

THE ART OF LIVING

MARIANKA SWAIN SHARES HER CAPITAL CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

EXHIBITION THOMAS COLE: EDEN TO EMPIRE

Bolton-born wanderer Thomas Cole became a renowned American landscape artist in the early 19th century. The self-taught painter drew on his formative years in the textile mills north of Manchester, as well as taking inspiration from the European masters he studied in London, Paris and Rome.

He applied his skill to depicting dramatic natural wilderness and dreamlike imaginative landscapes – making the case for an unspoilt land threatened by an increasingly industrial age. His work is shown here alongside contemporaries and those who influenced him, including Turner and Constable.

Visitors can also see concurrent exhibition *Ed Ruscha: Course of Empire* – a cycle of 10 paintings by the LA artist responding to Cole's series, and offering a more contemporary answer to his questions about how society would impact nature.

Until October 7
Adults from £10, under-12s free
www.nationalgallery.org.uk



'From Nature', 1823, Thomas Cole



'A view near Tivoli (Morning)', 1832, Thomas Cole



'Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps', 1812, Joseph Turner



'The Course of Empire: Destruction', 1836, Thomas Cole



'View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm - The Oxbow', 1836, Thomas Cole

Pictures: The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Juan Trujillo/Tate | The New York Historical Society/The Albany Institute of History & Art

FILM THE WIFE

Glenn Close is already hotly Oscar-tipped for this adaptation of Meg Wolitzer's novel (on general release later this month). Close's enigmatic character, Joan, is travelling to Stockholm with her literary titan husband, where he'll be awarded the Nobel Prize.

But a journalist interrupts their trip, trying to persuade the great man to cooperate with a revealing biography. The accumulation of events causes Joan to re-examine their lives together.

Flashbacks show how she went from Joe's flirtatious student to second wife, haunted by

the knowledge of likely infidelities, and how her own creative ambitions were eclipsed by his. It's a stark and timely study of that familiar female role – the supportive, self-sacrificing helpmeet – and of the insidious gender politics of the prestige art world.

There's excellent work from Jonathan Pryce as the narcissistic author, Max Irons as his resentful son, and Christian Slater's pushy journalist.

Björn Runge's film balances wry satire with intimate tragedy, anchored by a performance from Close all the more riveting for its restraint.



THEATRE THE LEHMAN TRILOGY

Sam Mendes helms this dazzling portrait of the Lehman Brothers, whose firm's collapse precipitated the 2008 financial crisis. Stefano Massini's play, deftly condensed by Ben Power, explores Western capitalism via this one immigrant family.

The Bavarian brothers stepped off the boat in the 1840s. Their fabric store grew and mutated, until they were 'middle men' trading the mythology of money instead of tangible goods.

Just three incredibly adept actors perform every role, using the props of a modern office, like ominous packing boxes – all within Es Devlin's rotating glass cube. It cleverly links storytelling with traders and their "temple of words".

Simon Russell Beale, Ben Miles and Adam Godley effortlessly evoke everyone from banking bigwigs to bewildered rabbis and Southern belles. Just as each person is introduced via a key characteristic, so too are complex financial ideas distilled into vivid analogies.

Pianist Candida Caldicot plays Nick Powell's wonderful score live. It's the "magical music box called America" – the Dream, and the nightmare.

You can still get Friday Rush tickets (£20) or Day Tickets (from £15), and it's well worth employing some Lehman-like savvy to catch this epic. 🏠

Until October 20
National Theatre, South Bank SE1
www.nationaltheatre.org.uk



Pictures: Mark Douet, Graeme Hunter/Sony Pictures Classics

COMMUTER CORNER

In this follow-up to *How to Build a Girl* – soon to become a film – Caitlin Moran continues revisiting her Britpop past. *How to Be Famous* (hardback £14.99, Kindle £9.99) sees her fictional alter ego Johanna writing for a London music magazine, pining after singer-songwriter John Kite, and fending off her eccentric family. Howlingly funny, it's also incisive on the mistreatment of women, whether via dismayingly bad sex or contempt for female fans.

How are you living up your commute?
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