Six artist residency programs, in concert with the national Alliance of Artists Communities and The James Irvine Foundation, set out seven years ago to celebrate, support, and promote the work of outstanding California visual artists from diverse communities—artists whose work may as yet be unfamiliar but whose compelling visions will define California in its next decades. The consortium's shared goal is to introduce these artists and their communities to the opportunities for support available through competitive artist residency programs.

Launched as a pilot program in 2003, Visions from the New California has expanded into a multi-year project and has served as a model for other consortia across the country. This book represents the fourth installment of Visions, documenting residencies from 2009.

Selecting six artists from a diverse group of talented individuals was a difficult but rewarding task. In an effort to identify a broad range of under-recognized artists doing outstanding work, we invited over 230 artists and arts professionals to nominate qualified California visual artists. “This project will have lasting effects on the participating artists as well as the residency programs, which will be better equipped to reach out and serve previously untapped artistic communities,” we told the nominators. “We hope that you will embrace this opportunity to help us recognize and assist a number of talented artists.” Nominations and an open call yielded 182 outstanding applicants for the six awards.
MEET THE ARTISTS

We will further introduce each of these artists, and show you some of their work, in the following pages.

Josué Rojas
a painter/multi-media artist from Los Angeles
As a community artist I have been used to working with others. Working isolated and by myself was a strengthening experience. Solitude provided a certain level of clarity that would have been otherwise hard to achieve and not instinctual.

George Two Horses
a mixed-media artist from Long Beach
The equipment available made a huge difference and to be around so many talented working artists was quite nice. Also, to be in a new area inherently affects you and your thoughts, changing you in subtle and powerful ways.

April Banks
a photographer/installation artist from Oakland
As an emerging artist, the residency provided validation that my work is compelling and important. Having space to experiment allowed me to make decisions quickly without the pressure of an outcome. It allows room for “failure” and discovery through failure.

Jane Castillo
an installation artist from Chino
It was wonderful to breathe in fresh air and be in a beautiful environment with wild turkey, deer, quail, the beach a short walk away, lots of hiking trails, and just gorgeous scenery. I was able to relax and feel like everything had cosmically aligned. The serenity felt here was energizing and inspiring on a daily basis.

Terry Berlier
a sculptor/installation artist from La Honda
The exchange of ideas for prototyping with the vast staff was incredible. You could problem solve out loud and shoot through ideas at great speed. Being able to bounce problems off people from various technical backgrounds pushed my work forward beyond expectations.

Glynnis Reed
a photographer and photo-based artist from Los Angeles
The most fruitful collaborations with artists during my residency occurred during the time I spent photographing the women who modeled for me. One resident was a choreographer and dancer and she brought so much to the time we spent together. She had endless patience, great flexibility (of body and will), and offered interesting ideas for poses as the concept for my work developed.

George Two Horses
a mixed-media artist from Long Beach
The equipment available made a huge difference and to be around so many talented working artists was quite nice. Also, to be in a new area inherently affects you and your thoughts, changing you in subtle and powerful ways.
Innovation and the forefront of new ideas

At the core of cultural progress are new ways of thinking about and reflecting on the world. Residency programs place themselves at the forefront of this progress by serving as research and development labs for the arts, encouraging aesthetic exploration, and nurturing the creativity of artists. By providing today’s visionaries with the time, space, and community to create new work, artist residencies actively contribute to the continuing development and strengthening of our culture.

Gifts of time and space

Two of the most important gifts that can be bestowed upon an artist are the time and space to develop and create. While many artists find a way to carve out minutes or hours in their daily life, very few have the ability to dedicate consistent, significant blocks of time to their work. Often, their work happens in less than ideal workspaces and in isolation from other individuals engaged in creative work. Residencies offer artists the freedom to separate themselves from the daily competitors for their attention and to enter an environment that encourages the artist to stretch his or her creative space.

