



**Bridge  
Authority**



*Historic Bridges of  
the Hudson Valley*



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NYS Bridge Authority Chief of Staff, Thomas Scaglione, (845) 691-7245

TCNHS Communications Manager, Jennifer Greim [JGreim@thomascole.org](mailto:JGreim@thomascole.org)

TOP Development & Marketing Communications Manager, Melanie Hasbrook [mhasbrook@olana.org](mailto:mhasbrook@olana.org)

***The First Ever Skywalk Arts Festival at the Rip Van Winkle Bridge will be Presented in Collaboration with the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and Olana State Historic Site on Sunday, September 24 from 1 to 4 p.m.***

**Skywalk Arts Festival is presented by Historic Bridges of the Hudson Valley in Conjunction with the NYS Bridge Authority (NYSBA) and Celebrates the Art of the Hudson Valley and the In-Progress Skywalk Pedestrian Crossing at the Rip Van Winkle Bridge on the Hudson River**

**The Festival coincides with special events at both The Thomas Cole Site and Olana:**

- **The Cole Site will present its Annual Community Day and the Annual Open-Call Exhibition, *Picturing the Sublime*, featuring local artists on September 24 at the Historic Site**
- **Olana will premiere *Performing Olana: Frederic Church Living His Art*, a specially commissioned immersive theater experience produced in collaboration with the Ancram Opera House with performances from September 22 to 24**

**Catskill, NY:** Historic Bridges of the Hudson Valley (HBHV), the NYS Bridge Authority (NYSBA), Olana State Historic Site and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site announced today the first ever **Hudson River Skywalk Arts Festival** at the Rip Van Winkle Bridge spanning Columbia and Greene Counties. The inaugural annual festival will be held in collaboration with the **Thomas Cole Site Community Day** and open-call pop-up exhibition, *Picturing the Sublime*, and with Olana’s one-weekend-only immersive theater experience, *Performing Olana: Frederic Church Living His Art*, in collaboration with the Ancram Opera House.

The Skywalk Arts Festival will celebrate the art of the Hudson Valley and the beginning phases of Skywalk, an initiative to transform the Rip Van Winkle Bridge with stunning viewing platforms of the Hudson River Valley along the span and connected pedestrian pathways to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in Catskill and the Olana State Historic Site across the river in Greenport. The Skywalk Festival invites visitors to come to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge Park (RVWB) on the river side of the RVWB Administration Building in Catskill to view area artists’ landscape art, participate in hands-on art lessons for all ages, view the new Skywalk Art Gallery, and hear live music in a beautiful setting overlooking the Hudson River from 1 to 4 p.m. The Festival coincides with special events at both the Thomas Cole Site and Olana. Please note that entrance is free, but some activities, including *Performing Olana*, require a



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fee and artists will be displaying and selling their art. Limited parking is available. While the Thomas Cole Site and Olana State Historic Site pedestrian connection to Skywalk is in the planning phase, temporary signs will be set up for the day to direct guests between the bridge and the historic sites.

On September 24, the **Thomas Cole Site** will present its annual Community Day and open-call pop-up exhibition, *Picturing the Sublime*. The Thomas Cole National Historic Site marks the home and studios of the artist Thomas Cole (1801-1848), the founder of the Hudson River School of painting, America’s first major art movement. Cole was profoundly moved and inspired by the landscapes surrounding the historic site, including the dramatic views of the Hudson River from where the Rip Van Winkle Bridge now stands. For this special occasion, Thomas Cole’s home and studios will be open to the public for free including two special exhibitions and two permanent installations throughout the historic buildings and grounds. The celebration includes games, demonstrations, refreshments, and activities for the whole family to enjoy, including a view of the world through the lens of a 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘camera obscura.’ There will be refreshments available for purchase from Pippy’s Hotdog Truck. The featured 5th annual exhibition event, *Picturing the Sublime 2017*, begins with an invitation to artists of all ages to follow in the footsteps of the 19th century landscape painters by creating an original work of art responding to nature. Please visit the website [thomascole.org/call-to-artists](http://thomascole.org/call-to-artists) for details and guidelines. All submissions are due by Tuesday, September 5. In a one-day pop-up exhibition on September 24, visitors will experience a wide range of these artist interpretations of the sublime, a deep feeling of awe and heightened emotion that is experienced through our personal relationship with nature. Paintings for sale in the adult category will be priced at \$100 - arrive early for the best selection! Paintings for sale in the kids category will be priced at \$25. A portion of all sales will benefit the Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

All weekend long, **Olana State Historic Site** will offer its regular schedule of historic landscape tours and guided and self-guided tours of the Main House. Olana is the greatest masterpiece of Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), a student of Thomas Cole who became the most celebrated and successful American artist of the mid-19th century. 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. Currently on view is the exhibition, *OVERLOOK: Teresita Fernández confronts Frederic Church at Olana*, a collaboration with the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC) in the Sharp Family Gallery. Open and free in the landscape is the participatory sculpture *Penetrable* by Jesús Rafael Soto.

