  
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.



## PART ONE: MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

---

The National Park Service, as a federal agency, has a major role in maintaining and



---

## THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'S ROLE IN INTERPRETING THE VISUAL ARTS

Art is an integral part of our American heritage and an important context for understanding our history and our contemporary world. Art reflects and is reflected in our most fundamental perceptions of who we are.

When we won our independence from England, our art became an expression of great national pride in what was uniquely American, particularly as it related to the wild and pristine nature of the New World. By the end of the Civil War, our perceptions and our art had changed. Innocence and idealism had given way to a new sobriety and seriousness, driving some artists further inward, others to starker reassessments of the physical world, and many others back to Old World traditions. By the turn of the 20th century a more self-assured American art had emerged, rooted in European traditions but aspiring to fully express American society, including its rapidly growing urban sector. In this century social idealism and utopianism have encouraged the exploration of new and unique forms of social structure and government—and of art. Now, in our time, modernism seems to be giving way to a return to the concerns of everyday life and an unprecedented acceptance of the validity of all forms of human expression. Viewed within this broad cultural context, the arts both confirm and enrich our shared American legacy.

The National Park Service, as a formal custodian of our heritage, should play a major role in mainstreaming art into

*The National Park Service, as a formal custodian of our heritage, should play a major role in mainstreaming art into our cultural awareness and sense of national pride.*

our cultural awareness and sense of national pride. By preserving and interpreting art-related sites, the Park Service can provide important doorways for introducing people to their national art.

To understand art, people obviously need to experience original works in museums and other public places.

But different *and equally important* experiences can be provided by art-related sites (homes, studios, foundries, galleries, gathering places, landscapes as subjects of art) and districts:

- Sites can frame art in a historical, visual, or personal context, helping make the unfamiliar more comfortable and approachable. People who have little background in the arts may first relate to the history surrounding a site, or to its scenic beauty, or to the lifestyle of its occupants, then gradually learn how art relates to the other elements of culture.
- Sites represent artists as individuals. They help people understand what a particular artist's life was like—how this individual influenced and was influenced by the design of his or her surroundings. In this way sites provide a personalized framework for understanding and appreciating the values expressed in an artist's work.

- Sites can address various aspects of the artistic process, such as technique, production, and patronage.
- Personal experiences at sites can leave strong impressions, which for purposes of introducing people to their art heritage are as important or more important than factual material. People may be attracted by something striking about a site, and this may provide an opening for future experiences and opportunities to learn about American art and culture.

The National Park Service can preserve and interpret art-related sites in a number of ways:

- The National Park Service should make sure that important artistic events and personages are included in the interpretive programs developed for all NPS areas having relevant connections. For example, the American colonial portrait painter John Singleton Copley could be mentioned at the home of one of his famous patrons, Paul Revere, at Boston National Historical Park. This would be particularly appropriate because no home, studio, or other site directly associated with Copley has survived. As another example, the romantic backlash to industrialization could be interpreted at Lowell National Historical Park, where the elements of the American industrial revolution first came together on a modern scale—and at Yosemite National Park, where Albert Bierstadt created his famous romantic painting *Domes of the Yosemite*. Understanding American history can be greatly enhanced by exploring art, along with politics, economics, society, and philosophy, as a tightly interrelated piece of the whole. Areas that are important culturally often have important visual art connections, and many natural parks also have ties to artists and art. Incorporating art into a great variety of park interpretive

programs will help make it meaningful to a large number of people with diverse backgrounds and interests.

Artists-in-parks programs were not universally supported by the theme study work group. Some people believe that artificial inducements to bring artists to paint in a particular location compromise the creative process and that the experience of this artifice is of little interpretive value. Others believe that these programs offer a unique opportunity to continue a tradition of art in parks and to use the arts—not just finished works of art, but the process of creating art, as well—as an interpretive medium, encouraging visitors to experience a park’s resources from this point of view.

- The National Park Service should own and operate certain nationally significant art-related sites. Some significant artists’ homes and studios are now protected and interpreted, mostly outside the national park system. But a much larger number of potentially significant art-related sites have been ignored. As a result, these valuable representations of our art heritage are disappearing before people have the opportunity to experience or learn from them. Including outstanding examples of art-related sites in the national park system will formally recognize the arts as an integral part of our national heritage and bring understanding of their importance to our culture. The criteria for determining nationally significant sites and guidelines for applying those criteria are included in part two of this document.
- The National Park Service should cooperate with managers of other art-related sites and museums to expand upon and enhance the interpretation of nationally significant artists and sites. Encouraging visitors to experience original works

in museums and to visit related homes, studios, landscapes, and other sites can greatly increase understanding and appreciation of artists' lives and works. Also, at certain times American art was characterized by an unusually strong interaction and cross-fertilization among artists that can best be communicated by interpreting larger urban districts or rural regions. In these instances the Park Service should develop a comprehensive interpretive framework and techniques for cooperative management. Technical assistance should be provided to others in preserving and interpreting related sites. A variety of techniques should be considered, including

trails with self-guiding brochures or interpretive waysides (plaques explaining why the sites are significant)

videos and other audiovisual media

centralized interpretive centers

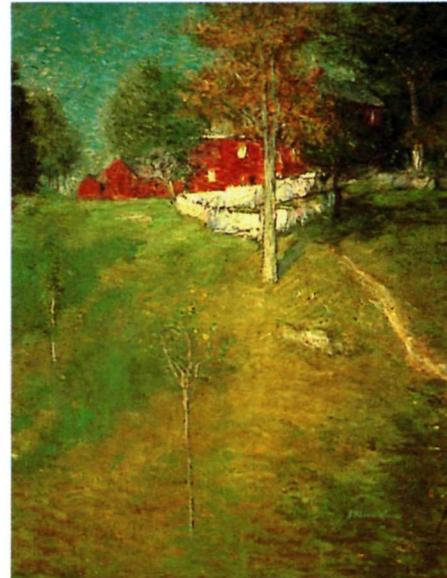
maps identifying art-related sites and districts associated with significant artists, along with museums where their original works may be viewed

Sites could be linked on local, regional, and national levels. The Park Service might also help produce guidebooks for American art sites in Europe, since some very significant American artists lived most of their productive lives abroad.

- The National Park Service should support the preservation and interpretation of a wide variety of art-related sites, including those of less than national significance, through financial and technical assistance programs.



