

OLANA AND THE OLANA PARTNERSHIP



Olana Panorama East to Round Top (detail) photo by Beth Schneck Photography

Description

Olana is the home, studio, and 250-acre landscape of renowned Hudson River School painter Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900). Situated on a bluff overlooking the Hudson River 100 miles north of New York City, Olana's famed 360 degree views include the Catskill, Berkshire, and Green Mountains, and provide sublime vistas of the Hudson River Valley and beyond. The Main House contains Church's paintings, furniture, décor, and collections he amassed throughout his lifetime.

As a New York State Historic Site, Olana is operated in a public-private partnership with The Olana Partnership (TOP), a private not-for-profit education corporation which supports Olana's restoration, development and improvement through exhibitions in the house and landscape, public programs, and events for the community and beyond. The Olana experience offers a unique combination of house, landscape and views for each of the 150,000 people who visit, and the destination is a key contributor to building the economic development of New York's Columbia County, as well as the Capital Region.

Olana as a National Historic Landmark

In addition to Frederic Church, the Hudson River Valley inspired other central figures of the Hudson River School including Thomas Cole, Jasper Cropsey, Thomas Moran, and Asher B. Durand. Contrasting the industrialized landscapes of Europe, this area represented the raw, spiritual and wild quality of the land of the New World, seemingly untouched by human impact. The artists highlighted this very detailed and distinctly American landscape, and in representing it in their moving and sometimes spiritual paintings, they called for its preservation and were therefore considered to inspire the modern conservation movement. Because of its importance in preserving a key component of America's 19th century story and more, in 1965, Olana became a National Historic Landmark.

Preservation Efforts

Olana was maintained by Church's heirs until 1964, when plans were made to auction the property. Many in the arts and local community initiated a long term preservation effort, gaining the support of Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Jacqueline Kennedy. Olana Preservation Inc., formed by art historian David Huntington, purchased the 336 acre property in 1966 with the aid of New York State. Soon after, the State opened the house and landscape to the public as a New York State Historic Site. Friends of Olana, Inc., later renamed The Olana Partnership (TOP), was established in the 1970's. Its mission is to inspire the public by preserving and interpreting Olana, and to create the most widely recognized artist's home and studio in the world, vibrant with the activity of students, visitors, and scholars. Today New York State and TOP work in partnership to restore Olana; ensuring its sustained recognition as an American icon representing an important period in this country's history and culture.



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