Part of a greater whole

Recognition and validation of an artist’s work are often the most crucial forms of support that an artist can receive; particularly, when this recognition comes from leaders in the field. Artists tell us that the affirmation from having been awarded a residency frequently comes at a critical point in their careers and offsets—in part—the marginalization and trivialization of artists in our society through professional acknowledgement and encouragement. Residencies also offer a community of other artists exploring their creative practices, developing new approaches to art-making, and challenging the way we view the world. Joining the ranks of these peers, artists often work more productively and with greater confidence during a residency, steady in the knowledge that they have been recognized for their work.

Exchange across boundaries

Whether boundaries created by artistic discipline, ethnicity/nationality, career stage, religious belief, or any other ways we find to distinguish ourselves from others, residencies are a place for crossing boundaries and breaking barriers. Artist residency programs provide uniquely fertile environments for exchanged ideas, fruitful collaborations, and engaged discourse to happen regularly. Art is not created in a vacuum and artists of all disciplines thrive on a steady balance between solitude from and interaction with other creative individuals.

Trust in the process

Unlike many other forms of support for artists, residency programs focus primarily—and often solely—on the creative process rather than the product. Not surprisingly, most artists note that they produce at a dramatically increased rate during their residencies without the program having to impose an expectation of output. The opportunity to experiment with new artistic techniques, disciplines, and ideologies often leads the individual artist in directions never before considered. Support for this type of risk-taking and innovation is rare; it is a benefit of residencies that artist highlight more than any other.

Investment in development

Artists sometimes view residencies as a luxury they can’t afford, within lives already stretched too thin. Yet, dedicated time to work is an essential aspect in developing and creating art. Without investment in experimentation and growth, the artist will stagnate. Nurturing the creative life of an artist is an investment in the work itself. An investment in new work is an investment in the forward progression of our culture. And so we come full circle.
April Banks is a conceptual artist whose image-based installations explore issues related to international trade and commerce, farmer’s rights, racial equality, and human rights. Though the subject of her work varies, the common threads are the disparity of access and economy and the polarity between disgust and desire. Her goal is to produce art that is simultaneously attractive and repulsive.

Combining photography, video, and sound, she applies her background in architecture to create a holistic approach to objects and space. Her installations pay keen attention to detail and form and are the result of deep and immersive research processes—which include foreign travel—to gather experiences first-hand. Her long-term artistic vision is to create installations at an architectural scale while maintaining the sensibilities of conceptual art.

April strives to increase the scale of her installations and experiment with new materials and processes. While at 18th Street she noticed that “I was able to let my work sit and to think about ways to make it stronger. I was able to do several iterations of a piece without the pressure of an exhibition deadline.”
During her first week at 18th Street Arts Center, April spent her time “organizing my many lists of ideas and concepts.” The result was the initial draft of a time-lapse installation, Rice Riots. This piece focuses on the riots that took place in Haiti when the price of rice was too high for the majority of the population. Haiti’s food shortage was confounded by its dependence on rice imports from the U.S. The installation is about the starvation due to market manipulation and, even more devastating, the vanishing knowledge of the native farmers.

She is currently working on the second installation, Rice Riots: 2, which examines the 2007/2008 world rice shortage.

April utilized the grant portion of the Visions award to undertake a three-month trip to the Middle East where she taught a photography workshop called Project Souanna at a Jordanian refugee camp. From this experience she has continued to develop another project that was prototyped during her residency. The kinetic installation looks at the stigma of refugee status and displacement by war. Using a field of umbrellas with one singular image, the image fragments and distorts as each umbrella rotates around on its axis.
Terry Berlier  
Sculptor and Installation Artist  
www.terryberlier.com

Terry is an interdisciplinary artist whose kinetic and interactive pieces explore everyday detritus, the environment, ideas of place/non-place, and queer practice. She describes her art as being driven by conceptual concerns that dictate the mediums used to best convey her ideas: “The work provides a response to my feeling unhinged by certain social and cultural stigmas. In a sense, they are delayed reactions to everyday life. As innovations are changing how we perceive and interact with the world, I often question whether we are coming closer to or farther from understanding each other and the world around us.”

To articulate her artistic concepts, Terry incorporates elements of sculpture, sound, video, installation, and drawings. She uses found everyday materials in many of her works—such as chairs, pan lids, car horns, telephone speakers, and fire alarms—with the intent of both appropriating and subverting their meanings. An underlying sense of humor infuses much of her art.