Weir Farm.



*The Laundry, Branchville*, J. Alden Weir, c. 1894.  
Courtesy: Weir Farm Heritage Trust.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. Because the National Park Service does not have a great deal of experience in evaluating art-related sites, and because the agency currently has limited expertise in art history, it must rely on cooperation with professionals from outside the agency to help analyze proposed new national historic landmarks and national historic sites related to this theme. The highest priority should be placed on establishment of an informal peer-review group to help determine the national significance of art-related sites on a case-by-case basis. The group should be established immediately, since decisions about art-related sites need to be made before the completion of the theme study. The group should include art historians, cultural historians, museum curators and administrators, and specialists in other relevant disciplines, including representatives of the National Park Service, and should balance professional biases to create a neutral testing ground for nominated sites. The group could bring in additional experts as it deemed appropriate. This would not be a legislated commission. Group members would agree to make themselves available for a specified term, during which they would review studies of potential national landmarks and national historic sites prepared by NPS staff. The group would convene as necessary to make recommendations on studies before they were submitted to the National Park System Advisory Board. If similar groups were eventually established for the other arts, they should be closely coordinated.
2. The theme of painting and sculpture should be expanded to encompass all the visual arts, including graphic arts and

photography. Fluidity between these media often characterized American artists: Painters explored photography, illustrators became painters, and sculptors drew. The peer-review group established to advise the National Park Service should include art professionals with expertise in each of these fields.

3. The National Park Service should undertake a theme study for the visual arts as soon as possible, recognizing that the arts are severely underrepresented in the interpretation of our culture and that potentially significant sites are endangered. Theme studies typically include both a theme analysis and a site survey.
4. In the interim, pending the completion of the theme study, the National Park Service should act to analyze and influence the appropriate management of five sites that may be highly significant:

The Thomas Eakins house in Philadelphia—This home of one of the most significant American painters is an endangered national historic landmark. Water from a leaking roof is damaging the wall shared with an attached house and is hastening the deterioration and possible demolition of the attached structure, which would greatly diminish the rowhouse character of the site. The surrounding urban scene and the nearby Schuylkill River remain much as they appeared when Eakins lived and painted there, and the home is near the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, where he taught, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where many of his

works are displayed. Interpreted together, these sites could provide visitors with an in-depth look at Eakins's life and art.

The houses and landscapes associated with the Hudson River school in New York—Within an area of several square miles are Frederic Church's Olana, the home of Thomas Cole, and surrounding landscapes retaining some of the classic views painted by the Hudson River artists. Both houses are national historic landmarks. Some of the historic views still retain a high degree of integrity, but others are threatened by development. Nearby museums have many original Hudson River paintings. Together these sites offer an excellent opportunity for interpreting the artists' lives and work in conjunction with the Hudson River tradition.

The Grant Wood studio in Cedar Rapids—The loft studio space given to Wood by the Turner family of patrons is one of the few surviving studios dating from the 1920s. The property is now owned by a mortuary. The studio is not threatened, but neither is it adequately recognized as an important national site. Recognizing it now in the full context of its links with the larger Cedar Rapids group of artists and writers and with 1930s regionalism would set an important precedent for preserving and interpreting sites related to our art heritage.

The David Smith sites in New York—The group did not know if any sites associated with this significant sculptor have survived. If extant, the Terminal Iron Works, Smith's studio-home at Bolton Landing on Lake George, would exemplify Smith's welding techniques and the inspiration he drew from the surrounding landscape. The

site is probably in private ownership and may have been dismantled. If not, we should act quickly to protect it.

The Winslow Homer's Prout's Neck home, grounds, and studio in Maine—The personality and values of one of America's greatest artists are expressed in this house and studio. A designated national historic landmark in private ownership, this site warrants special attention to ensure that it remains preserved and well maintained.

5. It is recommended that 25 years beyond a productive period of an artist's life is an appropriate time to wait before judging the significance of the artist. The National Archives now uses this 25-year rule; the National Portrait Gallery uses 10 years. The fact that artists are continuously reviewed during their lifetimes provides a good foundation for judgment after 25 years. Indeed, contemporary society changes so fast that 25 years is a relatively long historical perspective. Waiting longer than 25 years to determine the significance of sites will result in many sites being lost.



Georgia O'Keeffe.

6. One or more of the following actions should be taken to protect contemporary sites that are likely to be historically significant in the future.

The theme study should extend to the present time.

Contemporary sites found through the theme study could be placed on a "potentially eligible" list with the idea that they would be reviewed again when they met the 25-year standard. The list, which would be completely separate from the National Register of Historic Places, might be maintained by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Endowment for the Arts, or the Archives of American Art.

The National Park Service could support the efforts of an organization, like the Trust for Public Lands, that would protect sites until they were eligible for national landmark evaluation.

A brochure identifying contemporary sites thought to be significant could be distributed to the state historic preservation officers and interested agencies.

---

*Violet Sargent*, 1890, Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Courtesy: National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.



