



GROUNDWELL

SAT. SEPT. 13 2014 | 2-6 P.M. OLANA STATE HISTORIC SITE
CO-PRESENTED BY THE OLANA PARTNERSHIP & WAVE FARM'S WGXC 90.7-FM

The Olana Partnership and Wave Farm’s WGXC 90.7-FM are pleased to co-present a new iteration of their award-winning exhibition event *Groundswell*. Hundreds converge at Olana State Historic Site for site-specific performance and works in sound, installation, broadcast, and movement. Over a dozen artists reflect on and react to Olana and its integral viewshed as an ambitious and early environmental work.

Groundswell features installations and performances from: Kenseth Armstead, William Basinski, Steve Bull, Jane Carver, Ellen Driscoll with Daniela Gomez, Michael Garofalo, McKendree Key, H el ene Lesterlin, Jack Magai, Man Forever, Laura Ortman, Mau Schoettle, and Bryan Zimmerman.

Olana’s 250-acre landscape was originally designed in response to its essential and spectacular views—the “Olana Viewshed”—by Hudson River School artist Frederic Church. On September 13, during this one-day exhibition event, audiences explore the property’s undiscovered roads and naturalistic scenes as they encounter each project site. Picnicking takes place at a breathtaking clearing, which overlooks the Hudson River, the Catskill Mountains and beyond. The event culminates with a performance by celebrated composer and artist William Basinski.

Groundswell installations and performances are sited along Olana’s historic Ridge Road. When Church created this road, he famously wrote: “*I can make more and better landscapes in this way than by tampering with canvas and paint in the studio.*” While passing through native woodlands and recently restored meadows, participants interact with the artists and Olana’s background elements, which include: the distant mountains of Vermont and the nearby City of Hudson; the Mount Merino hillside which was protected by Scenic Hudson; the site of the regional St. Lawrence Cement battle; the original property of Thomas Cole, the founder of the Hudson River School and Church’s teacher; high voltage power lines with blinking support towers which cross the Hudson River along a route which might soon be expanded throughout the Hudson Valley; the site of the famed Catskill Mountain House, America’s great wilderness hotel, which disappeared in flames in 1963; and Blue Hill, which Church painted and which has recently been threatened with a larger communications tower along its ridgeline. Since the 1970s, when a massive nuclear power plant was rejected because of Olana’s iconic views, Olana has represented a particularly American mix of art and environmentalism.

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ZONE 1: BRYAN ZIMMERMAN, MICHAEL GAROFALO & LAURA ORTMAN



Michael Garofalo is a sound artist, musician, and senior producer for the national public media project StoryCorps. At *Groundswell*, Garofalo will work with **Laura Ortman** and **Bryan Zimmerman**. Laura Ortman, a composer, multi-instrumentalist, visual and installation artist, has co-founded and performed in groups including The Dust Dive, Stars Like Fleas, and the all-Native American orchestra, The Coast Orchestra. Sound and visual artist Bryan Zimmerman's work takes shape in performance, photography, collage, and installation, consistently exploring overlooked and undervalued human geography, land use, and outdoor culture.

BLACK MIRROR PICNIC

Black Mirror Picnic is an immersive installation and audio transmission amplified via portable radios which features live performances by Garofalo and Ortman on violin, mbira (thumb piano), synthesizer, on-site field recordings, walkie-talkies, and megaphone. Employing traditional Persian scales and time signatures, the soundscape includes all three artists performing song-poems and call-and-response vocals informed by the acoustics of the surrounding landscape and the writings of Church and his contemporaries.

Intertwined with the soundscape and views are a series of intimate installations produced primarily by Zimmerman. Cut-paper collages, dioramas, “camouflage” surface designs, and fugitive architectural elements “remix” various print reproductions of Church’s paintings and drawings, and various works from the artist’s collection of early photographs (including daguerrotypes and albumen and salt prints). Interactive and photo opportunities are available to audience members in the form of Claude glasses (aka “black mirrors”); portrait backgrounds; and picnic tableaux which blend contemporary elements with Picturesque and Luminist aesthetics, as well as notions of the sublime.

Selected images, incorporated in this collage, are Frederic Edwin Church paintings, and photos collected by the artist, from within Olana’s Collection; Courtesy Olana State Historic Site, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

In Frederic Church’s day, visitors from the City of Hudson would ascend Olana’s hillside from Olana’s North Entrance. This zig-zagging approach (a “switchback” road) would build suspense. Guests would emerge from native woodlands and continue toward the main house as part of a designed and heightened arrival experience. Orchestrated scenes of river and mountains and sky were an integral part of Frederic Church’s large-scale design.



