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***SPECTACLE Frederic Church and The Business of Art* Opens at Olana State Historic Site**

A 21st Century “Heart of the Andes” Debut at Olana

HUDSON, NY – The Olana Partnership and Olana State Historic Site announced today the new exhibition titled, *SPECTACLE: Frederic Church and The Business of Art* opening November 19 at Olana. *SPECTACLE* will bring visitors a 21st century way of viewing Frederic Church’s great masterwork, “The Heart of the Andes”, and this exhibition highlights the showmanship and marketing that Church used to promote the debut of this work in 1859.

“The Olana Partnership is thrilled to bring the experience of one of Church’s ‘Great Pictures’ to our visitors and to explore how he became the country’s most famous and successful artist, enabling him to create Olana” said Sean Sawyer, Washburn and Susan Oberwager President of The Olana Partnership.

SPECTACLE: Frederic Church and the Business of Art combines immersive video technology with the wealth of Olana State Historic Site’s archival holdings to demonstrate how Church’s art responded to the most advanced scientific thought of his day and reached a broad public audience, the largest of any 19th-century American artist.

This special exhibition responds to two most frequently asked questions by visitors to Olana: How did people experience Frederic Church’s major paintings in the 19th century, and how did the artist Frederic Church make enough money to create Olana?

Frederic Church’s *The Heart of the Andes* (1859) was the pinnacle of his critical and popular success as America’s preeminent landscape artist. *The Heart of the Andes* was Church’s second masterwork and directly responded to the influence of the great German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt. Humboldt’s writings inspired Church’s South American travels and the resulting

masterpieces that made him internationally famous and informed Church's later trips. This final masterpiece is permanently on view in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's American Wing in New York City.

SPECTACLE will immerse visitors in Church's display of a "great picture," evoking the showmanship of these single painting exhibitions, which famously incorporated dramatic frames, props, and lighting, and even encouraged attendees to bring opera glasses for optimal close viewing. Visitors will experience an animated digital exploration of *The Heart of the Andes* narrated by Eleanor Jones Harvey, Senior Curator at the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) and created in collaboration with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This animation was created as a key feature of SAAM's 2020 exhibition *Alexander von Humboldt and the United States: Art, Nature, and Culture*. The film utilizes 2.5D animation to lead viewers into the breadth and complexity of Church's epic composition, while Harvey's narration explains its direct relationship to Humboldt's scientific discoveries. "The finished painting includes over 100 identifiable plant species over 5 separate environmental zones from the top of Mount Chimborazo down to the Amazon River basin in one picture" said Eleanor Jones Harvey, Senior Curator at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. "The video allows the visitor to explore the painting and brushwork in great detail the way Church intended."

A range of items from Olana's collection related to the display, marketing, and reception of *The Heart of the Andes* will shed light on Church's well-known business acumen that was fundamental to achieving the great critical and financial success that enabled him to embark on the creation of Olana. These documents range from ledgers and legal documents with his agent, John McClure, for the traveling exhibition of the painting, to the sales contract with William Blodgett for the painting and one of the fine engraved prints of the painting sold by McClure. Also included are examples of posters advertising the exhibitions, tickets, and reviews, and the public and private responses to the work, all of which drove people to turn out in record numbers to see *The Heart of the Andes*.

The exhibition will open November 19, 2023 and run through March 24, 2024. For more information and to purchase tickets visit, OLANA.org/ *SPECTACLE*.

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About Olana and The Olana Partnership: Olana is the greatest masterwork of Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), the most famous American landscape 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 landscape is open for guided touring, and reservations are highly recommended. The landscape is open daily 8 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 sites in the state. The Olana Partnership is the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit cooperative partner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation at Olana State Historic Site.