**PART TWO:  
FRAMEWORK FOR THE  
VISUAL ARTS THEME STUDY**

---

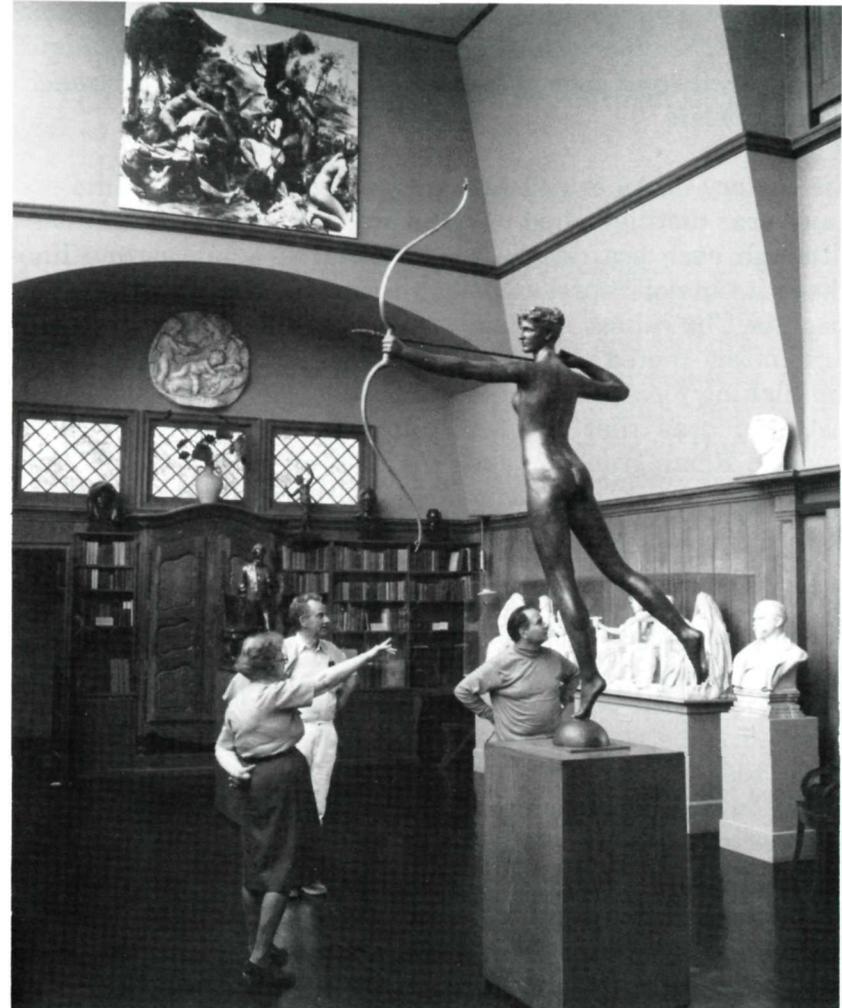
## THEME DEFINITION

The visual arts (as distinct from the performing arts, the literary arts, the decorative arts, or architecture, for example) include

- graphic arts
- painting
- photography
- sculpture

The theme encompasses visual art works by people who were born in or who produced art in America. The plain arts (folk art) and fine arts are included because both can be nationally significant. Pre-Columbian art is a distinct theme in American art history. The art traditions of indigenous peoples, which developed for thousands of years without reference to art traditions or centers outside the Americas, are discussed in a separate context under the theme, "Cultural Developments: Indigenous American Populations." However, the relationships between indigenous art and the European-based art traditions beginning in the 17th century should be addressed as part of this visual arts theme.

The visual arts are closely related to the other arts and also to other cultural themes, and these relationships should be stressed whenever possible.



Little Studio. Courtesy: National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.



## SUBTHEMES: THE STORY TO BE TOLD

*The following information was developed only for painting and sculpture. The other visual arts still need to be addressed and the subthemes and determinations of site significance expanded as appropriate.*

The history of American art can be divided roughly into six major eras distinguished by changing values and aspirations. Although each era can be roughly placed along a time line where its major representations occurred, the dates are not absolute. The values and aspirations that dominated in one era were often rooted in an earlier era and continued as a diminishing force into the era that followed. Some artists fit best into eras that did not coincide with their lifetimes. Frederic Remington, for example, shared in the values and aspirations of the early national era, although he was not born until after the major representation of that era had passed.

Below is a brief description of each of the six periods, followed by some examples of major artists (or groups of artists) and movements associated with that period. The lists are included to help define the periods and their traditions, but they are not intended to be complete inventories of significant artists. A major task of the theme study will be to complete the definition of the subthemes to ensure a national perspective on all aspects of the visual arts.

### **Colonial Era** (about 1600-1820s)

---

Throughout colonial times and continuing into the early years of the period after independence, Americans looked to Europe as their cultural capital and produced artists who either

accepted provincial status if they remained here or who were drawn to Europe to participate fully in its art life. The goal was not to produce an art tradition independent of the mother countries, but rather to best absorb and approximate their traditions, even in the depiction of the heroes and themes of the Revolution. Most saw this society as capable of great political and moral advancement but inevitably limited to secondary cultural achievement.

Examples of major artists or movements:

John Singleton Copley  
the Peale family  
William Rush  
Gilbert Stuart  
John Trumbull

### **Early National Era** (approximately 1800-1860)

---

In the first decades of the 19th century there began to emerge among artists, writers, and critics the goal of a national art that expressed the unique conditions and aspirations of not only a new country but a New World. Inspired by such figures as Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard is often referred to as a cultural declaration of independence, the artists of the national tradition found the inspiration for an art (most often shown in the grandeur of American nature and the honest simplicity of American life) that opposed the ornate, urban, and class-bound high culture tradition of Britain and the Continent. As this movement gained strength in the years leading to the Civil War, other artists continued to yearn for the charm and style of the Old

World but faced charges that theirs was a colonial and even immoral fascination with a corrupt civilization. Only the ancient cultures of the classical world of Italy and Greece were seen, particularly for sculpture, as appropriate inspiration for a republican society.

Examples of major artists or movements:

George Caleb Bingham  
Horatio Greenough  
Hudson River school  
National Academy of Design  
Hiram Powers  
Frederic Remington  
Colonies in Europe (Rome and Florence)

**Cosmopolitan Era** (for sculpture, about 1840s-1900; for painting, about 1860-1900)

---

After the Civil War many artists continued to produce work grounded in the landscapes and conditions, urban as well as rural, of the New World, but the post-war era unleashed a period of affluence and increasing cultivation that fed a hunger for the sophistication and style of the Old World. Supported by a new generation of wealthy, European-oriented American patrons and drawn to the great museums and teachers of the Continent, particularly in France and Germany, large colonies of American artists gathered in the art capitals abroad in search of full participation in the grand tradition. Some never escaped the clichés of imitative art, but others either found themselves in the forefront of new European art movements or found ways to adapt their lessons to American artistic goals.

Examples of major artists or movements:

Mary Cassatt  
William Merritt Chase

Thomas Eakins  
Gardner Museum  
Winslow Homer  
Weir Farm  
Newport Colony  
Old Lyme Colony  
Augustus Saint-Gaudens and the Cornish Colony  
John Singer Sargent  
Henry Ossawa Tanner  
James McNeill Whistler

**Cultural Nationalism Era** (about 1900-1940s)

---

Inevitably, the notion that American art and culture took on importance only when focused on European subjects, styles, and centers created a reaction in the new 20th century even among many artists and critics who accepted the value of European culture. There was an attempt not to reject Europe as much as to find or create in the United States an art as authentically related to our needs and conditions as the French, British, and Italian art that served and expressed their societies. Less driven by the equation of a genuine America with the natural landscape alone, the new cultural nationalists sought to express, not always in admiring ways, the settled experience of the farms and villages of regional America and the increased urbanization of American life represented in all its messy vitality by the emerging colossus, New York.