Core Sampling (Tick Tock)  
2009, FGR -95, dyes, steel, motors, MAKE Controller, computer, sensor, microscope camera, PVC, aluminum, pocket watch, MAX, cores: 6' x 3" x 3"
During her stay at the Exploratorium, Terry worked on her Core Sampling project, which involved constructing a device capable of playing audio samples from her handmade pseudo core samples. She described her time as being spent “designing, building, failing, and retrying to build the prototype.” Having access to the skilled and knowledgeable Exploratorium staff proved to be a boon for her artistic efforts: “I learned about motors and micro-controllers to get the device running. I walked around looking at the exhibits there and learned from existing prototypes. Though, honestly, digging through all the prototyping supplies at hand was like working in an inventor’s playground/salvage yard of sorts…in other words, a dream come true.”
Jane Castillo was born in Los Angeles to a Colombian immigrant family—her lineage also includes that of Filipino, African, Spanish, and Indigenous Colombian—which has had a profound influence on her work as an active artist in her community. She enjoys the exploration of materials and their identity, examining the definition, purpose, and typical perception of materials to inform her work. Presenting materials in a new way that embodies layers of meaning remains a source of fascination for Jane. Her latest work is a commentary on the history of capitalism and the role it has played in her lineage, specifically the sugar trade in Colombia. Employing a tongue-in-cheek approach, she addresses the perceived and misperceived honesty of being a “product” of the trade.

Jane sought the gifts of time and space that come with a residency in order to focus on new artistic pursuits. She recalled how her stay “lifted my spirits, validated my artistic pursuits, allowed me to grow spiritually, and as an artist.” Access to studio space facilitated her focus on creating new work without distraction in a beautiful setting. The residency also opened the door for Jane to interact with other artists, developing friendships that have the potential to last far past the residency experience. The fruits of these new-found relationships have only begun to present themselves: “There are friends that I have made and enjoyed the dialogues of potential collaborations with. These conversations [with other residency artists] were rich with inspiration for new ideas.”
Glynnis Reed

Djerassi Resident Artists Program
June 30–August 4, 2009

Brown Sugar initiative body, 2009, digital print, edition 1 of 10

installation detail  2009, triptych digital print, 11" x 17"
Glynnis Reed
Photographer and Photo-based Artist
www.glynnisreed.com

Glynnis has been working with photography and photo-based media for over ten years. As an artist, her work has moved progressively from a search into the urban landscape and the city to the intermediate spaces where the urban world meets nature in public parks. Her work also includes explorations of identity and place, as well as the complexities of one’s relationship with the self and with others. Through her art, she continues to examine how gender, race, sexuality, and power figure into people’s experiences within the physical and social geographies of the city and nature.

For Glynnis, her residency experience at Djerassi was an opportunity to explore her creative process unhindered by the demands of daily routines and responsibilities. She remembers her experience as providing her with “concentrated periods of time to explore, experiment, and take risks that you may not ordinarily have the physical or mental space for at home.”

In the work that she created during her residency, she immersed herself into the atmosphere and experience of a free-flowing natural environment. Dennis O’Leary, Executive Director of Djerassi, noted a striking breakthrough in Glynnis’ evolution as a visual artist during her stay: “Using other residents as models and the Djerassi landscape—multi-layered and abstracted—as ground, her new work is more sophisticated in concept, mood, and visual appeal…. She pushed the edges of her comfort levels to achieve new awareness of what’s possible and what works.”

The impact of Glynnis’ residency stay has forever changed her outlook and work as an artist. As she prepared to leave Djerassi to return to her everyday life, she predicted that: “I will remember my incredible focus and productivity and I will bring the higher level of attunement to my practice when I return home. This was a time to stretch creatively and embrace the possibilities in my continued exploration of art making.”
Sally and Don Lucas Artists
Programs at Montalvo Arts Center
May 1–31, 2009

Josué Rojas

Dancer in the Day
2010, archival inkjet print, 22” x 33”

Reveiller
2010, archival inkjet print, 22” x 33”

Stillness
2010, archival inkjet print, 22” x 33”

Inner Moods
2010, archival inkjet print, 22” x 33”
Josué Rojas
Painter and Multi-media Artist

Josué is an avid journalist, muralist, and multi-media artist. He has worked for The Pacific News Service/New America Media, as an instructor/lead muralist for the East Side Arts Alliance’s Visual Element Crew, and as the Art Director for YO! Youth Outlook Magazine. He was born in El Salvador, graduated from the California College of Arts and Crafts, and currently resides in San Francisco.

