

2009 **Visions** from the **New California**

An initiative of the **Alliance of Artists Communities**

Supported by

the **James Irvine** foundation

Consortium of participating California residency programs

18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica

Djerassi Resident Artists Program, Woodside

Exploratorium, San Francisco

Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito

Kala Art Institute, Berkeley

Sally and Don Lucas Artists Programs
at **Montalvo Arts Center**, Saratoga

www.visionsfromthenewcalifornia.org

A BOLD INITIATIVE

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.

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

- **Armando Cid**, artist, Sacramento
- **Ramekon O'Arwisters**, Curator, San Francisco Airport Museums
- **Lorraine Garcia-Nakata**, Publisher/Executive Director, Children's Book Press, San Francisco

These panelists reviewed all of the applicants' work samples and narrowed the pool down to twenty-one semi-finalists who exhibited the highest quality of work and also represented a diversity of artistic methods, ethnic backgrounds, ages, and experiences. From this short list, six artists were selected by the participating residency programs to be awarded the Alliance of Artists Communities' 2009 *Visions from the New California Award*: a \$4,000 grant and a one-month residency at one of the participating programs.

MEET THE ARTISTS

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



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.



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.



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.



Glynnis Reed

a photographer and photo-based artist from Los Angeles

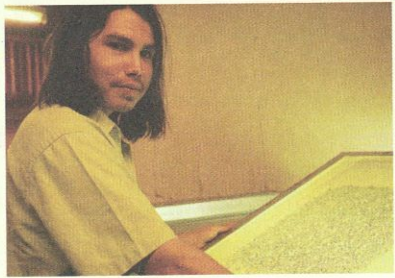
The most fruitful collaborations with artists during my residency occurred during the time I spent photographing the women who modeled for me. One resident was a choreographer and dancer and she brought so much to the time we spent together. She had endless patience, great flexibility (of body and will),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



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.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Role of Artist Residency Programs

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 artists highlight more than any other.

