The Olana Partnership
Curatorial Assistant

Department: Collections & Exhibitions
Reports to: Director of Collections & Exhibitions
FLSA Status: Non-Exempt Salaried

Description

The Olana Partnership (TOP) seeks a Curatorial Assistant for a full-time role at the Olana State Historic Site, the home, studio and designed landscape of Frederic Church in Hudson, NY. The Curatorial Assistant will be a core member of the small team that oversees special exhibitions, conducts research on, and cares for, Olana’s diverse and internationally significant collections. Curiosity and flexibility will be paramount as the Curatorial Assistant provides essential administrative and logistical support, working closely with educators, scholars, State Parks staff, and the general public. This opportunity will provide valuable experience and mentorship in all aspects of museum work, including the opportunity to grow in the role to curate installations and special exhibitions.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Manages curatorial correspondence and logistics for permanent collection and exhibition projects in collaboration with the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP).
- Works with the Director of Collections & Exhibitions to prepare loan requests for referral to the OPRHP Collections Committee;
- In collaboration with the Director of Collections & Exhibitions and OPRHP staff, identifies priorities for conservation treatment and acquisition of museum collections;
- Recruits and supervises interns and volunteers for curatorial projects;
- Implements seasonal displays and other installation changes in the historic rooms of the main house;
- Develops and maintains checklists of works on display and communicates with OPRHP about the location of accessioned objects;
- Assists in the development of new projects by handling staff research requests and sharing knowledge and insights about the collections with all staff;
- Works with TOP’s Education staff to provide information and access to collections for programs;
- Supports the Director of Collections & Exhibitions and guest curators in developing and implementing special exhibitions including assisting with exhibition research, writing, and installation;
- Coordinates TOP’s requests for publication and/or use of images of museum collections by assembling information, writing captions/credit lines, and providing other curatorial support as needed;
- In coordination with TOP’s Librarian/Archivist, responds to research and image requests, assists on-site researchers, and provides general research support;
- Occasionally participates in group and private tours of the house and other interpretive and educational programs;
- Contributes curatorial content for website, blog, social media and TOP publications;
• Supports Curatorial and Advisory Committees that relate to projects and areas of responsibility;
• Manages supplies of conservation materials and reconciles applicable budgets;
• Assists on all other tasks as requested by supervisor.

Supervisory Responsibilities: Supervises curatorial interns and volunteers.

Ideal Experience, Skills and Abilities:
• BA in art history, history, or related fields. MA preferred;
• Minimum of 3 years’ experience working with collections at a museum or historic site;
• Experience with conservation and art handling a plus
• Strong written and oral communication skills;
• Strong organizational and computer skills;
• Ability to become passionate about the mission of sharing Olana with the world;
• Ability and willingness to work evenings and weekends when needed;
• A valid driver’s license;
• Ability to lift and carry 40 pounds.

Application Procedure
Candidates should submit a cover letter and resume with list of references by September 20 to Joyce Batterton at jbatterton@olana.org

Olana State Historic Site

A National Historic Landmark, Olana is the greatest masterpiece of America’s preeminent artist of the mid-19th century, Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900). He created Olana over 40 years, beginning in 1860. Church designed every aspect of Olana: the eclectic fantasy of the main house, the bucolic assemblage of the farm complex, and the 250-acre landscape that provides a romantic, picturesque setting for the whole and engages sweeping 360-degree views. In 2017 there were approximately 170,000 visitors to the landscape and 25,000 visitors to the main house.

Olana’s collections of art, artifacts, and archives range widely, including Church’s own art and that of his contemporaries to objects that demonstrate the broad range of his and his family’s interests. The Church-designed landscape includes parkland, farmland, an orchard, and five miles of scenic carriage roads. Architectural collections include the Persian-inspired main house, Cosy Cottage (the first residence of the Church family and now TOP’s offices), barns and outbuildings. Collections on view in the main house comprise the original household furnishings of the Church family as they were arranged in the 1890s, including 16th- through 19th-century paintings and sculpture, pre-Columbian artifacts, Middle-Eastern textiles, ceramics and other objects, Mexican folk art, and large family library. Collections in storage at OPRHP headquarters near Albany include: 700+ artworks by Church; approx. 400+ architectural sketches by Church; hundreds of drawings, prints and original artworks by other artists; correspondence to and from Church and his family and other personal and financial papers; 7,000+ photographs including images of the site, family photos and a large collection of commercial photography including landscape and ethnographic images; historic costumes; household furnishings and textiles; the papers of David Huntington and Richard Wunder.
Research materials on site include transcriptions and copies of archival material at OPRHP as well as other museums and archives, extensive files, unpublished reports, and a 2,000+ volume library.

The Olana Partnership

The Olana Partnership (TOP) operates Olana State Historic Site under a cooperative agreement with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). TOP is both a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and an education corporation chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York. Through four decades, TOP has harnessed the passion and philanthropic support of thousands of supporters to restore Olana’s treasures of art, architecture, and landscape. TOP’s mission extends to the stewardship of Olana’s nationally-significant viewshed and to developing Olana as a vital educational resource for visitors from across the world and the communities of the region. TOP’s vision is of a fully-restored Olana, vibrant with the activity of artists, scholars, students, and visitors, that will be the most widely-recognized artist’s home and studio in the world.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

The State of New York owns Olana State Historic Site and all its collections. Olana is one of 37 state historic sites administered by OPRHP. The Bureau of Historic Sites, which operates a facility at Peebles Island State Park (Waterford, NY), provides technical direction and support in the areas of collections care and management, historic interpretation, and other museum administrative functions. Many of Olana’s collections are stored there. Responsibility for general maintenance, capital repairs and improvements at Olana are assigned to the Taconic Region of OPRHP.