Examples of major artists or movements:

the Eight  
Taos School  
Grant Wood and the Stone City Art Colony  
Norman Rockwell  
Andrew Wyeth and the Brandywine School

## **Modern Era** (about 1910-1970)

---

From around 1910 to about 1970 (and arguably to the present) the ideas, ideologies, and formal inventions of European modernism—cubism, futurism, expressionism, pure abstraction, surrealism—profoundly challenged and pervasively influenced American painting and sculpture. They did so first as an imported influence with which every serious artist had to reckon, whether affirmatively, problematically, or dismissively (as in regionalism), and then, beginning in the 1940s, as a successfully transplanted and soon transformed artistic culture that made America the most vitally creative site of the modernist undertaking.

Examples of major artists or movements:

- Harlem Renaissance
- Greenwich Village
- Stieglitz Circle
- Alexander Calder
- Jasper Johns
- Isamu Noguchi
- North Beach (San Francisco) Colony
- David Smith
- SoHo District
- Jackson Pollock

## **Post-Modern Era** (about 1960s-present)

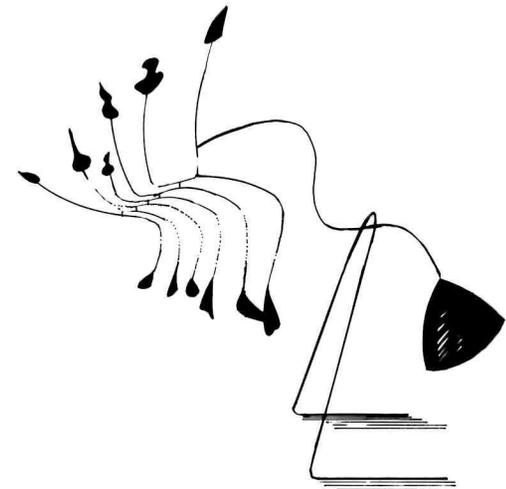
---

While evidence of an anti-modernist movement could be found early in the 20th century, it was only in the 1960s that some American artists began to seriously question the utopianism, idealism, and search for new and unique forms that were the basic drives in the development of modern art. Called by critics "post-modernists," these artists reject the separation of high

art from the concerns of everyday life and challenge the idea of a dominant mainstream culture in which all great art participates. Seeing any and all images made by human beings as theirs for the taking, they create hybrid art forms that challenge the hierarchies that have traditionally existed between media, between the fine and popular arts, and between mainstream art and that of local and ethnic communities. Their interest is as much in content and in meaning as in style. The post-modernist perspective is global rather than national, and the vocabulary is eclectic and relativist.

Examples of major artists or movements:

- Andy Warhol
- Jenny Holzer
- Jeff Koons
- Robert Longo



*Spider*, by Alexander Calder, 1939.

## DETERMINATIONS OF SITE SIGNIFICANCE

### KINDS OF SITES

A great variety of sites may have national significance related to a visual arts theme:

- artists' homes
- studios and production/fabrication sites
- galleries, early museums, and other sites associated with dealers, collectors, and patrons
- communal gathering places
- landscapes as subjects for art
- art colonies and districts where artists worked

Many of these sites will help illuminate certain subthemes more than others. For example, art colonies were central to the era of modern art but not to the colonial era. Landscapes are

valuable for interpreting the Hudson River school or the Ash Can school but not the work of portraitists. Some artists' homes are more representative of their values and works than are others. The challenge is to identify *exactly the right places* for interpreting the many facets of the history of American visual arts, making sure that a variety of possibilities are considered. Examples of artists' sites are shown in the following table. The individual sites may or may not be found to be nationally significant; they are presented here merely to help illustrate the different categories.

The story will in all instances transcend the representational capabilities of a single site. Linking these sites with each other, with museums where original works are displayed, and even with other kinds of places interpreting other aspects of American history, is essential to tell the complete story.

	Home	Studio/ Production Site	Gallery/ Early Museum	Communal Gathering Place	Landscape	Colony or District
<b>Colonial Era</b>	Charles Willson Peale home		Peale Museum			
<b>Early National Era</b>	William Sidney Mount home				Hudson River school	
<b>Cosmopolitan Era</b>	Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site			Weir farm		Newport
<b>Cultural Nationalism Era</b>	Grant Wood home and studio					Stone City
<b>Modern Era</b>	Pollock-Krasner home and studio	Isamu Noguchi studio			O'Keeffe in the Southwest	North Beach, San Francisco
<b>Post-Modern Era</b>		Andy Warhol factory				

## **CRITERIA OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE**

### **National Historic Landmark Criteria**

---

National significance for cultural properties is measured by criteria for the designation of national historic landmarks. Most national historic landmarks remain outside the national park system, where they may be managed by a local, state, or federal agency, a private institution, or an individual property owner.

To qualify for national historic landmark designation a district, site, building, structure, or object must

- possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture
- possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association

Examples of cultural resources that may be nationally significant include those that

- are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained
- are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States
- represent some great idea or ideal of the American people

- embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, exceptionally valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction; or represent a significant, distinctive, and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction
- are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively composing an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance; or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture
- have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States

Ordinarily, cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historic figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years are not considered appropriate for addition to the national park system unless they have transcendent importance, unless they possess inherent architectural or artistic significance, or unless no other site associated with that theme remains.

### **National Park System Criteria**

---

To qualify for inclusion in the national park system, a cultural site must meet the landmark criteria of national significance and additional tests of suitability and feasibility. In addition to the standards listed above, it must

- be an outstanding example of a particular type of resource
- offer superlative opportunities for recreation, for public use and enjoyment, or for scientific study

### **Applying the Criteria**

---

The workshop participants made the following recommendations as to how the criteria could be understood and applied with reference to sites associated with the visual arts. The site and the artist(s) associated with it need to be considered simultaneously in making decisions about national significance. To be considered nationally significant, a site should generally be strongly associated with a nationally significant artist or artistic movement. However, this association alone does not automatically mean that the site is an outstanding example of its particular type or that it possesses exceptional value in illustrating a visual arts theme.