In 2007, Josué was inspired to initiate the Cooperative for International Education in Fine Arts in the Americas (CEIBA) project after a trip to Honduras. Teaming up with Bay Area graffiti legend Estria Miyashiru, the two artists worked with local Honduran children to paint a mural in commemoration of the young students who had perished in the Chameleon Bus Massacre. Josué has traveled extensively throughout Latin America using art as a means to explore non-violence, identity, and authorship with the youth that he encounters.

Montalvo provided Josué with the time and space to begin the creation of a project he had long wanted to produce. Using a series of paintings and writings as a skeleton, he began to flesh out his ideas for turning them into a graphic novel: “It will tell the story of the transnational migration of the Salvadoran people to California, their life work,
and the creation of the by-products of war and migration.” The work is meant to tell the tale of a burgeoning cultural identity and to serve as a tool to help prevent gang violence.

“I had good experiences and conversations with artists while at Montalvo, specifically Deborah Lefkowitz—who was open to me, my work, and provided feedback in an honest, critical way. Her work and life have inspired many new approaches, as well as a new appreciation for life and my work.”
George Two Horses
Mixed-media Artist

George is a mixed-media artist from Long Beach. He describes his artistic educational background as consisting of "many years of both self- and guided exploration. With the aid of our public libraries and community colleges I have found my voice." His artwork is infused with references to multiculturalism and a desire to inform and encourage social change.

In seeking a residency at Kala Art Institute in Berkley, George felt that it would provide him with an opportunity to experience a different atmosphere, to meet other creative people, and to advance his work by sharing new ideas and concepts. As he later recalled, "The staff at Kala have it down—supremely helpful and understanding. Housing was cool and Berkeley is great for food."

Kala gave George room to explore and experiment with new and different mediums. While there he produced a video, several screen prints, and a

Moche 2008, print alteration, approx. 4" x 5"

Peasoup 2009, pen and ink, 18" x 24"

Mai Doufu 2009, print alteration, approx. 2" x 3"
The Alliance of Artists Communities is the service organization for the field of artists’ communities and residencies. Believing that the cultivation of new art and ideas is essential to human progress, the Alliance’s mission is to advocate for and support artists’ communities, to advance the endeavors of artists. The Alliance strives for a society that values creative people and process, as well as products; that encourages experimentation and the exploration of new ideas; and that recognizes the role artists and the creative process can have in achieving this vision.

The Alliance gives a collective voice on behalf of approximately 500 artists’ residency programs in the US and more than 1,000 worldwide, leveraging support for the field as a whole; promoting successful practices in the field; and advocating for creative environments that support the work of today’s artists. The Alliance is one of the few national organizations representing programs that support artists in all disciplines, believing that collaboration and exchange that cross traditional boundaries furthers our culture’s progress.

To learn more, visit our website at www.artistcommunities.org

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18th Street Arts Center values art making as an essential component of a vibrant, just, and healthy society. Its mission is “to provoke public dialogue through contemporary art making.” With a focus on supporting creative projects by California artists, 18th Street’s residency program helps build and strengthen the creative community of the State.

18th Street operates a variety of residencies, ranging from long-term “anchor tenants,” who have helped to define the character and scope of the organization, to local and international residents who live and/or work at 18th Street for less than one year. Over the past fifteen years, 18th Street has fostered and supported the work of many of Los Angeles’ most interesting emerging and mid-career artists, and has done so at that crucial point when such recognition can make a real difference in their careers. Technical assistance for artists-in-residence includes free access to professional development workshops, staff coordination, and grant writing consultation.

