FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Enroll Now! Olana and Ancram Opera House Offer Virtual Young at HeART Playwriting Course

HUDSON, NY – The Olana Partnership at Olana State Historic Site is partnering with the Ancram Opera House to offer the third course in its Creative Aging series, an in-depth playwriting course, for adults 55-plus. The course will be offered as a live virtual learning experience.

The playwriting course will offer students the skills and techniques to create a dramatic monologue from start to finish. The series culminates in a performance, for which professional actors Darrah Cloud and Jeff Mousseau, will read student works during a live virtual event.

“We are thrilled to offer this important programming virtually during this time of social isolation,” said Sean Sawyer, Washburn and Susan Oberwager President of The Olana Partnership. “We are grateful to Aroha Philanthropies for the funding to support the Creative Aging series and pleased that Olana can continue to inspire creativity and self-expression.”

"We will not let the pandemic stop us or our creative audiences," said Emily Sachar, consulting Program Manager for The Olana Partnership. "Olana is deeply committed to the development of creative aging courses, and this is yet another chance for us to test exciting new ideas."

The five-week playwriting workshop will teach techniques for crafting dramatic monologues, three-dimensional characters, and captivating narratives. Participants will experience their creation coming to life through the art of theatre and professional acting. This course also teaches the fundamentals of playwriting, performance, teambuilding, research, improvisation, and more.

All Young at HeART courses use Olana and documents in its archives as a point of inspiration. Students will learn about landscape painter Frederic Church’s love of ethnic costumes, collected on his travels in the Middle East in the 1860s. Church often used these historic costumes to add authenticity and a sense of place and time in his paintings.
Creative Aging courses are designed to engage older adults in participatory, professionally run arts programs with a focus on social engagement and skills mastery, according to the non-profit organization Lifetime Arts, a partner of Aroha. The creative aging movement responds to a major demographic shift in the United States. With millions of baby boomers entering their third act of life, creative aging has grown into a full-scale movement designed to provide opportunities for meaningful creative expression through visual, literary, and performing arts workshops.

The Young at HeART playwriting course runs Thursdays and Fridays from 10 AM to noon, May 21 through June 19. To participate, students need to have a reliable internet connection and, once enrolled, will be given step by step instructions on how to access the live session. Students must plan to attend all eleven sessions, including an extra virtual rehearsal on Wednesday, June 17. The cost is $150 per person.

To register, call 518-567-2170 or visit OLANA.org.

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**About Olana and The Olana Partnership**

Olana is the greatest masterpiece of Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), a preeminent American artist of the mid-19th century and the most important artist’s home, studio, and designed landscape in the United States. Church designed Olana as a holistic environment integrating his advanced ideas about art, architecture, landscape design, and environmental conservation. Olana’s 250-acre artist-designed landscape with five miles of carriage roads and a Persian-inspired house at its summit embraces unrivaled panoramic views of the Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountains and welcomes more than 170,000 visitors annually. The house is open for guided touring, and reservations are highly recommended. The landscape is open daily 8:30 AM-sunset.

Olana State Historic Site, administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, is a designated National Historic Landmark and one of the most visited historic sites in the state. The Olana Partnership, a private not-for-profit education corporation, works cooperatively with New York State to support the restoration, conservation, and interpretation of Olana. The Olana Partnership operates Olana State Historic Site in a cooperative agreement with New York State Parks. More information is available at OLANA.org.

**About the Ancram Opera House**

Ancram Opera House in southern Columbia County is an intimate showcase for fresh, contemporary work by visionary theater and musical artists where audiences can connect with
performers in immersive, immediate ways. More information is available at www.ancramoperahouse.org.

About Aroha Philanthropies

Aroha Philanthropies, based in Minneapolis, is devoted to the transformative power of the arts and creativity, inspiring vitality in those over 55, joy in children and youth, and humanity in adults with mental illness. Aroha believes that learning about, making, and sharing art enriches everyone throughout their lifetime. More information is available at www.lifetimearts.org