A major recommendation of the theme study work group is that determinations of national significance be accomplished on a case-by-case basis through peer review by art professionals and specialists in other relevant disciplines. In determining whether sites meet the criteria for national significance, the following guidelines should be considered.

### **EVALUATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ARTISTS**

The workshop participants agreed that it would not be useful to try to establish a definitive list of nationally significant artists. It would be difficult to reach consensus, and any consensus reached in one decade might be considered invalid in another. Furthermore, because the sole purpose of

establishing such a list would be to judge the significance of sites, it would be more productive to consider the significance of an artist and a site together, on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, instead of working on a list of significant artists, the workshop participants generated guidelines for judging an artist's significance.

An artist could be considered nationally significant for any of the following reasons:

- The artist was a premier exponent (a founder or one of the important representatives) of a major movement or school of thought. In judging an artist's importance, the overall contribution of his or her work, rather than the quantity, would be the major consideration.
- The artist's work is of the highest quality (technique, formal quality, measure of influence).
- The artist was highly influential in educating others.
- The artist spoke for American culture in its highest aspirations.
- The artist affected art nationally or internationally.

An artist's place in history cannot always be accurately judged by his or her contemporaries. Twenty-five years from a productive period has been recommended as an appropriate waiting period before judging the significance of an artist.

As shown by the following examples, there is frequently a combination of reasons for judging an artist to be nationally significant.

**John Singleton Copley** is considered nationally significant because he was a premier portrait painter. Portrait painting was the principal art form of the colonial period. Like most colonial artists, he had more peers in England than in America. His work is of the highest quality, and he ranks internationally among the great painters of his time. His subjects included some of the greatest personages of the era.

**Winslow Homer** was a premier painter of native realism at a time, following the Civil War, when most American artists were doubting the values of nationalism and were looking back to Europe for inspiration and affirmation. Late in his career he became a great symbolist painter. As someone who constantly pushed himself into new frontiers, Homer defies pigeon-holing. He created a multifaceted body of great art, much of it out of American materials, establishing the foundation for a rebirth of cultural nationalism in the 20th century.

**Thomas Cole** is considered nationally significant because he was a founder and premier exponent of the Hudson River school, which embodied many of the major aspirations of the nationalist period. He was a great artist who discovered the American landscape and invested it with divinity, creating the first national "school" of art. He was a significant spokesman for Americans' emerging pride in what was distinctive about their country.

**Thomas Eakins** developed his technique in Europe, but returned home to Philadelphia to espouse a new and controversial school of American realism. He found his subjects in the American people, whom he portrayed with uncompromising realism, challenging the tradition of portraiture conforming to the sitters' demands. An academic, teacher, and mentor, Eakins was highly influential in training other American artists.

**Frederic Church**, a student of Cole, transcended the status of a follower to become a major 19th century landscape painter and the first American landscape artist to be celebrated internationally. His wall-sized canvases, painted with great technical ability, depicted the grandeur and variety of the New World from the arctic to the tropics. Composed to present the American landscape at its most dramatic, his works reflected the intellectual and religious leanings of the national psyche.

**Mary Cassatt**, the most significant American female artist of her generation, lived in Paris for most of her adult life. There she exhibited alongside the French Impressionists and produced a body of work that was internationally acclaimed for its boldness of conception, its beauty, and its interpretation of women's lives.

**Henry Ossawa Tanner** was a premier exponent of cosmopolitanism; however, his was not the typical experience of the cosmopolitan American artist of his period. Prejudice against his Afro-American race was an impediment to his movement in cosmopolitan circles in the United States, and he preferred to live abroad, where he experienced more appreciative patronage. The distinctive set of circumstances under which he participated in this major movement helps us understand the era and the life of American artists.

**Grant Wood** would not have been considered nationally significant ten years ago. This indicates how the canons of greatness change and illustrates the inappropriateness of establishing a static list of nationally significant artists. Wood was the creator and premier exponent of 1930s American regionalism and was an extremely popular artist during his lifetime. In his effort to encourage Midwestern artists and a native school of realism, he established one of the first art colonies west of the Atlantic seaboard.

## EVALUATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SITES

A site, by definition, will define the story to be told there. Unlike museums, artists' homes and studios can give people a sense of the artist as a person, providing a personalized framework for understanding the art. Landscapes that have been the subjects of art can show how the artist interpreted that subject, helping people understand the resulting image. Different kinds of sites will be important for interpreting the full range and richness of American art. A site may be judged to be significant for any of the following reasons:

- The site expresses the personality and values the artist brought to his or her art.
- The site illustrates an approach, technique, or technology of creating art.
- The site places the artist and the art in their historical cultural context.
- The site shows important interrelationships among artists or between artists and the rest of society

## Artists' Homes

---

To be considered nationally significant, a home should

- express the personality and values the artist brought to his or her art
- be associated in a meaningful way with a productive period of the artist's life (Other structures, such as birthplaces and burial sites, are considered secondary in importance for interpreting the arts.)

Interpretive programs and furnishings, including works of art, should reflect the desires and sensitivities of the individual artist. Some painters, like Frederic Church, liked having their paintings around, but others, like Georgia O'Keeffe, did not. Original works of art are often desirable but not absolutely necessary at homes and studios. Although the artist's work should always be addressed at these sites, it may not be feasible to have original works because of cost, security, and conservation needs. A range of other suitable media (books, videos, reproductions, brochures) can be used to interpret an

artist's work. Where it is feasible to display original works, they provide an important experience for visitors, since original works have scale, texture, and points of view impossible to duplicate in reproductions. Locations for hanging original works or reproductions should be carefully chosen to avoid degrading the historic ambience of the site.

**Frederic Church's home and studio, Olana**, a designated national historic landmark, satisfies all of the criteria of national significance. It is closely associated with a nationally significant artist. The home and grounds themselves are one of his great works of art. The house sits high on a hill, overlooking the landscape he painted, creating the same kind of perspective seen in many of his paintings. The grounds were prepared specifically as a foreground for the views. The artist's personality still pervades the site, and the reverence afforded the natural landscape, one of the major features of the nationalist movement, is a powerful part of the ambience.

