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Press Release

For Immediate Release

Planting Utopia: Artist Julia Whitney Barnes' Site-Specific Installations Connect Albany International Airport and the Shaker Heritage Society

(Wednesday, May 25, 2022, Albany, NY) The Albany International Airport and the Shaker Heritage Society announce a series of events and installations stemming from a year-long collaboration with artist Julia Whitney Barnes. A public reception on Saturday, June 25, from 1–4pm at both the Airport and the nearby Shaker Heritage Society, will introduce guests to both installations and provide an opportunity to meet the artist and learn more about her research and creative process. Transportation between the two sites will be provided by an Airport shuttle. Additionally, the exhibition in the Airport's Concourse A Gallery, opening July 16, will tell the story of *Planting Utopia*, and the Shaker Heritage Society will host an artist-led cyanotype-printing workshop on July 23. Reproduction images and a checklist can be accessed by clicking this link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/cj4bwes1ye0flcdckmwsk/h?dl=0&rlkey=cufrsxcgai7wt6jqoq6i4ewkfj>

Beginning in the spring of 2021, Poughkeepsie-based artist Julia Whitney Barnes photographed and collected specimens from over 150 plants growing in the herb garden at Shaker Heritage Society, the site of the first Shaker settlement in the United States. The herb garden, which reflects the Shakers' important herbal medicine industry, and historic Shaker 'gift' or 'spirit' drawings are the inspiration and source imagery for a series of prints on view at the Airport, and the companion site-specific installation at the Shaker Heritage Society, located a short walk from the Airport.

Whitney Barnes often works with the cyanotype process, which is an early cameraless photographic process that was invented in 1842, the same era the gift drawings were being created. Objects or transparencies are placed on paper or fabric coated with cyanotype chemistry and then exposed to light to create various hues of white to light blue silhouettes on rich, blue backgrounds. Through the use of this cyanotype medium, Whitney Barnes manipulates pressed and dried plants from the herb garden along with intricately cut photographic negatives. For her works on paper, the unique blue and white prints are just the beginning and then she paints in many layers of watercolor, gouache and ink.

At the Shaker Heritage Society's 1856 Drying House, Whitney Barnes' installation includes temporary murals on the exterior of the historic brick building, with stark blue and white silhouettes of herbs in bloom climbing the outside of the red brick walls. The complementary interior elements are cyanotype prints on fabric and hanging bunches of herbs from the garden. The mural and installation will remain on view through the summer of 2023.

For the installation at the Albany International Airport, Whitney Barnes developed a series of eight cyanotype paintings on paper with plants collected from the Shaker herb garden. Their compositions were based upon nineteenth-century Shaker 'gift' or 'spirit' drawings that were complex, divinely inspired revelations of spiritual perfection, often symmetrical and including botanical elements. These eight original paintings were reproduced on aluminum panels and hung within a light-filled pedestrian corridor linking the new south parking garage with the ticketing area. The installation will remain on view for three to five years.

Beginning July 16, the Airport will also host a six-month long exhibition, called *Planting Utopia*, in its post-security Concourse A Gallery, that will present the highlights of this collaboration, including original artwork, preparatory sketches, and a documentary video.

The Shaker Heritage Society will host a special cyanotype workshop with the artist on July 23 from 10am – 3:30pm.

A catalog of the installations and exhibition will be forthcoming.

The installation at the Shaker Heritage Society was funded by the New York State Council on the Arts Support for Artists Program; the site-specific project and exhibition at Albany International Airport was commissioned by the Airport through its Art & Culture Program. The catalog is funded by Albany International Airport and The Michele L. Vennard Hospitality Grant Program of the Albany County Convention and Visitor's Bureau Fund of the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region

About Julia Whitney Barnes

Julia Whitney Barnes is an artist living in Poughkeepsie, NY who works in a variety of media from cyanotypes, watercolor, oil paintings, ceramic sculptures, murals, and site-specific installations. She has exhibited widely in the United States and internationally including the Dorsky Museum, New Paltz, NY, Ely Center of Contemporary Art, New Haven, CT, Woodstock Artists Association & Museum (WAAM), Woodstock, NY, Institute of Contemporary Art, Portland, ME, Carrie Haddad Gallery, Hudson, NY, Kenise Barnes Fine Art, Kent, CT and Garvey|Simon NY, New York, NY. She was awarded fellowships from New York State Council on the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Arts Mid-Hudson, Abbey Memorial Fund for Mural Painting/National Academy of Fine Arts, and the Gowanus Public Art Initiative, among others. Born in Newbury, VT, Julia Whitney Barnes spent two decades in Brooklyn, before moving to the Hudson Valley in 2015. She received her BFA from Parsons School of Design and her MFA from Hunter College. Whitney Barnes has created site-specific installations Brookfield Place/Winter Garden, New York, NY; Arts Brookfield, Brooklyn, NY, the Wilderstein Sculpture Biennial, Rhinebeck, NY; The Trolley Barn/Fall Kill Creative Works, Poughkeepsie, NY; GlenLily Grounds, Newburgh, NY; ArtsWestchester, White Plains, NY; Gowanus Public Arts Initiative, Brooklyn, NY; Space All Over/Fjellerup Bund i Bund & Grund, Fjellerup, Denmark; Lower Manhattan Cultural Council/Sirovitch Senior Center, New York, NY; Brooklyn School of Inquiry, Brooklyn, NY; New York City Department of Transportation, New York, NY; and Fgment Sculpture Garden, Governors Island, NY and among other locations. Whitney Barnes was awarded a glass commission for NYC Public Art for Public Schools/Percent for Art that is slated to be completed in 2023. To learn more about the artist visit: www.juliawhitneybarnes.com or @juliawhitneybarnes on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.

About the Albany International Airport Art & Culture Program

Since 1998, the Albany International Airport's Art & Culture Program has sought to showcase the cultural vitality of New York's Capital Region through exhibitions and installations within the Airport's terminal. Such presentations enhance the experience of airport travelers and foster the advancement of a thriving creative community. The Program has become a cornerstone for demonstrating the breadth and quality of the arts throughout the Region as well as a resource for learning about local culture. Through exhibitions presented in the Albany International Airport Gallery and Concourse A Gallery, the Exhibition Case Program, large-scale installations, free public programs and tours, the Art & Culture Program has extended the reach of area artists and museums to an audience of more than three million people each year.

About the Shaker Heritage Society

Since 1977, the Shaker Heritage Society (SHS) has stewarded the site of America's first Shaker settlement. The Shakers' Utopian, communal society was built on a framework of equality of men and women and all races, and valued innovation and the pursuit of perfection through everyday work. The SHS mission is to enrich the Capital Region by engaging the community with the founding home and enduring values of the Shakers. Established in 1776, the historic site is a small oasis of Shaker buildings in a tranquil, natural landscape. The site is located within walking distance of both Albany Airport (built on former Shaker land) and the Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve. The museum is open Tuesday-Saturday from March through late December. The grounds are open to the public from dawn to dusk throughout the year. SHS offers a wide variety of tours, workshops, and programs for youth and adults. The Society's annual craft fairs are a tradition that support over 100 regional artisans. The 1848 Meeting House and 1915 Barn are venues for both community programs and private events.

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