



Session Two | Kudos | Djerassi News



Aleksandra Vrebalov greeted onstage by Kronos 4.

From The Artists' Ranch to The Sea Ranch

"Experience wonder with regularity." Luckily for paperwork-burdened arts administrators, this unwritten job responsibility makes mincemeat of our financial insecurities and misunderstood missions. I successfully met this job

requirement over the weekend at Kronos Quartet's (see photo, left to right: David Harrington, violin; John Sherba, violin; Hank Dutt, viola; and Sunny Yang, cello) world premiere of *The Sea Ranch Songs* by composer and Djerassi alum **Aleksandra Vrebalov (2014)**.

I am still quivering from the experience; my instinct is to say, "You had to be there." But the artists and organizers deserve recognition for creating an immersive experience that defines and elevates how the arts can create a sense of place. This is too long for a newsletter column, but bear with me. Because art matters.

Every square mile of this earth has a history - of geologic time, of its flora and fauna, of the ideas of the peoples who have made it their home. But few geographies ask that a gifted composer, intuitive video artist and world renowned string quartet express that history creatively.

Harmony with Land and Sea

In seventy minutes and thirteen songs, Aleksandra captures what is eternal to not just The Sea Ranch and its environs but the oft-elusive, hard-wired dream many share about living in harmony with nature. One of the original Sea Ranch architects, Donlyn Lyndon notes, "It was the setting for something bigger as well as for something smaller." The Sea Ranch was and is a small, but intentional, component of the continuum in the historical nautilus of the astronomical, geological, biological, and human cultural time-line.

The Sea Ranch Songs are achingly lovely in their exploration of the stars, rocks, forests and ferns. The songs about the elements and the ocean quicken the pulse. I could hear my heart pumping in time to Sunny Yang's cello as the relentless sea pounds the sand and rocks. There are nods to the native rituals of the Pomo Kashia Indians (the tribe's shaman and other tribal members attended Sunday's performance) and the earliest Russian settlers. Staccato strings mark mankind's measurements as The Sea Ranch's first buildings are built and preserved. Coyotes recorded during Vrebalov's Djerassi residency intertwine with her equally wild piano melodies to symbolize the land's rambling spirits.

The music and Andrew Lyndon's seamlessly integrated video/animation sequences focus on the constants, not on the houses that now grace the property. On the eternal. On the commons. On the sea and its creatures. On the stars. On the sea - always the sea. It is art that focuses on the vision and philosophy that guide the community. One hundred years from now, the piece could be performed and would resonate with as much truth and beauty as it did over the weekend. The work is the setting for something bigger and something smaller.

Two years ago, the residents of The Sea Ranch had the foresight to think BIG about the 50th anniversary of their 10-mile California coastal community. Under the able leadership of local gallery owner (and Ansel Adams' biographer) Mary Alinder, there have been community potlucks, architectural walking tours, lectures and even vow renewals for twenty-seven Sea Ranch couples. Iconic Bay Area choreographer and Sea Ranch resident Anna Halprin led a group in dance on the beach. And, they reached out to SF-based Kronos Quartet who commissioned Aleksandra Vrebalov to tell the community's story.

I was overwhelmed by the music and video to be sure. But I was also humbled by a community who cared enough to make the past year happen. This is a group of people whose homes are not an accident of ancestry but a geographical and

philosophical choice. These are *not* the people of Mad Men's 60s who littered public parks and sought relief from their "outsiderness." These people see themselves as *inside* the historical nautilus the community's logo represents - The Sea Ranch nestled next to the past, the future and the cosmos.

The Challenge of Success

"Now that's it has become so financially successful, it's attracted some people who sort of don't get it," worries one Sea Rancher in the sampled oral histories that comprise Vrebalov's multi-textured score. I could hear the audience's silent agreement. Sky-high lot and home prices, airbnb rentals and the passing of the first generation of Sea Ranchers are a challenge to maintaining the fragile sense of community.

