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“OVERLOOK” *Exhibition at Olana Features a Groundbreaking Site-Specific Installation by Artist Teresita Fernández*

Fernández draws from the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros and the vast collection of Olana State Historic Site

Hudson, NY – The ground-breaking exhibition “OVERLOOK: *Teresita Fernández Confronts Frederic Church at Olana*” will open on Sunday, May 14 at Olana State Historic Site. In this exhibition, an innovative collaboration between The Olana Partnership and the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros [CPPC], artist Teresita Fernández examines Frederic Church and his contemporaries’ response to the cultures and landscapes they experienced during their 19th century Latin American travels. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore Fernández’s perspective and respond to her provocative installation in Olana’s Sharp Family Gallery. In addition, the interactive sculpture *Penetrable* by the late Venezuelan artist Jesús Rafael Soto – a popular iconic work on loan from the CPPC that is coming directly to Olana from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art – will be installed on one of the most prominent scenic viewpoints in Olana’s designed landscape for the duration of the exhibition.

“With each new installation of works from the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, we are not only able to share those works with a new audience but gain fresh insight into their place in art history” says Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Founder of the CPPC. “To be able to show historic Latin American works from the CPPC’s collection of landscapes of Latin America and the Caribbean at Olana, the former home of the renowned Hudson River School painter Frederic Edwin Church, is therefore a most welcome opportunity. It

is especially exciting to be able to include in this collaboration the work and curatorial eye of artist Teresita Fernández, with whom the CPPC has had a long and fruitful relationship, adding another dimension to this fascinating mix.”

Working with Guest Curator Sara Meadows, Teresita Fernández incorporates her own new work in a site-specific installation with elements from the collections of Olana State Historic Site and the renowned Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros. Combining portraits of indigenous people, dramatic horizon lines, and botanical representations of the natural world, Fernández presents the works through a contemporary lens that prioritizes the individual within the landscape. The artists in the exhibition interpreted their Latin American travels in a range of styles and attitudes. Fernández seeks to respond to their interpretations and biases through a conversation about a deeper sense of these varied American cultures, contesting the iconic view of the “American Landscape” painting tradition constructed by Church and his peers that often omitted or erased other narratives and figures.

Fernández says she is “really thinking about places and landscapes as the history of human beings, rather than as static sites.” Her way of thinking effectively inserts the gaze of people who might otherwise be overlooked and extends it to the audiences interacting with this exhibition. In her own practice, Fernández utilizes landscape to create a visual catalyst to prompt our thinking about places and how we imagine them. “I cull from a lot of established ideas about landscape,” she says, “but I’m also questioning and challenging them to provide a very different series of lenses to amplify what the word ‘landscape’ means and how our perception of it is often warped by the dominant narrative or culture.” With this broader view, Fernandez seeks to also reframe notions of the American landscape within the plurality of the “Americas” rather than the singular “America”.

“The Olana Partnership is thrilled to be collaborating with the CPPC and Teresita Fernández to bring a broader, diverse vision of American art to Olana this season,” states Sean Sawyer, Washburn and Susan Oberwager President of The Olana Partnership. “The CPPC’s mission to expand the understanding of Latin American art as integral to the art and cultural history of the Americas connects directly with the legacy of Frederic Church. The landscapes of the Americas were central to Church’s work and his artistic conception of a spectacularly diverse world beyond the Eurocentric vision of the 19th century.”

OVERLOOK is the largest loan exhibition The Olana Partnership has ever undertaken and includes fifty-five works from the CPPC. The Traveler Artists included in this exhibition are **Frederic Church, Martin Johnson Heade, Fritz Melbye, Marianne North, Auguste Morisot, José María Velasco, Alessandro Ciccareli, Frans Jansz Post, Norton Bush, R.N. Captain Seymour, Anton Goering** and **Robert Ker Porter**. Four works from the Olana collection will be on view for the first time, including three by Fritz Melbye, who completed one work during a Latin American trip with Frederic Church. Another work is attributed to Marianne North, a close friend of Frederic Church and the artist who inspired Fernández’s installation during her first visit to Olana. Ms. Fernández created 18 new works specifically for this installation at Olana. In addition,

five masterworks on loan from the CPPC will be on view throughout Olana's main house.