**Winslow Homer's Prout's Neck home and studio**, a national historic landmark, is nationally significant because it encompasses both the site and subject of his mature work. The home shows his desire for seclusion, simplicity, and proximity to the Maine coast landscapes he loved to paint. The site is permeated with the mood illustrated in his paintings, and the landscape scenes remain much as they were when Homer painted them. The studio was designed by the artist himself and reflects the value he placed on space and light.



Frederic Church's home and studio, Olana State Historic Site.

### **Studios and Production/Fabrication Sites**

---

Studios are often closely associated with homes and may be judged similarly. In addition, studios and other production or fabrication sites should

- illustrate an approach, technique, or technology of creating art
- demonstrate the artist's use of space and sense of design

Furnishings would not be necessary in all cases. With no furnishings, studios might still possess exceptional value for interpreting artists' values in terms of where and how they chose to live and work and how they manipulated the surrounding environment. The placement of windows in a studio might illustrate the artist's need for a certain kind of light, or the size of the doors and work space might indicate the sizes of the works produced there. A foundry should have a tradition of fine arts casting and association with a number of artists and still be in use. Quarries are secondary resources that could be interpreted through audiovisual media.

**Andy Warhol's factory** might be considered nationally significant because it was the production site for his pop art works and his underground films. Many artists worked with him there.

The **Roman Bronze Works** on Long Island is considered nationally significant because it was the first American foundry to dedicate itself exclusively to lost-wax casting, making what had been an obscure technology known to only a few European-trained artists accessible to all American sculptors. Frederic Remington, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and Daniel Chester French were notable early clients.

### **Communal Gathering Places**

---

Some sites such as homes, bars, restaurants, or parks served as gathering places where a number of significant fellow artists shared companionship, inspiration, and support. To be considered nationally significant these sites should

- show important interrelationships among artists and between artists and the rest of society



Weir House. 1989.

**Weir Farm National Historic Site** is considered by the workshop participants to be nationally significant because it was an important residence for a community of artists who are sometimes referred to as the American Impressionists. The fact that a number of artists (some considered nationally significant) regularly visited the farm to study, paint, and gain inspiration makes it an outstanding example of a gathering place for a community of artists. The farm is also significant because it preserves the kind of rural landscape that the American Impressionists sought out, often in emulation of their French counterparts. The farm has been a home to artists since 1882, and the structures and grounds are unusually well preserved.

### **Galleries, Early Museums, and Other Sites Associated with Collectors, Dealers, and Patrons**

---

These sites are generally most valuable as parts of larger districts that also contain artists' homes and studios (see below). However, sites associated with certain collectors, such as the Cone sisters, who directly shaped artistic movements, might be found to be nationally significant. Some galleries were also instrumental in shaping American art. To be considered nationally significant these sites should

- show important relationships among artists or between artists and the rest of society
- contain a good representative collection of the original art historically associated with the site (An empty house that once belonged to a collector would not make sense.)

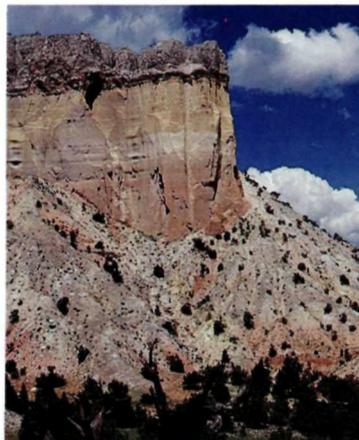
The **Peale Museum** in Baltimore is significant because it was a pioneering venture in museum exposition. The **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum** in Boston and the **Frick Collection** in New York are other important examples of this category of sites. Most of the potentially significant galleries, like Alfred Stieglitz's 291, are gone.

## Landscapes

---

The idea of preserving and interpreting landscapes as subjects of art is a new concept. It is particularly appropriate to American art because of the importance of landscapes to that tradition. Landscapes are most valuable in association with an artist's home or studio. In some instances, however, it may be valid to preserve and interpret a landscape by itself. To be considered nationally significant, a landscape should

- express the personality and values that the artist brought to the art
- help illustrate an approach, technique, or technology of creating art
- be connected with a significant body of work of a significant artist or school (To be the subject of a single painting is not enough.)
- be identifiable in the art
- retain a high level of integrity within the entire viewshed



Cliffs in lower Rio Chama valley.

The lower Rio Chama valley is considered a nationally significant landscape because of its exceptional association with the life and work of Georgia O'Keeffe. O'Keeffe said that the valley's eroding badlands "fitted exactly" the shapes and colors she had been seeing in her mind. Many of the "abstract" qualities of her paintings are inherent in the landscape itself, indicating that she was more of a realist than people unfamiliar with northern New Mexico might think. The values O'Keeffe placed on simplicity and solitude are readily apparent in the surroundings she chose. While most other landscape artists traveled from place to place, O'Keeffe lived in her landscape for almost 60 years, drawing personal inspiration from it and continually reinterpreting it. The relationship between O'Keeffe and the landscape was so uniquely personal and intimate that her work there became a consummate expression of them both, to the point that it changed the American public's perceptions of the Southwest.

In comparison the houses depicted in Grant Wood's *American Gothic* or Andrew Wyeth's *Christina's World* are not, by themselves, considered nationally significant because they were the subjects of only a single work.

