Visions from the New California

An initiative of the Alliance of Artists Communities
Six artist residency programs in California, in concert with the national Alliance of Artists Communities and The James Irvine Foundation, set out 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.

Launched as a pilot program in 2003, Visions from the New California has expanded into a multi-year project. This book represents the final installment of Visions, documenting 2012 awardees.

The 2012 awards were open to visual artists living in California who had not previously participated in a residency and were not degree-seeking students at the time of application nor during the award year. Selecting six artists from a diverse group of talented individuals is always a difficult task, and the open call yielded more than 200 outstanding applicants for the six awards.

Four distinguished artists and arts professionals served on the selection panel:

- Taraneh Hemami, 2004 Visions from the New California award recipient and artist, from San Francisco
- Rebecca Lowry, 2010 Visions from the New California award recipient and artist, from Los Angeles
- Alix Refshauge, artist and former residency director at HUB-BUB, from San Diego
- Pilar Tompkins Rivas, independent curator, from Los Angeles

These panelists reviewed the applications and narrowed the pool down to sixteen semi-finalists who exhibited the highest quality of work and potential to benefit from the award. From this short list, six artists were selected by the participating residency programs to be awarded the Alliance of Artists Communities’ 2012 Visions from the New California Award: a $4,000 grant, a residency of at least one month at one of the participating programs, and inclusion in a multi-city exhibition in 2012.

The exhibitions were held at 18th Street Arts Center in Santa Monica and Kala Art Institute in Berkeley. Combined, they featured work from all eighteen Visions from the New California awardees from 2010, 2011, and 2012.

Mark Greenfield and Lauren Davies co-curated the shows. Mark is an independent curator and educator based in Los Angeles and Lauren Davies is Kala’s former Director of Exhibitions and Public Programs. The exhibition at 18th Street ran April 14th through May 31, 2012; the exhibit at Kala ran May 18th through July 30, 2012.

"There are few occasions when the breadth of work in a group exhibition so serendipitously finds its own cohesion," says the exhibition’s co-curator, Mark Steven Greenfield.

"Thankfully such is the case with the offerings of the Visions from the New California exhibition. To my mind, the most conspicuous thread running through the exhibition is one of pan-culturalism, as evidenced by the priorities engendered in the work, as well as the diverse backgrounds of the artist. The work suggests a rethinking of long held notions of the contemporary Californian aesthetic as envisioned by a cross section of artists representing ideas with decidedly global perspectives. The exhibition featured work that deals with issues of race, sex, gender, redefine constructionism, new minimalism, nostalgic meditations, and the interplay between nature and the man-made."

To learn about all the past awardees and to read previous publications from Visions from the New California we invite you to visit www.visionsfromthenewcalifornia.org.
MEET THE ARTISTS

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

John Ruszel
a sculptor and printmaker living in Oakland

My work emerges from the application of a set of rules to a set of materials. As the ruleset shifts to accommodate the materials and materials are shuffled to fit the rules, the form is born. With each adjustment there is both refinement and mutation. Structures emerge without function, aesthetics manifest from physical necessity.

Bessma Khalaf
a multi-disciplinary artist living in San Francisco

My videos look like moving stills and my photographs look like stills from a movie. I find a poetic, densely layered image and I try to push it to increasing levels of absurdity. I was born in Iraq and immigrated with my immediate family to the United States when I was 12. My art and my sense of the absurd come from the hilarious and tragic experience of moving between these two very different worlds.

Justin Lowman
an installation artist living in Northridge

My work attempts purposeful connections and distinctions between art and architecture through examination and response to the given light and material conditions of a specific place. Subsequent interventions follow on my part via electrical light sources and other reflective/absorptive surfaces—a combination of found, constructed, and painted elements. Such a process synthesizes site and object into a complete installation that both questions influence of forms one to another as well as seeks perceptions of spatiotemporal presence within the site itself.

Marnia Johnston
a sculptor living in Concord

Many of my sculptures explore what Donna Haraway calls the “ideological struggle between life and social science.” My work does this by incorporating themes surrounding mass production, ecology and biological processes by using robotics, ceramics, and various other media. My current work deals with the ethics surrounding bio-mass production (mass production of cell and tissue cultures) and explores migratory ecology in an era of climate change.