ZONE 2: KENSETH ARMSTEAD



Multimedia installation artist **Kenseth Armstead's** most recent work spans from a first person investigation of the African-American experience inside the American Revolution from the perspective of a historical figure, James Armistead Lafayette. The founders' high ideals and the penalty for deviation from them are both reshaped as objects that relate this point of view.

HERESY • HEARSAY

Heresy • Hearsay is the first sculpture to be exhibited from a new series of work by Armstead called “Parther Land.” The series symbolically reflects on ten years of research on the true story of James Armistead Lafayette, slave turned double-agent spy. Objects in the series respond to the age of revolution and the founders’ declaration that “all men are created equal” with irony and suggestive material content.

Writes Armstead, “*Olana’s 250-acre landscape, designed by Hudson River School artist Frederic Church, is a response to the American landscape, natural environs and spectacular views. [For me] the “Olana Viewshed” represents an extension of both the notion of the American dream as articulated by the founders and the development of manifest destiny. In Church’s hands, nature could be improved upon and made to look more natural for the purposes of painterly aesthetics. Heresy • Hearsay offers a tongue-in-cheek critique of both the idealistic consumption and reshaping of the environment and the transformation of formerly native lands into the utopia that are these United States of America.*”

Frederic Church often wrote “Hudson” at the top of his correspondence, and the City of Hudson continues to be a presence in this middle-ground view. One of the main historic entrances at Olana, the North Road entrance, points directly toward Hudson. The foreground view includes the recent and ongoing restoration of Olana’s meadows and pastures—“negative space” within Church’s 250-acre design. On clear days, the Green Mountains of Vermont rise in the distance.



ZONE 3: HÉLÈNE LESTERLIN & JACK MAGAI

article - 0 Albion!

... wife is a celebrated donkey rider.- twice a day
... y in company with her mother - she has her rides
... site Bagdad donkeys are wonderful little beasts -
... ght away from a horse and are untiring and very e
... ble. I wish I could transport a couple into yo
... t Garrisons. Master Freddie Josie is a connois
... eys - some he will ride (of course carried) for h
... light - others he rejects in a few minutes.

Hélène Lesterlin founded Studio Reynard in 2012 for her work as director, performer, artist, curator, and instigator of collaborative projects. At *Groundswell*, Lesterlin will work in collaboration with **Jack Magai**, choreographer, dancer, and founder in 2006 with Lesterlin and Margit Galanter of Emergent Scores Lab (ESL), a weekly meeting of improvising time-based artists.

GEOGRAPHICA

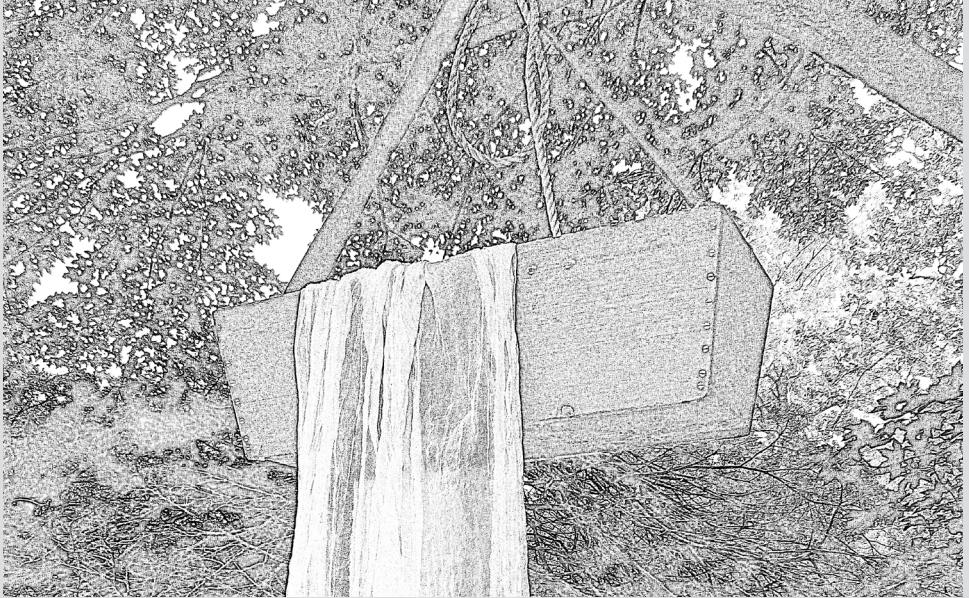
Two dancers hover above a field, the massive panorama of the Hudson Valley behind them. Framing the landscape, small figures exist on a huge ground in this ongoing, improvised, duet, buoyed by an undercurrent of words. Inspired and informed by the art, life, and personal letters and archives of Frederic Church and his wife Isabel, the texts in *Geographica* alternate between intimate travelogue, Persian poetry, excerpts from Strabo’s description of the Roman empire, and contemporary musings on art, foreign lands, geopolitical alliances and our shimmering, shifting American identity. Both performers and audience members hear a rumbling soundtrack, which acts as an aural frame, through radio headphones. Lesterlin and Magai’s dance is created in real-time and anchored in this one vast landscape. Their movements work in counterpoint to these far-flung references that float as radio signals in the air.