## Colonies and Districts

---

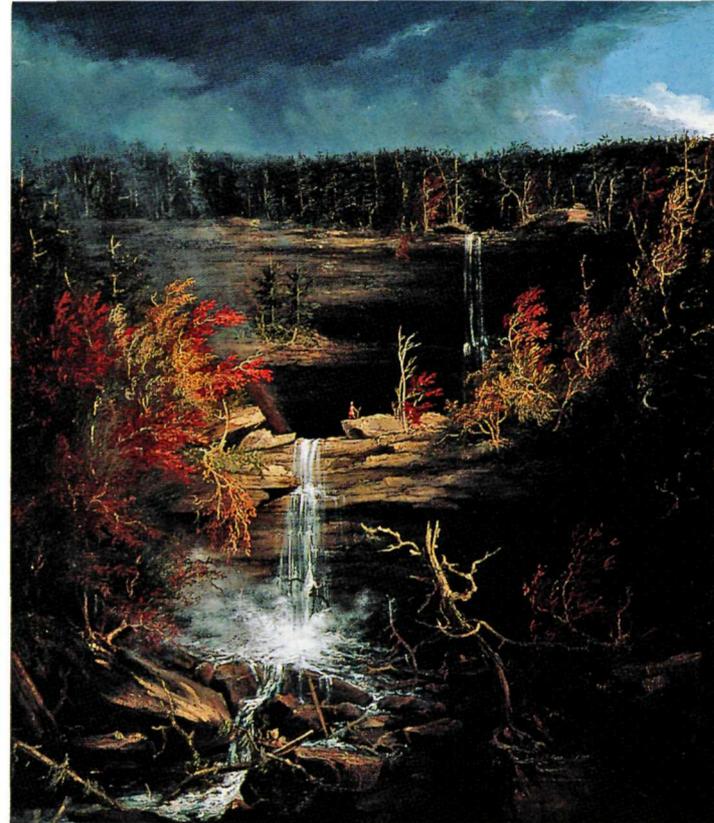
Colonies and districts represent a significant concentration of artistic activity related to more than one artist and more than one site. Contributing elements may include sites related to the performing, literary, or other arts, along with sites associated with collectors and other patrons. The districts themselves may be a collection of homes, studios, meeting places, schools, galleries, and the subject matter of the art created there (urban streetscapes or natural landscapes). Rural as well as urban complexes should be considered under this category.

To be considered nationally significant, these larger complexes should

- show important relationships among artists or between artists and the rest of society
- contain a number of art-related sites that would individually be judged to be nationally significant

Parts of the **Hudson River valley and the Catskill Mountains** may be a nationally significant rural art district encompassing a number of artist's homes, studios, and landscapes associated with the Hudson River school. Frederic Church's Olana and the nearby Thomas Cole house are designated national historic landmarks. Kaaterskill Falls and other landscapes may also be found to be nationally significant, since the wilderness and grandeur of these landscapes were the inspiration for a significant body of work created by the Hudson River artists. Taken together, these sites offer an excellent opportunity for visitors to experience how artists interpret their subjects through their own personal values.

**Greenwich Village** may be a nationally significant art district. It encompasses a rich concentration of homes, studios, gathering places, streetscapes that were the subjects of art, and other sites associated with the growth and development of New York as the 20th century art capital. A number of these sites may be judged to be nationally significant. Beginning in the early 20th century the Village provided the support system for a new direction for American culture.

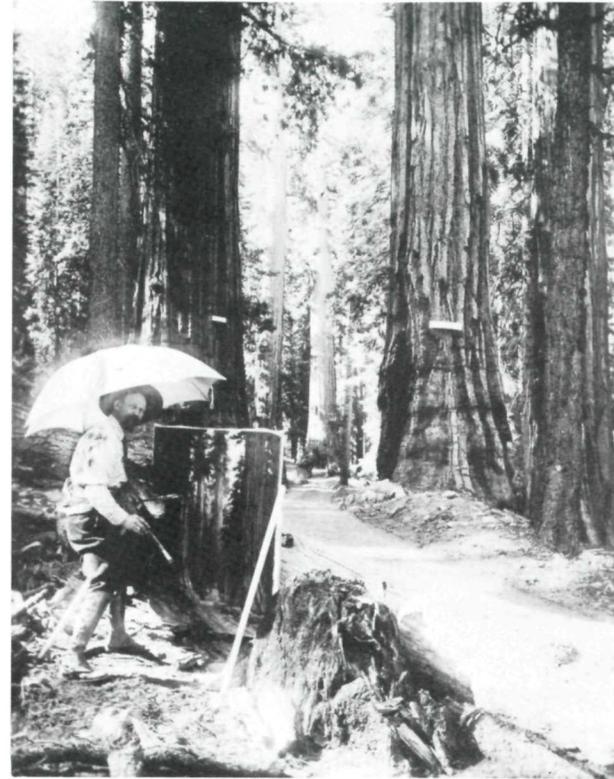


Falls of Kaaterskill, Thomas Cole, 1826. Courtesy: The Warner Collection of Gulf States Paper Corporation, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.



## COMPLETING THE FRAMEWORK

As work on the visual arts theme study continues, the subthemes should be expanded and refined, paying particular attention to incorporating photography and the graphic arts into this theme structure. Sites should be identified and evaluated against the theme study guidelines to determine whether they meet the criteria of national significance. Those that do should be nominated as national historic landmarks and could be considered further for possible inclusion in the national park system. It is the unanimous opinion of the workshop participants that the visual arts should be fully represented within the national park system and that the art theme study should be completed as quickly as possible to support this goal. In addition, a peer-review group should be established immediately to help review resources.



Christian Jorgensen, a painter in Yosemite National Park, c. 1910.  
Courtesy: Yosemite National Park Collection.



## WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

### SPECIALISTS FROM OUTSIDE THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**Dr. Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr.**, Head of the Department of American and British Painting, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Dr. Cikovsky is a graduate of Harvard University and has been listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in American Art*. He has taught at several universities, including the University of New Mexico, Harvard University, and Vassar College and has produced more than 30 publications encompassing such artists as George Inness, Ansel Adams, Winslow Homer, Raphaelle Peale, and Thomas Eakins.

**Dr. Wanda M. Corn**, Chair of the Department of Art, Stanford University, and Acting Director, Stanford Museum of Art, California

Dr. Corn holds a doctorate from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. Her field of scholarship is American art, especially the history of late 19th century and early 20th century painting and photography. She has written books on tonalist painting and photography, on Andrew Wyeth, and most recently on Grant Wood. She is currently writing a book on cultural nationalism in early American modernism.

**Bruce Craig**, Cultural Resources Program Manager, National Parks and Conservation Association, Washington, D.C.

Mr. Craig is a graduate of the Williamsburg Seminar for Historical Administration and has a master of arts in public historical studies from the University of California at Santa Barbara. He is the winner of two prestigious awards, the Freeman Tilden Outstanding National Park Service Interpreter of the Year award and the Natural Resource Council of America's award for outstanding achievement in the area of federal policy for his role in the successful campaign to preserve Manassas National Battlefield Park.