Michiko Yao
an interdisciplinary artist living in Los Angeles

My work investigates the relationships between Western and Japanese imperialisms and the unique social behaviors and fantasies of contemporary Japan. The goal of my art practice is to expose social stereotypes in both Eastern and Western cultures and to confront the boundaries of socio-culturally constructed ideas of gender, race, and sexuality and their relation to power.

Suné Woods
a multimedia artist living in Los Angeles

Much of my current work engages intergenerational relationships and connections. I’m fascinated with how one can be linked through genealogy and separated by geography. I am interested in various forms of kinship relationships and the emotional/psychological underbelly of these systems. Siblings may share a biological parent live in the same city or in other areas of the world and have no knowledge of each other. This void of consciousness is intriguing—not really knowing kin and creating one’s own array of family formation.
Over twenty years ago, The MacArthur Foundation advocated for the creation of the Alliance of Artists Communities to “nurture the process of creation… at a time when it is important to reaffirm the essential freedom that is necessary for all creative accomplishment.” “Process” and “freedom” may seem at odds in a world that values products, quick turn-around, and minimization of risk. But the essential freedom that is necessary for all creative accomplishment is more important now than ever – freedom to develop without expectations of outcome, freedom to challenge assumptions, freedom to take bold turns toward new directions that will shape our world in years to come.

We believe that the cultivation of new art and ideas is essential to human progress. As research-and-development labs for the arts, residency programs support artists through time, space, and community dedicated to the development of new work. Just as importantly, residencies offer artists trust, in the private moments of creative daring when ideas are most fragile, when first pen is put to paper or fingers to keyboard or brush to canvas. Trust in the creative process, without dictating outcome. Trust in an artist’s own best path to creative discovery, without setting the destination. Trust that transformation will come by providing an environment rich in inspiration, engagement with other artists, and the freedom to explore new ideas.

Time and space dedicated for creative work are gifts, for artists who struggle to carve out minutes or hours in their daily lives, who work in the kitchen early in the morning or in the garage late at night, who juggle families and jobs with precious few resources available for art-making itself.

Whether urban, community-engaged studio residencies or isolated, rural artist colonies, artist residencies are not about retreat. They are about advancement, believing that supporting today’s artists in the creation of new work is neither a luxury, nor a leisure activity, but a vital and necessary force in society.

As we reflect on 10 years of Visions from the New California, we are struck by the impact the awards have had on the dozens of artists, the participating residency partners, the Alliance of Artists Communities, and the field of artist residencies as a whole. Visions artists from years past often share how the award has transformed their careers, their creative practices, and their identities as artists. The residency partners continue to stretch themselves to reach new artists not already served by their organizations. The Alliance has used this awards program as a model for consortia around the country, bringing new resources to other under-served artists. And residency programs nationwide have taken the valuable lessons learned through Visions to better support their artists.

Most importantly, Visions from the New California has touched the lives of artists. Sarah Perry, a 2007 awardee, reflects that after a residency “you might create some-thing that would never have otherwise existed. You could discover one or two lifetime friends. You might land in your body, and find that those dark places are yours and that growth can hurt but is always worth it. You may learn that what is precious is what you left back home…. You will certainly feel grateful. I did.”
Bessma Khalaf
Multi-disciplinary Artist
www.bessmakhalaf.com

Born in Iraq and currently residing in San Francisco, Bessma holds a BA in Photography from San Diego State University and an MFA in Photography from California College of the Arts in San Francisco. Bessma was awarded a two-month residency at Kala Art Institute, a good amount of time for her to be inspired and productive. She spent most of her residency preparing and shooting *The Long Goodbye*, a 12½-hour video performance where she obstructs the frame slowly by dripping a candle until she disappears behind a wall of wax. Bessma immediately set up her studio in close proximity to the Kala gallery, which was a great way to interact with staff and visitors. “Bessma’s genuinely warm, witty, and outgoing personality drew visitors to her studio to check on the status of her time-based project involving wax and video—an unlikely combination,” says Lauren Davies, Kala’s former Director of Exhibitions and Public Programs. While
at Kala, she also began a new series of black-and-white photographs utilizing modern everyday objects as ancient tools of divination and sorcery (The Re-Enchanter series).

“The residency at Kala was the best thing that could happen to my work. It provided me with a studio that was private and easy to access 24 hours a day, which was imperative to shooting The Long Goodbye. It took me three consecutive days of shooting, so being able to come in at 2am and shoot until 7am was very important to that project.”