Olana is a fictional name inspired and drawn from a historical place written in the pages of Strabo’s “Geographica,” a staggeringly detailed description of the geographical, social and political attributes of the ancient Roman world. Isabel gave Frederic this tome as a gift—a fitting symbol of their fascination with ancient empires and the imaginary utopias they evoke.

Mount Merino was painted by Hudson River School artists, and this particular view from Olana was protected by Scenic Hudson in 2008 as part of a larger effort to protect the Olana Viewshed; this facing hillside will never be developed. The far-reaching views to the east include the Berkshires in Massachusetts, and the view of the St. Lawrence Cement site serves as a visual reminder of Olana’s ongoing viewshed protection story. The Olana Partnership was a consulting party in this legal battle and spent years working with others to preserve this particular view.



ZONE 4: MAU SCHOETTLE



Mau Schoettle's recent work includes hybrid tools, house coats, and security blankets and the large scale multi-media collaboration and crowd project Dada Spill. In the 1980s, she established the umbrella term "Conceptual Clothing," with the conviction that clothing can be a vehicle for intervention and interpretation. This has come to include clothing in art, design, performance, and participation, curatorial projects, and a variety of cross media collaborations.

CRADLING TENDENCIES

High in a tree, the swinging toolbox cradles an infant's surprising and nuanced sounds.

During Frederic Church's lifetime, Romanticism and belief in nature's portent was being redirected by a distinctly American Protestant faith. On his Olana estate, he built his hilltop house and carefully framed the soaring views of the majestic Hudson River and the distant mountains. Church extensively reworked, sculpted and planted his land, and created paths that highlight the spiritual aspiration of the divine trinity of People, Nature, and God.

In 1999, The Olana Partnership and other organizations raised concerns about the construction of a large industrial power plant across the river from Olana. The Athens Generating Plant was ultimately built, but significant mitigation efforts were implemented because of Olana: A reduction in smokestack height to preserve the ridgeline view, the use of natural building material colors to blend with the surrounding natural environment, and a decision to use dry (vs. wet) cooling in order to minimize the smoke plume effect against the northwestern sky.

Further north up the Hudson River, one can see high-voltage power lines. These electrical lines, which span the river atop massive support towers with blinking lights, are part of a larger network which has been proposed for expansion throughout the Hudson Valley. The Hudson Valley Smart Energy Coalition has formed in response to this potential expansion and represents a collective desire for sensitive and innovative treatment of the Hudson Valley as a significant American cultural resource.



ZONE 5: WILLIAM BASINSKI



William Basinski is a classically trained musician and composer who has been working in experimental media for over thirty years. Employing obsolete technology, shortwave radio static, and analogue tape loops, his haunting and melancholic soundscapes explore the temporal nature of life and resound with the reverberations of memory and the mystery of time.

CASCADE

Basinski's new work *Cascade* will be performed at the Ridge Road picnic site, which overlooks the Hudson River, the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, and the Catskill Mountains. *Cascade* is the culminating performance at *Groundswell*, taking place during the hour before sunset.

Writes Basinski, *"I am particularly fond of performing outdoors in nature, particularly at this time of day. I will be utilizing a laptop computer and analogue tape loops and reel-to-reel tape decks. Cascade is a particularly organic composition, which will hopefully allow the audience to relax and enjoy the magnificent view from this hillside clearing. One should gaze at the view, noticing the light on the water, the wind in the trees, the clouds, the change of light on the mountains in the distance. Perhaps, if we are lucky, the local birds will join in towards the end of the concert as they prepare to settle down for the night."*

Opened in 1935, the Rip Van Winkle Bridge connected Columbia and Greene counties, and today it serves as a connection between the homes of Frederic Church and his teacher, Thomas Cole, who founded the Hudson River School. To the southwest is the mountaintop site of the Catskill Mountain House, America's great wilderness hotel, where Cole and Church painted. On clear days, the cut up the Catskills is still visible and highlights the route of an early funicular railway, which brought visitors up to the hotel for far-reaching views. The Catskill Mountain House was visible to the naked eye from Olana, and in 1963 it was intentionally burned to the ground after year of neglect—the same era in which Olana was nearly destroyed.