From Friday, September 22 through Sunday, September 24 The Olana Partnership and the Ancram Opera House will present the premiere of ***Performing Olana: Frederic Church Living His Art***, an immersive theater experience taking place within Olana’s 250-acre designed landscape. The dramatic work draws inspiration from Frederic Church’s paintings, letters, family life and the celebrated landscape and is presented as an immersive theater experience in which performer and audience journey together into Church’s art. Performance schedule: Friday: 6 pm; Saturday and Sunday: 2 p.m., 4 p.m., 6 p.m. Tickets: \$10/Member, \$15/Non-Member, \$40/Family up to 5.



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### **HISTORIC BRIDGES OF THE HUDSON VALLEY**

Historic Bridges of the Hudson Valley (HBHV) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the history and general knowledge of the region’s bridges and their role and contribution to shaping the economy, as well as the continued importance of the bridges to sustain the vitality of the Hudson Valley region and the Northeastern transportation corridor.

### **NYS BRIDGE AUTHORITY**

The NYS Bridge Authority (NYSBA) operates five vehicular crossings over the Hudson River, including the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, for the economic and social benefit of the people of the State of New York. Established in 1932, the Authority is a public benefit corporation which does not receive state or federal funding and is financed primarily through its tolls, which are among the lowest in the Northeast.

**THE THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE** preserves and interprets the home and studios of Thomas Cole, the founder of the Hudson River School of painting, the nation's first major art movement. Located on 6 acres in the Hudson Valley, the site includes the 1815 Main House; Cole’s 1839 Old Studio; the recently reconstructed New Studio building; and gardens. It is a National Historic Landmark and an affiliated area of the National Park Service. The Cole Site’s activities include guided tours, exhibitions, printed publications, extensive online programs, activities for school groups, free community events, lectures, and innovative public programs such as the Hudson River School Art Trail—a map and website that enables visitors to see the nearby views that Cole painted. The goal of all programs at the Cole Site is to enable visitors to find meaning and inspiration in Thomas Cole’s life and work. The themes that Cole explored in his art and writings—such as landscape preservation and our conception of nature as a restorative power—are both historic and timely, providing the opportunity to connect to audiences with insights that are highly relevant to their own lives.

### **ALSO on VIEW at the Thomas Cole Site through October 29, 2017**

- + *Sanford R. Gifford in the Catskills*, an exhibition in the New Studio, curated by Kevin J. Avery.
- + *KIKI SMITH / From the Creek*, Solo exhibition in conjunction with the series OPEN HOUSE: Contemporary Art in Conversation with Cole
- + *The Parlors*, an immersive experience combining technology and meticulous restoration of Cole’s interior designs in his 1815 home, including the earliest-known interior decorative painting by an American artist.
- + *Mind Upon Nature: Thomas Cole’s Creative Process*, an exhibition in the Main House featuring Cole’s paintings and sketches.

### **VISITOR INFORMATION**

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is located at 218 Spring Street in Catskill, New York. Thomas Cole’s home, studios, special exhibitions, and grounds are open May – October, Tuesday – Sunday 10-5 pm. For details see: [www.thomascole.org](http://www.thomascole.org).

**OLANA** is the greatest masterpiece of Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), the 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 a Persian-inspired house at its summit embraces unrivaled panoramic views of the Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountains.

**Olana State Historic Site**, a historic site administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Taconic Region, is a designated National Historic Landmark and one of the most visited 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 State Historic Site. 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of Olana as a public work of art. Today, Olana welcomes more than 170,000 visitors annually.

**ALSO on VIEW at Olana State Historic Site through November 5, 2017**

*OVERLOOK: Teresita Fernández Confronts Frederic Church at Olana* in the Sharp Family Gallery. 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 19<sup>th</sup> century Latin American travels. Visitors 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, is installed on one of the most prominent scenic viewpoints in Olana's designed landscape for the duration of the exhibition.

**VISITOR INFORMATION** Olana State Historic Site is located at 5720 Route NY-9G, Hudson, 12534.

Olana's house and landscape tours, special exhibitions, and programs are open May-October, Tuesday-Sunday 10am-5pm. House tours and programs are available November-April, Friday-Sunday 11am-3pm. For details see: [www.olana.org](http://www.olana.org)