The Sea Ranch Songs reminded me that you can neither invent or buy a sense of place. But you *can* invest in it. By investing in art and artists to tell their story - to literally play their songs - the good people of The Sea Ranch have secured for themselves an eternal berth in the idea of the State of California and the state of wonder. I'm a proud citizen of both.

Care and respect,
Margot H. Knight
Executive Director

Rainin Foundation Grant

The Djerassi Resident Artists Program has been chosen by the *Kenneth Rainin Foundation* for a RENEW Program grant for 2015 to support our work with artists. The grants are awarded each year and could continue annually based upon completion of program requirements.

Save This Date for Artful Harvest

Artful Harvest time will be here before you know it. Mark your calendars now. The date is **October 11, 2015**. From 3 to 7 p.m. you can experience delicious food, the amazing Pacific and sunset view, the silent auction, live entertainment and the unique creative environment found only at the Artists Ranch.

Opportunity Knocks:

Seeking Director of Major Gifts and Foundations-Deadline May 29, 2015

Do you know someone who would like to be a part of insuring that Djerassi Resident Artists Program continues its important work? Take a look and share information about what we are looking for in the newly created position of Director of Major Gifts and Foundations. <http://djerassi.org/employment.html>

Silicon Valley Creates

The Djerassi Program has been selected for partnership with [PILOT OpenIDEO Youth Fellowship](#). Working alongside high school students from East Palo Alto and Palo Alto this fall will be local artist [Melissa Wyman](#).

Students will create both at Djerassi and at their high schools. The grant was awarded by *Silicon Valley Creates* as a **Creative Impact & Audience Engagement Grant**. This unique, community-based residency is designed to cultivate and make space and time for the creative confidence of young people by building upon the network of existing local, national and international artist residencies. Our thanks to [Silicon Valley Creates](#).

Michelle Hofland Had Her Baby!



Beatrix Hofland, photo courtesy M. Hofland.

The Djerassi Program and the world welcome *Beatrix Cheryl Hofland* to our midst. Born on May 13, daughter and mother **Michelle Hofland** (Communications and Development Associate) are resting and well.

This event brings to mind a little feature we would like to add to an upcoming **ART///SKY**. We know many of our alumni have also had additions to their families. You know who you are! So please send us YOUR "Djerassi" baby photos!! We'd love to have a round-up of your progeny who will undoubtedly become future Djerassi alumni. Send you photos to nick@djerassi.org.

Carl Djerassi Memorial Fund

To make a donation in memory of Dr. Djerassi, and to help support his artist-residence vision, visit the [Carl Djerassi Memorial Fund](#).

Now for Session Two ...

After a most successful first group, our second session steps forward to accept their Gift of Time.

May 12 - June 10

Visual Arts

Garrick Imatani, Portland, OR

Axel Koschier, Vienna, Austria

Media Arts

Kelly Sears, Swampscott, MA

Choreography

Keith Johnson, Long Beach, CA

Music Composition

David Dominique, Somerville, MA

Literature

CM Burroughs, Chicago, IL. Poet

Kara Candito, Madison, WI. Poet

Vivienne Glance, Subiaco, Australia. Playwright

Ernestine Hayes, Juneau, AK. Writer

Michelle La Marca, Minot, ND. Writer

Catherine Talyor, Ithaca, NY. Writer



Session 1.2015

See [more about the artists.](#)



Fast Forward, Cameron Hockenson, 2013

Kudos

Julia Wolfe (1994) was awarded the 2015 Pulitzer in Music for *Anthracite Fields*. Read more about this outstanding achievement: <http://www.pulitzer.org/citation/2015-Music>

Congratulations go out to **M. Louise Stanley (1989)** who has been awarded a 2015 Guggenheim Fellowship for the Applied Arts.

This from **Camille Utterback (2012)**: "I am thrilled to announce the acquisition of *Text Rain*, created with Romy Achituv in 1999, into the Smithsonian Museum of American Art's permanent collection! Thanks to Haines Gallery for their support with the acquisition." Find out more about this and Camille's latest endeavors at her [Facebook artist's page](#).