ZONE 6: ELLEN DRISCOLL WITH DANIELA GOMEZ



Artist **Ellen Driscoll** explores history, resource consumption, and material lineage in her sculptures, drawings, and installations. Recent projects imagine a ghostly and chaotic future through sculptural landscapes, constructed out of translucent, plastic bottles. Driscoll serves as Program Director of Studio Arts at Bard College.

TELESCOPIC TEA TABLE

Telescopic Tea Table is a mirrored table installed inside a distinctive grove of trees, with an implicit invitation of an intimate tea party. The surface of the table is cut in the shape of the lake at Olana—which in turn was created by Church and mirrors a nearby bend in the Hudson River. On the table surface float small, mirrored islands representing a sampling of places where Church travelled to paint including Jamaica, the Middle East, Grand Manan Island, Ecuador, and in the case of India, one of many other countries whose visual influence can be felt in objects and decoration in the house. The teapots echo the Japanese teapot used as finials on the four corners of the main house's Crow's Nest high above the grove. The mirrors in *Telescopic Tea Table* reflect all that is around the table and draw their images into the site of the table in a poetic acknowledgement of Church's wide ranging interest in radically different sites and his willful urge to "bring it on home" into a domestic setting. Church uniquely aimed to understand his experiences, in travels far from home, through an artistic and domestic lens.

The native vegetation and shadows of Olana's woodlands serve as an interior counterpoint to other far-reaching views. As visitors travelled through Olana, they would encounter a series of composed scenes. Olana is a naturalistic "landscape garden," experienced through its carriage roads, and much was designed by Church after his involvement in New York's Central Park. In 1871, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, the visionaries behind Central Park and colleagues of Church, secured the appointment of Church as a park commissioner in Central Park so that "the art element should be recognized." Years later, Church wrote of his work at Olana: "*I am busy landscape architecting!*"



ZONE 7: McKENDREE KEY AND JANE CARVER



Jane Carver's performance and sound-based works are fueled by an interest in the accumulation and decay of sound, as well as the relationship between melody and memory. At *Groundswell*, Carver will work in collaboration with conceptual artist McKendree Key, whose practice centers around architecture and space. Key's ongoing project "The Den Transaction" is an experiment in space as a commodity in Brooklyn, NY.

BANSHEE

Banshee is a kinetic sound piece: a box containing a recording attached to a zipline that runs down the hill beneath Church's studio at Olana. The recording is a collection of different versions of the ologygas: a shriek or wail that cannot be withheld, associated with moments of extreme experience: childbearing, grieving, the ecstatic. Not unlike the contested powerlines that span hillsides throughout the Hudson Valley, *Banshee* can be read as a kind of contract between two points. The space in between is a channel for communication, less a conversation than a warning or a protest.

Frederic Church's *The Valley of the Shadow of Death Pilgrim's Progress* (1847) is located in the studio, and serves as a point of origin for envisioning Olana as a locus for a lurking banshee. The painting's hills and trees are a close companion to the landscape of Olana, and its perspective simulates that of the studio porch: the zipline's upper anchor point from which *Banshee* descends.

Continuing down the hill from the artist's studio porch to the zipline's anchor point on Ridge Road, forging beyond in the same direction as the line, and across the river, one finds themselves at the home of the painter Thomas Cole, Church's friend and mentor, whose influence is evident in *Pilgrim's Progress* in its sense of foreboding: a wraith-like figure roams down the dark, storm-struck trail.

Like the Catskill Mountain House, Olana's Persian-inspired house was built on a rocky precipice, which provided exaggerated and sublime vistas. The Half-Round Porch is part of Church's studio addition and looks west across the Hudson River. It is one of many perches and porches at Olana which serve as outdoor viewing rooms, connecting nature and architecture. An internal staircase leads up to the studio tower for more panoramic views.



ZONE 8: MAN FOREVER



Man Forever is an exploratory percussion project helmed by drummer **John Colpitts** (aka **Kid Millions**), one of New York's most critically acclaimed and versatile performers and composers.

