

# Preserving The Spirit



## The Seligmann Homestead

SUGARLOAF, NY

**S**URREALIST ARTIST KURT SELIGMANN SAW THE WORLD FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE AND THE RENOVATION OF HIS HOMESTEAD FOCUSED ON THE PRESERVATION OF THAT VISION. This sprawling 55-acre estate includes the artist's home, the building that served as his studio/gallery and the dairy barn he often painted in.

The studio has been fully restored and houses numerous examples of Seligman's work, but it is the dairy barn—split into the foundation's office suite on the lower level and an event studio and artist's gallery above—that draws the eye. Featuring the dramatic incorporation of a curtain wall of windows and exposed beams and trusses, the gallery fulfills and preserves the spirit of an artist known for his unique eye and use of space.

Site work included water and sewer, updated utilities, an off-road parking lot, exterior lighting and landscaping. ■■



"The transformation from an old, beat up farm to an elegant resource in Orange County was almost magical."

**Nancy Project**  
President  
Orange County Citizens  
Foundation



## The Art of Kurt Seligmann

**KURT LEOPOLD SELIGMANN (1900–1962) WAS A SWISS-AMERICAN SURREALIST PAINTER AND ENGRAVER KNOWN FOR HIS FANTASTIC IMAGERY OF MEDIEVAL TROUBADORS AND KNIGHTS ENGAGED IN MACABRE RITUALS.** He was a member of the *Abstraction-Creation Art Non-Figuratif* in the early 1920's and Paris' *Surrealist Group* in the late 1930's. After World War II, his work was exhibited widely throughout the World.



Beginning in 1940, Seligmann and his wife, Arlette, lived in Manhattan where he taught for many years at Brooklyn College. The couple retired to their farm in the hamlet of Sugar Loaf, New York in 1958. Shortly before her death in 1992, Arlette bequeathed the entire estate to the Orange County Citizens Foundation, a private nonprofit corporation dedicated to the preservation of Orange County, New York. ■■







## Joe's Viewpoint

**As CHAIRMAN OF THE ORANGE COUNTY CITIZEN'S FOUNDATION'S SELIGMANN COMMITTEE, I OVERSAW THE HOMESTEAD'S RENOVATION AND RE-PURPOSED USE.**

A lot of the site's energy came from the legacy of Seligmann himself, as well as fellow artists like Gérard Deschamps and Salvador Dali, who were often guests on the property. In that spirit, I brought in my own team of long-time collaborators, landscape engineer, Steven Esposito and architect, Chris DeHaan.

Our chief goal was to preserve and maintain the homestead, respecting the wishes of Seligmann's wife, Arlette, when she left the property to the county.

The old dairy barn was originally split into two levels, so we kept it that way. Seligmann often painted in the upper level, taking advantage of the northern light, so we kept that—building a curtain wall of windows to emulate the old barn sash and panes of glass. Today, it's a great meeting space for art related functions and groups that utilize the building.

The lower level, which was only used for milking cows and storage, was converted into office space—first for the foundation and most recently for the OC Citizen's Foundation. ■■

