

Understanding Olana: Frederic Church and the Idea of Place

Tuesday, November 19, 10:00am-3:00pm

Frederic Church was America's preeminent landscape artist of the 19th century, whose "great paintings" of the 1850s and 1860s (Niagara, Heart of the Andes, and Icebergs) achieved international acclaim. Beginning in 1860, he spent 40 years creating Olana in Hudson, New York, a 250-acre designed landscape in which his family residence and farm were sited and whose panoramic views of the Hudson River Valley and Catskills are integral elements.

Carolyn Keogh, director of education and public programs at the Olana Partnership, leads a detailed exploration of the life, career, and inspirations that motivated Church to create this masterwork. She offers new ways of understanding Olana and Church's relationship with the Hudson Valley and considers how he and other artists were deeply inspired by the idea of place.

10–11 a.m. The Artist's Inspiration

An overview of Frederic Church's artistic beginnings, success, and influences, as well as the artistic world of the Hudson River School of painting.

11 a.m.–12 p.m. The Science of Church's Vision

Examine the intersections among art, science, nature, and creation that are fundamental to Olana—both in the 19th century and today—and how contemporary scientific thinking inspired Church's development

12–1 p.m. Break

1–2 p.m. Family Home or Holistic Work of Art?

Consider Church's home as a holistic work of art and a source of inspiration for him and his family. She leads a virtual tour of main house at Olana, with its rich collection of fine and decorative arts that reflect the global reach of Church's travels and vision.

2–3 p.m. Preserved Views, Protected Site

The stunning "viewshed" that encompasses neighboring hills, valleys, the Hudson River, and distant mountains was a key element of Church's plan for his estate. Learn how a collaborative effort among preservation organizations, government, and private landowners resulted in the protection of important views from Olana.

Suggested Readings:

- Avery, Kevin. HEILBRUNN TIMELINE OF ART HISTORY ESSAYS: Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900), https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/chur/hd_chur.htm
- The Olana Partnership, Frederic Church's Art, <https://www.olana.org/history/%D1%81hurchs-art/>
- Rosenbaum, Julia, *Outside In: Space, Light, and the Artful Interior at Frederic Church's Olana*, 19th Century Art Worldwide: <https://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/summer21/rosenbaum-on-space-light-and-the-artful-interior-at-frederic-churchs-olana>
- The Olana Partnership, Church's World, <https://www.olana.org/history/churchs-world/>
- Griswold, Mac, *A View of the World*, Landscape Architecture Magazine - <https://parks.ny.gov/documents/historic-sites/OlanaOlanaViewoftheWorld.pdf>
- The Olana Partnership, The Viewshed, <https://www.olana.org/history/the-viewshed/>
- Schuyler, David. "Saving Olana" <https://www.olana.org/savingolana/>
- "Humboldt and Church by Andrea Wulf": <https://www.olana.org/humboldtandchurch>

Suggested Viewing:

- The Art and The Order of Nature: Humboldt's Earthly Model, Kevin Avery: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cOSTK66uk8>
- "Traveling to the Heart of the Andes," a webinar with Dr. Mauricio Diazgranados: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9H2SYbNPb_A&t=1s
- "The Women of Olana" by Allegra Davis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TswQM3ybOZU>
- Animated Interiors, Frederic Church's Experiments with Space and Light with Julia Rosenbaum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0RYUapPYg>
- "Art, Ecology, and Olana's Native Forest" by Sean Sawyer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pR9ootJe7xs>
- "Restoring a Masterpiece: The Rediscovery of Frederic Church's Olana" by Thomas Woltz: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-rIS-ctHq4&feature=youtu.be>
- *The Saving of Olana: An American Treasure*, WMHT: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=attmZeJsGCK>
- *The View from Olana: Preserving America's Cultural Landscape with Harvey Flad*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4i8ujqfw3Oo>
- "Resurrected Landscapes: Frederic Church and The Public Park Movement" with Rebecca Blendell : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnHAQYHupag>
- Looking at Frederic Church, 1975-2020: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_buvmDdROvo&feature=youtu.be