MUHHEAKANTUCK

Man Forever's *Muhheakantuck* features an assemblage of New York-based drummers including, Tigie percussionists **Matt Evans** and **Amy Garapic**. *Muhheakantuck* is translated as “river that flows two ways” and believed to be a name given to the river we now know as The Hudson River by the Native American peoples the Lenape long before the arrival of Henry Hudson. At *Groundswell*, Man Forever performers will play a continuous shifting pattern of percussion, movement, and vocal along Bethune Road, activating their own two-way flow. The different tiers of the switchback carriage road will result in aleatoric patterns caused by the distances between the drummers, and their distances from the listeners, in reflection of the dynamic river at the core of the Olana Viewshed.

The Hudson River is a strong presence at Olana. Not only did Frederic Church paint this iconic waterway many times, but it is a key feature—visually and ecologically—from his large-scale designed landscape at Olana, which includes the main house. Bethune Road was a switchback route which connected Olana down to the river. In Church's day, the Hudson was also an industrial highway and provided ferry service back to New York City. Much of the Hudson River corridor had been deforested in the 19th century, and part of Church's large-scale design included the creation of native woodlands at Olana. *“For several seasons after I selected this spot as my home, I thought of hardly anything but planting trees, and had thousands and thousands of them set out on the southern and western slopes,”* wrote Church in 1890. On certain mornings, a fog bank settles over the Hudson River and can be seen drifting up Olana's wooded hillside.



ZONE 9: STEVE BULL



**BLESSING IN GOLD
SMOKEY VISTA
BRIDGE HOME
DIRTY HUDSON
FOLIAGE LUSTING
INSECTS SPEAKING TO ME**

Steve Bull is a mixed-media technology artist whose practice includes cellphone karaoke and augmented reality. For over a decade, Bull has created location-specific narratives and games that explore the social, technological, and creative possibilities of cell phones.

CELLPHONIA: VIEWSHED

As Frederic Church terraformed the Olana landscape, *Cellphonia: Viewshed* transforms visitor's responses into a sonic landscape. Visitors on the *Groundswell* carriage roads are invited to telephone (518) 512-0518. Callers will encounter three prompts:

- **What do you see?**
- **How does it make you feel?**
- **Turn around and say where you've come from.**

Cellphonia: Viewshed weaves these responses into an ephemeral song that constantly evolves as the event progresses. Visitors entering and leaving Olana may access the latest *Cellphonia: Viewshed* by tuning into Wave Farm's local radio station WGXC 90.7-FM, or streaming online at cellphonia.org/viewshed/.

Contrary to popular thought, Olana is not a house. It is—and was—much bigger than that, a 250-acre large-scale creation, designed around its near and distant views by the artist Frederic Church. The main house is one component in a much broader landscape composition. For Church, Olana was also a farm and a studio, and for Church's visitors, Olana was an experience. It still is. Church acquired and developed a landscape which afforded views of regional natural wonders: mountain ranges, neighboring landforms such as Mount Merino and Blue Hill, valleys, and—significantly—a bird's eye view of weather patterns, atmospheric conditions, and the sublime sunrises and sunsets which inspired him and other Hudson River School artists. Church designed and sculpted his personal landscape to be the foreground to this vast and theatrical backdrop.

Without these integral views, Olana would not be a complete work of art. That's why, over the last few decades, preservation organizations, governmental divisions and private landowners have joined to protect important views from Olana. Nearly 3,000 acres have been protected within the Olana Viewshed, and this collective effort, tied to Olana's role within the regional economy, continues.

ABOUT OLANA & THE OLANA PARTNERSHIP

The eminent Hudson River School painter Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900) designed Olana, his family home, studio, and estate as an integrated environment embracing architecture, art, landscape, and conservation ideals. Considered one of the most important artistic residences in the United States, Olana is a 250-acre artist-designed landscape with a Persian-inspired house at its summit, embracing unrivaled panoramic views of the vast Hudson Valley.

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, development and improvement of Olana State Historic Site. To learn more about Olana and The Olana Partnership, please visit olana.org.