Kala boasts a knowledgeable and helpful staff, one that is willing and able to give constructive critical feedback. Bessma found it very helpful to have access to them, especially for technical questions. The space was perfect for her, too; private studio space allowed her to focus on her work without distraction while communal workspaces with equipment allowed her to interact with the other artists-in-residence at the time. “Thanks to the space, there were automatic interactions with other artists. Kala really provides an opportunity to be a part of a community and build a network of peers.”

“Kala exceeded all my expectations. It was wonderful to be given a studio to work in and an incredible facility. I found myself addicted to going there everyday and putting in six- to ten-hour days. Quite frankly it was hard to leave.”
John Ruszel
Sculptor / Printmaker
www.johnruszel.com

John holds a BFA with a concentration in printmaking and sculpture from Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle. His expectations for his month at Djerassi included “a beautiful landscape, interesting people, good food, a warm bed, and a space to make work. I got all of that and more: a fantastic experience.”

John’s work is the product of basic physical laws and rules: tension, balance, gravity, symmetry, and pattern. His structures are not abstractions, nor are they representations; they exist only as themselves. John might tell you that he spent most of his time at Djerassi hiking around the property and watching the wildflowers bloom. In reality, he was working through ideas and following up on sketches and diagrams he had made in the previous year. While in residence, he made plans and maquettes for most of an entire body of work for an upcoming solo show. He also completed a work entitled Manifold.

“Working at Djerassi was like my normal process, but accelerated. Without the challenges of sharing a workspace or dealing with all the little distractions of the real world, I was developing, testing, and changing ideas faster than I could generate them. I had to stop ruminating over ideas and just pull out the saw and get to work. Luckily, some of that speed and immediacy has stayed with me in the months since.”

The beautiful natural environment at Djerassi proved to be a real inspiration for John. “The change in location had less effect on my working process than it did on my mental state. I was more relaxed, more energized, and more willing to get to work in the middle of the woods than I ever am in the city.” Communal dinners and a structure-free schedule allowed for friendships and connections to happen naturally. Those connections provided important sounding boards, confidants, resources, and critics. “I have always found it enriching to see how other artists work and how they think about their work, but what I saw at Djerassi expanded my understanding of what it can mean to be an artist and how one can go about it.”

While the residency was a great opportunity to make work and connect with other artists, some of the most vivid memories John took with him include family dinners, evenings in the impromptu outdoor living room, night hikes under the near daylight of the super-moon, two bobcat visits, and working in the gentle heat of the woodstove.

“Deciding to be an artist is deciding to have a full-time creative career along with whatever other work you have to do to survive. A residency is a chance to give that career at least a taste of the attention it deserves. It is also a chance to reaffirm that decision and push yourself to a new level.”
“John is the kind of artist Djerassi is honor-bound and proud to support,” says Margot Knight, Djerassi’s Executive Director. “He took full advantage of every inspirational tool our program has to offer. He cheerfully engaged with other artists, respecting their talents as much as his own. The trails that criss-cross the redwood forests and wild coastal landscape were his stomping grounds when he wasn’t in his studio. John was a model resident, giving as good as he got.”
Justin Lowman
Installation Artist
www.justinlowman.com

Justin holds a BA in Art History from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and an MFA from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena.

Justin wasn’t sure what to expect during his month-long residency at Montalvo: “I went in mostly empty-handed and open-minded to embrace the opportunity for discovery.” Studio 50, his live/work space, proved to be the perfect accommodation for Justin. Designed in collaboration between architect Jim Jennings, sculptor Richard Serra, and writer Czelaw Milosz, Studio 50’s design matched Justin’s interests perfectly, both conceptually and formally. The space immediately inspired him and became the subject of his project.

“The architecture of Studio 50—cinder blocks, cast-glass wall units, and shear strength rods—initiated my intrigue. The expanding natural environs—hillside forest, tall grasses, and a babbling stream nearby—situated the overall context quite agreeably in contrast to the stark forms of the buildings themselves. So, specific terms of the architecture and its setting would frame the work.” Upon his arrival, he immediately cleared out the studio, assessed the materials at hand, and began to develop a work plan. “A few items found inside caught my eye: an orange, plastic bookcase; a knot of wood; and a coil of green wire wound around a 2" x 2" chunk of wood with a couple of protruding screws. As useful elements, I had also identified the drafting table and a wooden worktable which I reinforced and mobilized with wheels. Further, overhead I was attracted to both a hand-made gantry (a rigging device) with a yellow coil of rope slung casually over its beam as well as a series of black roll-up sunshades covering sections of the glass walls. The aforementioned effects comprised the positive contents of the space, and I knew they would determine the project somehow.”