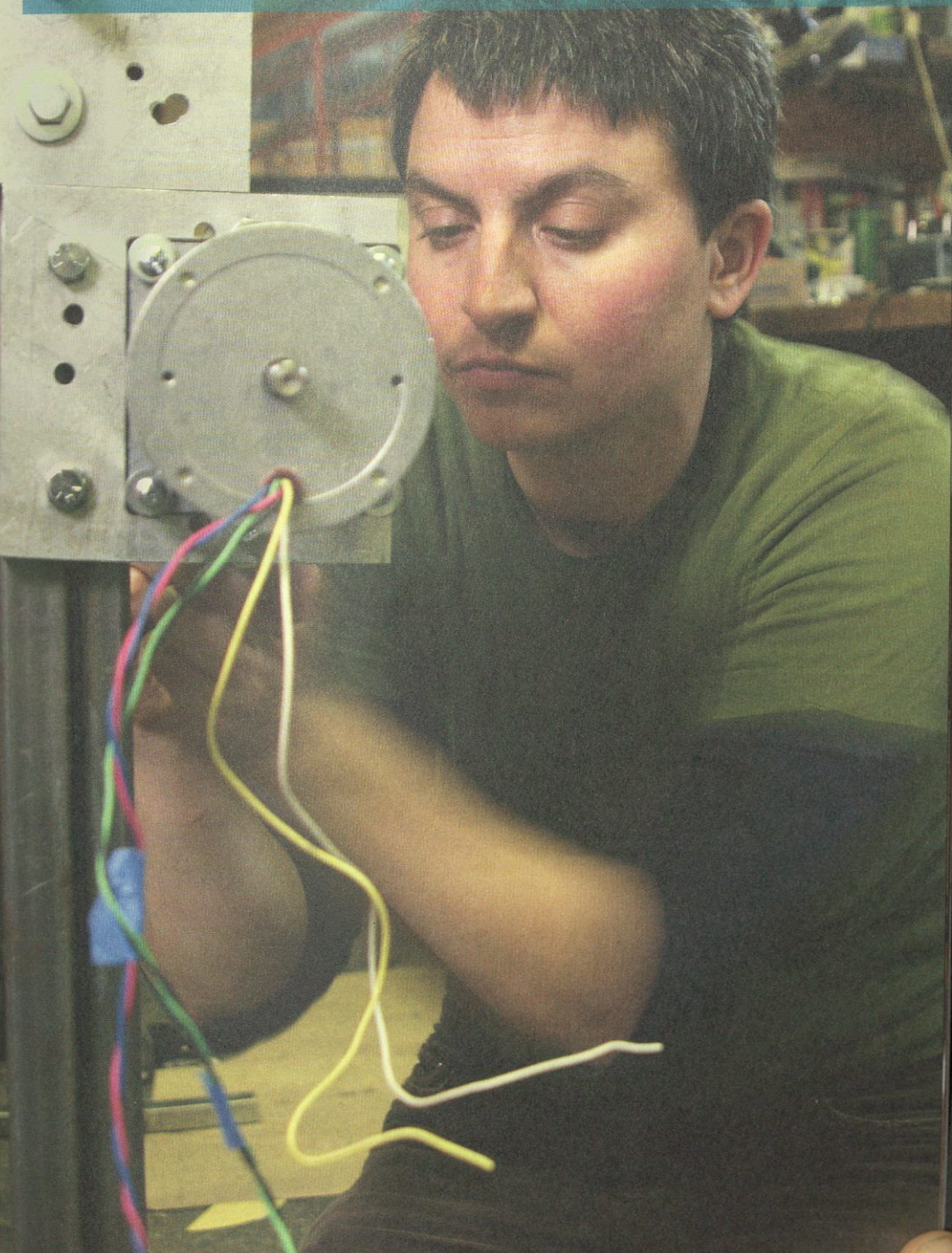
Investment in development

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.

Exploratorium

June 18–July 16, 2009

Terry Berlier



Terry Berlier

Sculptor and Installation Artist

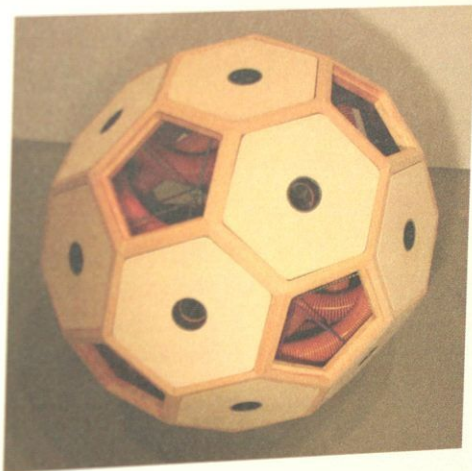
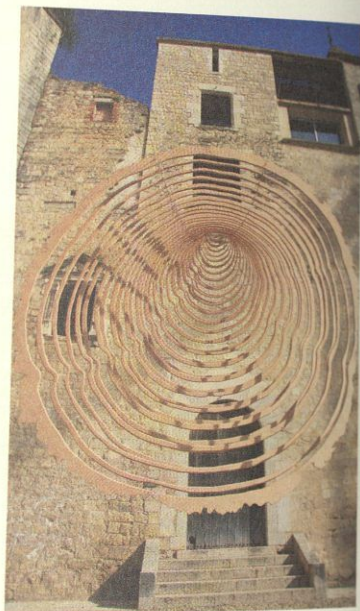
www.terryberlier.com

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.







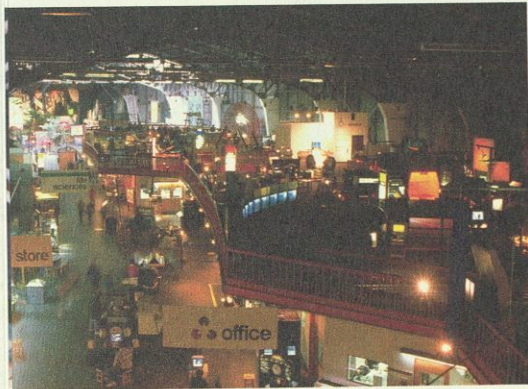
During her stay at the Exploratorium, Terry worked on her *Core Sampling* project, which involved constructing a device capable of playing audio samples from her handmade pseudo core samples. She described her time as being spent “designing, building, failing, and retrying to build the prototype.” Having 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.”

Self-Leveler (aka: Tipping Point), 2009, wood, metal, computer, wii
 Percussion Ball (interactive sound sculpture), 2010, wood,
 computer, wii, wii remote, wii motion plus, 2009, wood, metal, computer, wii

Exploratorium

San Francisco

www.exploratorium.org



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."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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 Calienes**, for his vision and direction. This is a true partnership, and we are so grateful for the opportunity to work together in this way.

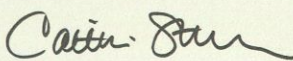
Our esteemed selection panelists—**Armando Cid**, **Ramekon O'Arwisters**, and **Lorraine Garcia-Nakata**—who took on the difficult task of selecting only a few artists from a large pool of excellent nominations.

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



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