OVERLOOK will also feature a signature work from CPPC's Modern art collection. After travelling throughout the Americas and coming directly to Olana after a long-term run at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *Penetrable* by Jesús Rafael Soto will be sited outdoors in Olana's designed historic landscape. This marks the first time Soto's immensely popular interactive sculpture will be experienced by the public in a naturalistic setting, and it's the first time it will be seen on the East Coast.

CPPC's Director, Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, states "Olana's setting, with its dramatic views of the Hudson River prized by the estate's former owner, Frederic Edwin Church and his fellow-members of the Hudson River School of painting, is a particularly apt setting for an exhibition that furthers consideration of our ideas concerning the depiction of landscape and the identity of the Americas." He goes on to say "We are thrilled that the artist Teresita Fernández is collaborating with us and bringing the discussion fully into the present by curating an installation of works that includes those in Olana's holdings with others selected from the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC), as well as her own work created for this exhibition. Her work often addresses perception and the meaning of landscape and place, and Fernández brings a fresh and illuminating perspective to a time-honored subject. As a bonus, a favorite public sculpture from the CPPC, Jesús Rafael Soto's *Penetrable*, will be sited outdoors at Olana on a spot overlooking the Hudson."

To accompany this exhibition, The Olana Partnership will also present a range of programs for youth and adults to expand the exhibition themes and encourage public engagement and education.

OVERLOOK will open on Sunday, May 14 and will run through November 5. For hours, tickets and more information visit www.olana.org/overlook.

ABOUT THE COLECCIÓN PATRICIA PHELPS DE CISNEROS

The Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC) works to enhance appreciation of the diversity, sophistication, and range of art from Latin America. The collection focuses on five different areas: modernist geometric abstraction from Latin America, contemporary art from Latin America and beyond, ethnographic objects from the Orinoco river basin, material culture from Latin America's colonial era, and artworks and documentation of traveler artists who explored and work in Latin America and the Caribbean during from the 17th–19th century. To learn more about the CPPC's programs and initiatives visit www.coleccioncisneros.org.

ABOUT TERESITA FERNÁNDEZ

Teresita Fernández is best known for her prominent public sculptures and unconventional use of materials. Her work is characterized by an interest in perception and the psychology of looking. Fernández's experiential, large-scale works are often inspired by a rethinking of the meaning of landscape and place, as well as by diverse historical and cultural references. Her sculptures present spectacular illusions that evoke natural phenomena and engage audiences in immersive art experiences and

conceptual way-finding. Fernández is a 2005 MacArthur Foundation Fellow and the recipient of numerous awards including a Guggenheim Fellowship, an NEA Artist's Grant, and a Louis Comfort Tiffany Biennial Award. Appointed by President Obama, she is the first Latina to serve on the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts.

In June 2015, *Fata Morgana*, Fernández's largest public art project, opened in New York's Madison Square Park. The artist's past site-specific installations include works at the renowned Benezesse Art site in Naoshima, Japan, the U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington D.C., and the Blanton Museum of Art in Austin, TX.

Fernández's works are included in many prominent collections and have been exhibited both nationally and internationally at MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; The Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.; and Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy, among others. Fernández received her MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University and her BFA from Florida International University. She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

ABOUT OLANA STATE HISTORIC SITE/THE OLANA PARTNERSHIP

Olana is the greatest masterpiece of Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), the preeminent American artist of the mid-19th century. Church had a sustained interest in the Americas, resulting from his trips to Ecuador, Columbia, Mexico, and the Caribbean. In his own artwork depicting these landscapes and in the objects he collected throughout his life, Church's passion for Latin America remains evident today. Olana and its diverse collections now comprise 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 a Persian-inspired house at its summit embraces unrivaled 360-degree views of the Hudson River Valley and beyond. Today Olana State Historic Site welcomes more than 170,000 visitors annually.