Since 1995, 18th Street’s International Exchange Program has hosted 200 artists from many different countries. These artists come for two to six months at a time. Their presence at 18th Street has enlivened the multicultural dialogue of Los Angeles. Over the past fourteen years, more than 700 multicultural visual and performing artists have also participated in 18th Street’s Presenting Program, with nearly 100 group exhibitions mounted.

Each year, 18th Street chooses a theme around which many of the residencies are based. This approach gives the artists a shared focus and brings a commonality to their work and research. In 2007-08, resident artists participated in an annual exhibition themed “The Future of Nations.” The artists created new works that addressed issues related to the Constitution, demographics, and war and conflict. In 2009, 18th Street’s chosen theme, “Almost Utopia,” looked ahead ten years to Los Angeles in 2019. For 2010, artists and curators have created new works and platforms for discussion and engagement related to theme “Status Report: the Creative Economy.” For 2011, 18th Street has set the programmatic theme “Legacy,” designed to explore issues of artistic legacy and notions of mentorship as manifested in the Southern California alternative artist space movement.

Now in its 31st year, the Djerassi Resident Artists Program offers up to 60 residencies during its core season to artists working in the visual arts, new genre/media arts, choreography, music composition, and literature. Located on a secluded 580-acre ranch in the Santa Cruz Mountains, forty miles south of San Francisco, the Program is open to local, national, and international artists at all career levels who meet a high standard of excellence.

The majestic beauty and remote solitude of the Program’s stunning natural landscape serve as an inspirational backdrop for the intense creative experience that defines a Djerassi residency. Designed to invigorate the creative process by affording artists the gift of time, free from everyday distractions, the Program offers seven individual sessions of month-long, retreat-like residencies for diverse groups of eight to ten artists. All direct residency expenses, including a private studio, housing, all meals, administrative and technical support, local transportation, and other personal amenities are provided free of charge. Residency artists pay only for their travel to California and their artistic materials.

Freedom and trust are two distinct hallmarks of a Djerassi residency. The Program encourages artists to find their own work style and rhythm and has no work requirements. The opportunity for concentrated solitary work in a place of great natural beauty is complemented by intimate collegial fellowship and lively discourse among peers, which has proven to stimulate genuine personal and professional relationships that bridge aesthetic discipline, age, geography, and ethnicity. For more than three decades, the Djerassi Program has adhered to its mission to conserve the culture, the land, and the creative spirit that ensures that the artistic process is perpetuated and valued.
The Exploratorium is a museum of science, art, and human perception, with a mission to create a culture of learning through innovative environments, programs, and tools that help people nurture their curiosity about the world around them. The museum invites visitors, artists, scientists, educators, and exhibit developers to explore the natural world in new ways. From its beginning, the Exploratorium has used the observations made by scientists and artists as a means of expanding the public’s understanding of nature, culture, and natural phenomena.

Exploratorium’s arts program aims to develop new insights and understandings by incorporating the artistic process with other investigative processes; to enhance the role of the museum as a center of cultural investigation; to initiate discourse about the relationships among art, science, human activities, and topics related to multidisciplinary and multicultural activities; and to elucidate, by example, the role that artists can play in modern society.

In the words of Exploratorium founder Dr. Frank Oppenheimer: “Art is included, not just to make things pretty, although it often does so, but primarily because artists make different kinds of discoveries about nature than do physicists or geologists. They also rely on a different basis for decision-making while creating their exhibits. But both artists and scientists help us notice and appreciate things in nature that we had learned to ignore or had never been taught to see. Both art and science are needed to fully understand nature and its effects on people.”

Headlands Center for the Arts provides an exceptional environment for the creative process and the development of new work and ideas. Through artists’ residencies and public programs, the organization offers opportunities for reflection, dialogue, and exchange that build understanding and appreciation for the role of art in society.

In creating Headlands Center for the Arts, the founders sought to reconfigure the role of the artist from a marginalized position to that of a central participant in our society. Since 1987, Headlands has developed this idea into an array of dynamic programs for artists and the public, including residencies, lectures and performances, open houses, community-based projects, publications, and commissions.