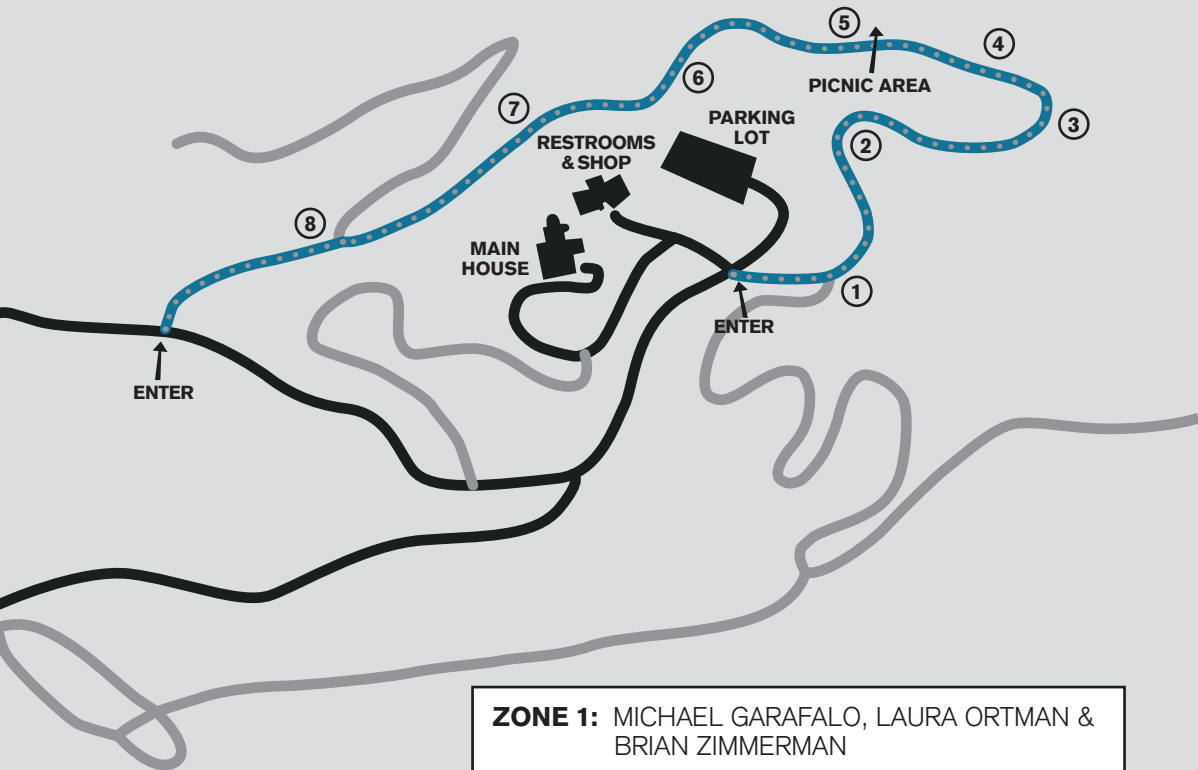
ABOUT WAVE FARM & WGXC 90.7-FM

Wave Farm is a non-profit arts organization that celebrates creative and community use of media and the airwaves. Wave Farm programs provide access to transmission technologies and support artists and organizations that engage with media as an art form. WGXC, a program division of Wave Farm, is a creative community radio station based in New York's Greene and Columbia counties. Hands-on access and participation activate WGXC as a public platform for information, experimentation, and engagement on 90.7-FM. To learn more about Wave Farm and WGXC, please visit wavefarm.org and wgxc.org.

Groundswell is co-organized by **The Olana Partnership** and **Wave Farm's WGXC 90.7- FM**; and made possible, in part, with public funds from the **New York State Council on the Arts' Electronic Media and Film Presentation Funds** grant program, administered by the **ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes**. Picnic delectables and libations provided by **Swoon Kitchenbar**. Solar powered performance amplification provided by **Lotus Energy**.

Cover photo, page 21-22: Antoine Lutens.
Landscape photos: Beth Schneck.





EVENT ROUTE 2-5 P.M.

WILLIAM BASINSKI 5-6 P.M.

- MOTORIZED ROAD
- ⋯** GROUNDSWELL

- ZONE 1:** MICHAEL GARAFALO, LAURA ORTMAN & BRIAN ZIMMERMAN
- ZONE 2:** KENSETH ARMSTEAD
- ZONE 3:** HÉLÈNE LESERLIN & JACK MAGAI
- ZONE 4:** MAU SCHOETTLE
- ZONE 5:** WILLIAM BASINSKI (5-6 P.M.)
- ZONE 6:** ELLEN DRISCOLL with DANIELA GOMEZ
- ZONE 7:** McKENDREE KEY & JANE CARVER
- ZONE 8:** MAN FOREVER
- ZONE 9:** STEVE BULL (SEE PAGE 19)