April Sellers (2013) and her Dance Collective was chosen as Best Dance Performance 2015 for *BIG BABY*. The award was presented by *City Pages* magazine in Minneapolis, Minnesota. See [more](#).



House for Djerassi, Sarah FitzSimons, 2014.

Djerassi news

Nanna Mwaluko's (2011) play *Sheroe* was part of the Fringe of Marin Spring festival May 1-10. Her play *Homeless in the Afterlife* was presented this month at the third annual New Moon Short Play Festival of the Luna Stage in West Orange, New Jersey.

Michelle Jaffe (2008) participated in a three-women show during March and April at the Bosi Contemporary Gallery in New York City. The show, *Come to Bed*, was based in and around the bed as a private space.

In addition, in a note to the Program, Michelle expressed her vivid memories of Dr. Djerassi and her stay at the Ranch shared with both **Isabella Gregor and Roald Hoffman**. See more of Michelle's work on her website: michellejaffearts.com/.

Jim Haynes (2012) was in residence at MoKS in Mooste, Estonia from April 15

through May 7. Jim will be presenting several iterations for his expanded cinema piece *18 Films About Ted Serios* throughout the coming year, including SFCinematheque, San Francisco in August; and LUFF in Lausanne, Switzerland on October 15.

Leslie Hirst (2002) is attending a 10-week residency at Djerassi's cultural partner institution in Lower Austria: AIR Krems. While in Europe, she will have two solo exhibitions: *Skywriting* at Kuntsverein Baden in Baden, Austria showing through June 28. *Message Threads* opening May 30 at the Museo del Merletto in Burano, Italy and runs through August 1. See *Comings and Goings* below. More information at www.lesliehirst.com.

On May 8, **Julie Perini (2014)** presented four Bay Area showings of her film, edited during her stay at the Ranch, *Arresting Power: Resisting Police Violence in Portland, Oregon*, at the Kala Art Institute in Berkeley and other venues. The film analyzes police actions and systems in Portland and nationwide.

Fresh off the presses: *Activist Architecture: The Philosophy and Practice of Community Design Centers* by **Craig Wilkins (2013)**. Pick up a copy here <http://activist-architecture.org/> or read more about Craig at <http://sitemaker.umich.edu/clwilks/home>.

Tim Braun (2010) wrote a piece for *HuffingtonPost.com*, the online news and feature site. Entitled *The Little Yellow School Bus, or the Lessons We Take*, Tim comforts a friend's eight-year-old being sent to school on the stigmatized "short bus." Based on similar experience, Braun writes a letter to himself as an eight-year-old, dealing with the pain while adding some optimism for the future. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/timothy-braun/the-little-yellow-school-b_7148838.html

Dawn Logsdan (2012) recently edited Jenni Olson's *The Royal Road* which had its West Coast premiere at San Francisco International Film Festival. *The Royal Road* is a meditation on the past and present of San Francisco. The film had its world premiere at Sundance and its East Coast premiere at Lincoln Center's *Art of the Real*.

Rawdance's short dance film "*since you went*," which was created as part of their **(Wendy Rein and Ryan Smith) 2011** Djerassi residency, was just announced as an official selection of the Bestias Danzantes Film&Dance Festival in Santiago, Chile in

May 2015. The film has also been screened at Cinedans Festival - Dance on Screen (Amsterdam, the Netherlands), City Art Link (Linköping, Sweden), Avayava Contemporary Dance Festival (Pune, India), and in various cities throughout the U.S., including San Francisco Dance Film Festival and Dance on Camera Festival in New York City.

Trent Hanna's (2007) compositions ...*At a Loss for Words...* and *The Sun Always Rises* were performed by the senior high school band of Stuttgart, Texas, during their festival celebrating American composers.