Over 1,000 artists from different disciplines and cultural backgrounds have participated in Headlands’ programs. A variety of public programs bring artists together with scholars, activists, and other professionals, facilitating interaction across traditional boundaries and introducing artists and audiences to new creative processes in order to expand the range of possibilities for art’s function in our society.

Headlands’ reputation for creative exploration is world renowned, influencing communities from Bangkok to Berlin, Stockholm to New York. The cross-pollination of ideas that is at the core of what Headlands does attracts emerging talents and highly accomplished artists alike. These artists, along with other professionals who come to Headlands, influence one another and the worlds they touch.
The Sally and Don Lucas Artists Residency Programs at Montalvo Arts Center offers facilities and staff supportive of the creative process, in an environment conducive to both individual practice and the energetic exchange of ideas among international and culturally diverse fellows. The residency has earned international recognition as a model of curatorial practice supporting new and challenging contemporary work.

Lucas Artist fellows are identified through a nomination/invitational process that helps ensure support for highly qualified artists with the potential to become major voices in the next generation of creative thinkers, but who might not normally find their way to residency programs. While at Montalvo, residents are granted time for solitary, creation and exploration, as well as the opportunity for stimulating interaction with colleagues and the greater community of Silicon Valley. The program’s international focus fosters a cultural and ethnic diversity that offers a variety of perspectives and a global framework of ideas. Shared dinners are especially significant, thanks to Montalvo’s unique Culinary Fellowship program, and encourage residents to linger in a vibrant exchange of ideas that often continues long after their residencies come to an end.

Of particular note are the Lucas Programs’ facilities, a complex of ten state-of-the-art, discipline-specific live/work studios and a commons building designed by six teams of renowned architects and artists.

Kala Art Institute helps artists sustain their creative efforts over time through its Artists in Residence and Fellowship programs, and increases appreciation of their work through exhibitions, public programming, and educational efforts. Located in the former Heinz ketchup factory in West Berkeley since 1979, Kala’s 8,500-square-foot facility houses an extensive array of printmaking and digital media equipment, as well as a public exhibition gallery, an art library, and an extensive print archive. Kala is a rare resource, providing high-quality facilities to serious artists working in all forms of printmaking, photography, book arts, and digital media including digital video, sound, and computer art.

Artists at Kala are encouraged to produce innovative artwork of the highest quality and are given total freedom to realize their artistic vision. Artists are also provided with a number of professional development opportunities, and a spirit of exchange and education is nurtured through artist involvement in exhibitions, special events, lectures, teaching, and classroom experience. Additionally, Kala is committed to offering quality art education to the general public and public school children through its on-site program of classes and workshops and its Artists in Schools program, established in 1991, providing multiple-week artist-led instruction to students in East Bay public schools and summer programs.
I would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their roles in making Visions from the New California a success:

The James Irvine Foundation and—in particular, Jeanne Sakamoto for her guidance and partnership, John McGuirk who, in his tenure at the Foundation, was a strong advocate for this project, and Foundation President James Cailienes, for his vision and direction. This is a true partnership, and we are so grateful for the opportunity to work together in this way.

Our esteemed selection panelists—Armando Cid, Ramekon O’Arwisters, and Lorraine Garcia-Nakata—who took on the difficult task of selecting only a few artists from a large pool of excellent nominations.

Our nominators—too numerous to name individually—who helped to bring many exceptional artists to the forefront while spreading the word about the opportunities available at residency programs.

The Djerassi Resident Artists Program, and Michelle Finch in particular, for taking on the great administrative task of serving as a clearinghouse for the artist applications and preparing the work for selection.

Carla Wahnon, the Alliance’s Director of Operations, and Adam Short, Development and Program Manager, whose oversight, coordination, and management of the project exceed all expectations.

The directors and staff of the participating residency programs—Holly Blake, Clayton Campbell, Lauren Davies, Michelle Finch, Archana Horsting, Ronald Lopez, Sharon Maidenberg, Dennis O’Leary, Kelly Sicat, Jordan Stein, Jan Williamson, and Pamela Winfrey—who continue to challenge themselves and each other toward the greater goal of supporting these talented visual artists.

Caitlin Strokosch
Executive Director