Studio 50
2012, found objects, T8 daylight fluorescent lights, latex paint, plywood
“The work that I had accomplished at Studio 50 was another attempt to reconcile the givens of a specific site in order to harmonize formal and functional elements, but more importantly to frame and appreciate the presence of a space at variable moments in time. Could the architecture start to be seen as art in and of itself? Certainly a relationship between the building, its contents, and my interventions challenged such a notion.”

Since leaving Montalvo, Justin continues to process the effects of the residency and plans to utilize some of the forms he constructed there to produce similar works elsewhere. “I’m interested in how this displacement will affect their reception. Now that I know something of what to expect from such a residency, I imagine approaching another in a similar manner. As much as it was fruitful for reinforcing and realizing my own work and process, it was also enjoyable to learn about the greater site and get to know other artists and staff working there.”
Marnia Johnston
Sculptor
www.marniajohnston.com

Marnia holds a BFA from San Jose State University and an MFA from the California College of the Arts in San Francisco. She lives in Concord and works out of her studio in the Castro in San Francisco.

While at Exploratorium, Marnia was working on her project: TE+ND (Terrestrial Exploration + Nurture Designed) Rovers, an interactive art project that explores migratory ecology in an era of climate change, inspired in part by the Mars rovers. Marnia’s rovers are robotic fostering environments that care for their own garden of native plants by interacting with participants and actively seeking out light and water. Prior to her residency, Marnia crafted and built her sculptures by hand, using a variety of power tools and welding equipment when necessary. She was
able to work with the helpful and knowledgeable tech staff at Exploratorium to learn how to use their computer numerical control (CNC) router and 3D modeling software. “I knew that by using these new technologies the look of my work would change. It now has much more of a calculated and designed feel. The work is also much larger and more complicated than work I’ve done in the past and that is mostly because the residency has afforded me the time and materials to build this most fantastic, wonderful thing.”

Exploratorium is filled with interactive exhibits that meander throughout the museum and proved to be inspirational for Marnia. “Watching people interact with the exhibits at Exploratorium, figuring out how they worked, finding out how they were built, it was all so fascinating. As I began to build more interactive works, it was very helpful to see what worked and what exhibits were less successful.”

While Marnia was the only artist-in-residence at Exploratorium at the time, she was surrounded by an amazing crew of fabricators, electronic engineers, programmers, biologists, and volunteers. Fabricators demonstrated the exhibits they were working on, how they came up with their exhibit, or what new technology they used to build it. “I’ve been back to visit since leaving the residency. They’ve introduced me to other possibilities and other artists who are working along similar lines in the Bay Area. There are a lot of us interested in growing plants, local ecology, and biology and how it fuels our art. It’s encouraging to have lively discussions with other focused craftsmen that enlarge arts discourse.”

“I think with residencies the thing you always remember most is the people. I know that I can go back and rely on them for advice, inspiration, or just an ear for when I get frustrated with a project.”

Jordan Stein, the Visiting Artist Coordinator at Exploratorium, worked with Marnia while she was there. “Marnia fit right in. Her experiments in our exhibit development workshop piqued the interest of many staff scientists, engineers, artists, and designers. And her good nature and obvious commitment made her a well-liked member of the community for the summer.”
Born in Japan and residing in Los Angeles, Michiko holds both a BFA and MFA from California Institute of the Arts.

Michiko spent a full three months in residence at 18th Street Arts Center working on a series of photographs and making large-scale prints exploring Japanese flower arranging and 17th century Dutch still-life. "I used my studio seven to eight hours a day, seven days a week. I took just five days off in three months. During that time, I gained a real focus on art-making, a nice change from working full-time in addition to my art practice."

Michiko’s work takes a critical view of the culture, religion, and traditions of Japan. During her childhood in Osaka, she first observed the unequal status of "Others"—women and minority groups, immigrants from other Asian countries, and descendants from less privileged classes. "Growing up in the final years of the ‘Japanese postwar economic miracle,’ I experienced the social and cultural stimulation, as well as the confusion, of the rapid absorption of Western values by Japanese tradition. My move to the U.S. has added a global context and an external point of view to the construct of my examination of Japanese culture. My recent body of work is inspired by the historical relationship between Dutch and Japanese. During the 250 years of Japanese isolation in the Edo period, the Dutch were the only Westerners welcome in Japan, where they mutually influenced each other."