**Elizabeth Glassman**, President of the Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, New Mexico

Ms. Glassman received an undergraduate degree in art history from Sweet Briar College in Virginia and a master of arts degree in art history from the University of New Mexico. While at the University of New Mexico, she served as assistant curator of the Tamarind Institute in Albuquerque. She also has a master's degree in business administration from the University of St. Thomas in Houston.

**Dr. Marc Pachter**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for External Affairs, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Dr. Pachter is a Harvard-trained American cultural historian. Interested in the relationship of the visual arts to the broader currents of American society, he has written on such subjects as the American Impressionists and the emergence of New York as a cultural capital. He has served on panels for the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Trust, and the Smithsonian, and recently chaired two delegations of American arts scholars in discussions with the Soviet Ministry of Culture.

**Dr. Jan Seidler Ramirez**, Assistant Director for Collections and Senior Curator of the Painting and Sculpture Department, Museum of the City of New York

Dr. Ramirez is a summa cum laude graduate of Dartmouth College. She received master's and doctorate degrees in American studies from Boston University. She has published and lectured widely on American sculpture, painting, and decorative arts and has taught both graduate and undergraduate courses at Harvard and Boston universities. She has also curated numerous museum exhibitions drawing on her interests in American visual arts and the cultural history of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

**James Ryan**, Manager of Olana State Historic Site, New York

Mr. Ryan received an undergraduate degree in intellectual history from the University of Notre Dame and a master's degree in museum administration from the Cooperstown Graduate Program, where he was a National Endowment for the Humanities fellow. He has written on Olana and presented a paper on Olana at the international seminar in Paris on artists' homes and studios.

**Dr. David Seamon**, Associate Professor of Architecture, Kansas State University

Dr. Seamon received a doctorate from Clark University in environment-behavior research. His writing and research focus on the phenomenology of environment and architecture as place-making. He has written several books focusing on these subjects and is currently contributing to the planning for a visitor center at Olana State Historic Site .

**Jeffrey L. Soule**, Special Project Director for the Design Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C.

Mr. Soule received an undergraduate degree in fine arts from Colgate University and a master's in city and regional planning from Harvard Graduate School of Design. He currently supervises "Your Town," a rural and small town design project that focuses on inventorying and analyzing cultural and natural resources and developing plans for their interpretation. He lectures on land use and cultural planning at national conferences and universities.

**Susan Stedman**, Media, Arts and Education Consultant to Museums, Educational Institutions, and Government Agencies, and Executive Director of the Museum Education Consortium, New York City

Ms. Stedman is an art historian and educator who holds a master's degree from Columbia University. She has been an advisor to more than 80 museums, parks, government agencies, and corporate arts facilities and has managed the development of architectural master plans and the design of exhibitions and interpretive programs in diverse fields. The consortium she co-

founded is a national organization dedicated to expanding uses of new technologies, such as multimedia and interactive video, in museums and in art education programs in schools.

**Jane Van Norman Turano**, Editor of *The American Art Journal*

Ms. Turano received an undergraduate degree in art history from Smith College and has been editor of *The American Art Journal* since 1975. She has lectured and contributed articles to several publications in the fields of American fine and decorative arts, history of photography, and Native American art. She is currently writing a book for a university press on early photographic images of Native Americans of New England, an expansion of a paper she presented at the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife in 1991.

**David Turner**, Director, Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe

Mr. Turner received a graduate degree in art history from the University of Oregon and an undergraduate degree in business administration from Southern Methodist University. He has served as director of the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe since 1983. Published material includes exhibition catalogs on Georgia O'Keeffe, Paul Pletka, Bruce Nauman, and Luis Jimenez. He has served on advisory panels for the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Commission on the Arts, the Texas Humanities Center, and the New Mexico Arts Division.

**Dr. Robin W. Winks**, Professor of History, Yale University

Dr. Winks holds an undergraduate degree and a master's in history from the University of Colorado, a master's in anthropology from the University of New Zealand, and a doctorate from Johns Hopkins University. His specialties include comparative British and American history and conservation history, and he holds the Randolph W. Townsend Chair in the Department of History at Yale University. He received the Department of the Interior Conservationist of the Year Award in 1988. He has been a regular advisor to the National Park Service and chairman of the U.S. National Park System Advisory Board.

## **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PARTICIPANTS**

**John Cook**, Regional Director, Southwest Region

**Dave Dame**, Special Assistant to the Manager, Harpers Ferry Center, Colorado Field Office

**John Dryfhout**, Superintendent, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

**Dave Forgang**, Park Curator, Yosemite National Park

**Denis Galvin**, Associate Director for Planning and Development, Washington Office

**Ben Levy**, Senior Historian, Manager of the National Historic Landmarks Survey, History Division, Washington Office

**Francis McCalmont**, Planning Assistant, Southwest Region

**Joan Mitchell**, Chief, Branch of Planning, Southwest Region, and Regional Representative for the Georgia O'Keeffe Study of Alternatives

**Ann Moss**, Project Team Captain/Planner, Denver Service Center

**Sarah Olson**, Chief, Division of Historic Furnishings, Harpers Ferry Center

**Sarah Peskin**, Chief, Branch of Planning, Design, and Legislation, North Atlantic Region, and Team Captain on the Weir farm and Thomas Cole feasibility/suitability studies

**Richard W. Sellars**, Chief, Southwest Cultural Resource Center

**Gail Slemmer**, Editor, Denver Service Center

## **CONSULTANTS NOT ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE**

**Dr. Martin Friedman**, Former Director, Walker Art Gallery

**Jan Harris**, Planner and Team Captain for the Georgia O'Keeffe Study of Alternatives, National Park Service, Denver Service Center

**Dr. Neil Harris**, Professor of History, University of Chicago

**Ellen W. Lee**, Curator of Painting & Sculpture, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

**Marilyn Hof**, Planner, National Park Service, Denver Service Center

**Dr. Louis Sharp**, Director, Denver Art Museum

**Howie Thompson**, Planning Branch Chief, National Park Service, Denver Service Center

**Dr. John Wilmerding**, Professor of Art History, Princeton University



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The department also promotes the goals of the Take Pride in America campaign by encouraging stewardship and citizen responsibility for the public lands and promoting citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

Publication services were provided by Ruth Eitel (visual information specialist), Gail Slemmer and Kathy Dimont (writer/editors), and Janet Stickland (visual information technician) of the Branch of Publications and Graphic Design, Denver Service Center. NPS D-691A May 1992