Judy Dater (1999, former trustee), is featured in an online article at ArtPractical.com. The website explores contemporary art and visual culture in the Bay Area. Read [more](#).

Timothy Nolan's (2006, winter 2011) art is featured on the Heather Marx Art Advisory website featuring contemporary artists. See his work [here](#).

Jane Vandenburg's (2010, winter 2014) article on Mildred Howard (an award-winning artist Jane says is still underappreciated) appears in *The Huffington Post*. See it [here](#). And see a show of Ms. Howard's work in Richmond, CA, through May 24 at the Richmond Art Center.

Anthony Heinz May (2014) has a new site-specific installation entitled *Rawrenok* (a reassembly of recycled Elm tree fragments) in Roanoke, Virginia, in the heart of Elmwood Park. The sculpture was created on location - a reassembled representation of the species that used to grow in the park before renovations took place. <https://artinroanoke.wordpress.com/2015/04/25/wooden-sculpture-from-elmwood-trees-to-be-created-by-anthony-heinz-may/>



Comings, Goings & Showings

Where Are We Going To? asks Lenny Kravitz and **ART///SKY**. Give us the word on who, what, where and when! Email your upcoming art events, exhibitions, performances, premieres and/or book tours (as far in advance as possible) to nick@djerassi.org.

To follow our alumni and friends' events, be sure to check the D.R.A.P. Alumni [Facebook](#) page.

Through May 29 **Brittany Powell (2013)** *Cell Phone Photo Paintings*, small watercolor paintings based on cell phone photos. Portland Building Installation Space, Portland, OR.

May 30 **Lenora Lee (2013)** is the dancer/choreographer for *Wong Wei's Gamble*, a new four-movement musical work by Francis Wong. Fort Mason Center, San Francisco.

May 30 **Julie Mayo (2013)**, her latest work-in-progress *Novatia Tryer*, [Brooklyn Studios for Dance](#), as part of their Spring Launch, 210 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn, NY.

May 30 - August 1 **Leslie Hirst (2002)** *Message Threads*, part of this year's *Biennale*, Museo del Merletto in Burano (Venice), Italy.

May 31-Sept 19 **Naomie Kremer (1999)** *The Age of Entanglement*, San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, 560 S. First St., San Jose, CA. Featuring artist talk on June 11.



Through May 31 **Tiffany Calvert (2007)** solo exhibit Cook & Sloan Contemporary, 8371 N. Interstate Blvd., Portland, OR.

Through June 6 **Ken Urban (2012)** *Sense of an Ending*, Theatre 503, The Latchmere, 503 Battersea Park Road, London, England.

Through June 21 **Beili Liu (2006)** [Arte & Arte Foundation](#) exhibit, *Invita a Tavola - Everyone to the Table*, Pianta San Francesco, Como, Italy.

June 27 **Daniel Gwartzman (2005, 2013 winter)** Dance Company appears at the Higher Ground Dance Festival, during Dance Week, New York City. <http://nycdanceweek.org/the-festival>

Through June 28 **Leslie Hirst** *Skywriting*, solo exhibition, Kuntsverein Baden Galerie, Baden, Austria.

Through July 10 **Jian-Jun Zhang (1995)** *Jade Mountain & Ink River*, Christian Duvernois Gallery, 648 Broadway, New York, NY. See the online catalogue [here](#).

July 11 - August 23 **Lava Thomas (2003, winter 2009, trustee)** one-person exhibition. Opening Reception July 11. Berkeley Art Center, 1275 Walnut St., Berkeley, CA.

Through Dec 11 **Sasha Petrenko (2014)** [Just Passing Through: Sculptures and Installations](#) Kalmanovitz Hall Rooftop Sculpture Terrace, University of San Francisco, 2300 Fulton St.

Through January 5, 2016, **Stacey Steers' (2014)** *Night Hunter House* is featured in a group show *Showing Off, Recent Modern and Contemporary Acquisitions*, Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO.

ART//SKY May 2015

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