Michiko took advantage of the availability of staff and fellow residents. "I appreciate the 18th Street staff’s devotion to the artist community and their support for my residency. My room was next to live/work spaces occupied by international artists. Therefore, I had interactions with international artists daily. We often had conversations about art and life and sometimes explored the city together. Since I am originally from Japan, and with my interests in cultural differences, hearing non-American perspective about artist life was a valuable and encouraging experience. I found that this interaction also led me to think about my social role as an artist in the global context."

Since finishing the residency, Michiko has been working on a new sculptural project and video work. "I worked intensively on my photo series during the 18th Street residency so I have decided to take a short break from that project until I start another local residency program this fall."

"Overall, the support from 18th Street, the Alliance of Artists Communities, and The James Irvine Foundation really helped nurture my growth as an artist."
Headlands Center for the Arts
June 28–July 30, 2012

Suné Woods

A STILL LIFE OF FLOWERS IN A VASE
2012, lightjet, 43.5” x 60”
Suné Woods
Multimedia Artist
www.sunewoods.com

Suné has a BFA from the University of Miami and an MFA from California College of the Arts. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

Suné found that, while at Headlands Center for the Arts, what she felt she needed to work on and how she approached her work shifted from her usual practice. “I learned that my process while in residence was shaped by the studio I was working in, the environment I was exposed to, and the interactions with other artists and staff just as much as by the ideas that I was driven to investigate while I was there. The isolation, even though it was a shock to the system initially, was really helpful.

There weren’t daily distractions or responsibilities. There was a real sense of freedom.”

Suné’s month at Headlands was incredibly productive and educational. She conducted research around what she loosely calls the Siblings project. “For this project I created recordings based on conversations with family members and friends. My fellow artists-in-residence at Headlands assisted me in making new recordings using their voices. I also made drawings that inform a video piece I’m currently working on. The video piece was initiated in the ‘Family House’ at Headlands. I photographed and made video using the environment surrounding the facility, exploring/experimenting and gathering material to work with later.” Four weeks at Headlands proved to be very productive for Suné in new directions as well. “An unexpected piece that I made while in residence was a video addressing representations of power using a superhero character. Another resident shared resources/knowledge and helped me to realize this project. It was the first piece I’ve made utilizing green screen; I also worked with visual effects software that I had never used before. Having direct access to this technology in my studio was a wonderful challenge that allowed me the opportunity to experiment and utilize unfamiliar materials.”

“Suné impressed me for being highly focused about her work yet easy and gracious in her demeanor, combining with a willingness to share in detail her developing projects with Headlands staff, visitors, and other artists,” says Brian Karl, Headlands’ Program Director. “She and one other new artist acquaintance in particular found common ground by pooling technical resources and aiding one another in shooting a series of highly fanciful photographic and video images conceptualized and implemented on-site during her residency.”
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 and residency programs, to advance the endeavors of artists. The Alliance strives for a society that values creative people and process, as well as creative output; 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

Interacting with staff and other artists was a rewarding aspect to Suné’s time spent at Headlands. “The communal dinners were a beautiful aspect of the whole experience. Often the rhythm of how artists worked varied and this was the time where we were able to see everyone, engage in conversation, and really enjoy each other. Living together was also a wonderful experience and a great opportunity for exchange outside of the studios and communal meal. I built some real friendships at Headlands and remain connected and in conversation with a few of the artists. One piece that I made at Headlands was directly related to being in the same space at the same time where collaboration could evolve. The conversations and exchanges were invaluable. I wouldn’t be surprised if future collaborations with fellow residents come from this experience.”

PARTICIPATING RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

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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 Arts Center operates a variety of residencies, 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 twenty-four 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.

Since its founding in 1988, 18th Street Arts Center has featured more than 6,000 visual and performing artists in group and individual exhibitions, special events, and presentations at the Center’s popular ArtNights. Since 1992, 18th Street’s Visiting Artists in Residence Program has hosted more than 350 artists from dozens of countries around the world. These artists are in residence for one to three months at a time and their presence at 18th Street enlivens the international contemporary arts dialogue of Los Angeles.

Each year, 18th Street Arts Center seeks to stimulate public dialogue around the role of artists in society through its exhibition programming. In its main gallery, 18th Street supports funded residencies in the form of “artist laboratories” that foster exploration and experimentation. This opportunity is for individual artists or artist teams to develop a process-based exhibition, create new work, or generate provocative programming that stimulates 18th Street Arts Center audiences to question their notions about contemporary art making practices. Artists are encouraged to use the space—which is open to the public—in a dynamic capacity. For example, artists may collaborate with other artists, use the gallery as a studio, develop on-going programs and events, create installations, or modify their exhibition layout over the course of their three-month residency.

Now in its 34th year, the Djerassi Resident Artists Program offers up to 84 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. In collaboration with LEONARDO: The International Society for Arts, Sciences and Technology, Djerassi recently launched Scientific Delirium Madness, a themed residency to link artists and scientists.

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 ten to twelve artists. A private studio, housing, meals, administrative and technical support, local transportation, and other personal amenities are provided free of charge to all resident artists.

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 authentic 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 ensure the artistic process is perpetuated and valued.
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 and 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.

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, 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.”
The Sally and Don Lucas Artists Residency Program (LAP) at Montalvo Arts Center offers international artists from all artistic disciplines an environment and staff conducive to individual and collaborative creative practice. Seeking to stimulate an energetic exchange of ideas between culturally diverse Fellows and across artistic fields and scholarly disciplines, the residency has earned recognition as a model of curatorial practice supporting the development of new and challenging work.

In 1939, Montalvo’s residency began with five studios and a small gallery in the historic Villa. The LAP facility opened in 2004 celebrating LEED certified, discipline-specific live/work studios and a commons building designed by six unique teams of architects and artists. Located amidst a 175-acre natural landscape, the LAP is situated within a multi-disciplinary arts center which offers residents numerous opportunities for engagement and inspiration. While at Montalvo, Lucas Fellows are granted time for solitary exploration, creation, research and contemplation, as well as the opportunity to engage with fellow residents, colleagues, and the Bay Area community. Evening dinners, created by the resident Culinary Artist, provide artists opportunities to participate in stimulating conversations, exchange of ideas, and develop a creative network that extends far beyond the residency.

Lucas Fellows are identified through an international nomination process that ensures support for highly qualified artists who have the potential to become major voices in the next generation of creative thinkers. The residency also seeks to support underserved artists who might not find their way into a residency program. Selected artists are offered a 1-3 month Fellowship, conducive to their personal schedule and creative needs.

The LAP is a creative refuge in the heart of Silicon Valley designed to support the creative process, for those artists eager to develop their practice through experimentation and risk taking. Through a hybrid artistic program, resident artists are invited to propose projects that engage the diverse general publics of Montalvo through newly created works that respond to current and relevant themes. Lucas Fellows provide access to the creative process, allowing a deeper understanding and investment in the role of the arts in our global discourse.
In this tenth and final year of Visions from the New California, we are especially grateful to all the individuals who have been a part of this project since 2003. I would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their roles in making Visions from the New California a success:

To The James Irvine Foundation and—in particular—Jeanne Sakamoto for her guidance and support throughout this project, and Foundation President James Canales for his vision and direction for the Foundation. This is a true partnership and we are so grateful to have had the opportunity to work together in this way.

To our esteemed selection panelists—Taran Hemami, Rebecca Lowry, Alix Refshauge, and Pilar Tompkins Rivas—who gave careful consideration to all the applicants and maintained wisdom, integrity, and incredible thoughtfulness throughout the selection process.

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To Malcolm Grear Designers, who has created each Visions publication into a beautiful and fitting tribute to this project.

To Mark Greenfield and Lauren Davies, who curated the exhibitions in Santa Monica and Berkeley and took on the difficult task of creating two group shows with grace, humor, and vision. And to 18th Street Arts Center and Kala Art Institute for hosting these incredible exhibitions.

To the directors and staff of the participating residency programs—Holly Blake, Lauren Davies, Judy Freeland, Michelle Finch Hofland, Archana Horsting, Brian Karl, Margot Knight, sharon maidenberg, Kelly Sicat, Jordan Stein, Pilar Tompkins, Jan Williamson, and Pamela Winfrey—who continue to challenge themselves and each other toward the greater goal of supporting these talented visual artists.

Most of all, to all the Visions from the New California artists over the past 10 years—you have been an inspiration to all of us involved in this project and we are grateful for the countless ways you shape our world.

Caitlin Strokosch
Executive Director