

**MONTALVO ARTS CENTER PRESENTS
ANNUAL ARTS ON THE GROUND FESTIVAL, LAUNCHING WITH
THREADS: WEAVING HUMANITY
IN SUMMER NIGHTS SERIES
6:00pm-9:00pm, Friday, July 19, 2019**

SARATOGA, CA (12 June 2019) — **Montalvo Arts Center** kicks off its annual **Art on the Grounds** exhibition program this summer with *Threads: Weaving Humanity*, a series of newly commissioned textile works that use braiding, stitching, patching, and mending as a metaphor for weaving the threads of our diverse communities into a shared social fabric. Many of the works on view will offer opportunities for conversation about connecting through our collective humanity, including practicing kindness, compassion, integrity, respect, empathy, forgiveness, and self-reflection. This vibrant evening filled with astonishing arts, live music, performance, dancing, poetry, hands-on art-making activities, gourmet food trucks, and more will be open to community members of all ages. *Threads: Weaving Humanity* will be presented **6:00pm-9:00pm, July 19** at **Montalvo Arts Center**, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga. Admission is free. To RSVP and for more information, the public may visit www.montalvoarts.org or call **408-961-5858**.

In partnership with **Sangam Arts**, a nonprofit providing innovative platforms for artists from diverse backgrounds to collaborate on multicultural performances, the evening will feature live music and dance by local cultural organizations. This collaboration, entitled *Mosaic Montalvo*, offers attendees the opportunity to directly interact with musicians, dancers, and artists representing the cultural diversity of the Bay Area. Performing groups include **Calpulli Tonalehqueh Aztec Dancers**, **San Jose Taiko**, **Xpressions Indian Folk Dance**, **Yang Yang Chinese Dancers**, and contemporary dance company **NewGround Theatre Dance**.

Artists from all over the world will perform on the evening of July 19 for *Threads: Weaving Humanity* throughout Montalvo's historic gardens and grounds. Joining the opening night celebration is Bay Area-based artist **Ramekon O'Arwisters**, who will be hosting *Crochet Jam*.

O'Arwisters's hands-on workshop will engage festival-goers to think differently about the role of art within community and the power of art within society. Participating Fellows from the Lucas Artists Program also include: Swedish composer and instrument builder **Johannes Bergmark**; American poet and author of Marvel Comics' *World of Wakanda* **Yona Harvey**; author of *The Possibilities of Mud* (Kórima 2014) and *Bloodline* **Joe Jiménez**.

Threads: Weaving Humanity will remain on view on Montalvo's grounds through the summer and into the fall. Four newly commissioned works have been created by Bangladesh-based visual and performance artist **Yasmin Jahan Nupur**; local interdisciplinary artist **Sudnya Shroff**; multimedia artist, master weaver, and educator **Hellen Ascoli**; and **RoCoCo**, the Bay Area Collective comprised of **Modesto Covarrubias** and **KC Rosenberg**. Highly sensitive to the elements, fiber works are traditionally displayed inside the carefully controlled environments of galleries and museums. Serving as an analogy for our human vulnerabilities, these works have been placed outdoors where visitors can appreciate and witness the fragility and resilience of the materials as they interact with the natural surroundings.

In an effort to increase understanding between people of different backgrounds, **Yasmin Jahan Nupur** will create a large-scale fiber installation at the top of Montalvo's Great Lawn that will capture audiences through its vibrancy. A visual and performance artist, Nupur is seeking to respond to the social realities that form the basis of her work, influenced by the ecological and community driven aspects of life. Often depicting human relationships from various points of view, Nupur explores class distinctions and the social discrepancies people face, particularly women and migrants of South Asia. Her meticulous fiber works frequently incorporate *jamdani*, a centuries-old and disappearing fine weaving technique, which she uses to express individual and collective memories across time and space. A member of Britto Arts Trust in Bangladesh, her work has been featured in exhibitions internationally, including: *Cosmopolis #1.5: Enlarged Intelligence*, Mao Jihong Arts Foundation in collaboration with the Centre Pompidou (2018-2019); *Beyond Borders*, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester (2017-2018); the Serendipity Arts Festival, Goa (2016); the Dhaka Art Summit (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018); the Bangladesh Pavilion, 54th Venice Biennale (2013); and the Asian Art Biennale, Dhaka (2013, 2008), where she received the Honourable Mention Award for her inclusion in both editions.

Sudnya Shroff will represent her commitment to the global refugee community with the creation of her *Common Threads* installation in Montalvo's gardens. Visitors will be invited to experience Shroff's rainbow-like environment comprised of hundreds of feet of yarn and 6,000 refugee-crocheted flowers. These flowers have come to symbolize "...the tenacity of the refugee-activist collective that resists the darkness of fear, while embracing the beauty of hope." Born and raised in India, Shroff graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Electronics and Telecommunication in 1995 before moving to the US for postgraduate studies in Electrical Engineering at Iowa State University. It wasn't until 2011 when Sudnya got her break in the art world, and has since had several exhibitions in California, New York, and India. She also wrote and published her debut novel, *Unraveling*, in 2012. Her work is unmistakably influenced by her passion for the sciences and the arts.

Emerging textile-based artist, weaver, and mediator **Hellen Ascoli** lives and works in Guatemala City, Guatemala and Madison, Wisconsin. Ascoli will create a *Caravan* of flowers for Montalvo's historic gardens. This work will be comprised of handwoven saddle bags draped over small furniture pieces such as saw horses, and small constructions referencing movable markets. These saddle bags' warp will be made from thread of recycled clothing, and lined with similar materials known as *pacas* in Guatemala. *Pacas* is an export threatening the traditional weaving culture of Guatemala. Ascoli will also work in collaboration with Montalvo to craft a participatory installation where visitors can collectively create a weaving of *pacas* and other found materials. As a creative principle, Ascoli will employ the act of "thinking while making," and design a space for contemplative reflection about the struggles that refugees face at the southern border of the United States. Throughout her career, Ascoli's work has been an affective and synthetic investigation of body, object, and site.

RoCoCo Projects is the collaborative duo of **Modesto Covarrubias** and **KC Rosenberg**, who describe their practice as a "dialog of making." These interdisciplinary artists are interested in the juxtaposition of materials and response to space (architectural and natural) in their exploration of complex emotional states, semantics, equity, and contemporary culture. Their new work for Montalvo's historic grounds continues an ongoing exploration of forgiveness. At the

base of the Great Lawn sit four pedestals; atop these pedestals are three extant sculptures. The original set of four statues referenced the four seasons, however the fourth sculpture has long been missing, likely destroyed in an earthquake. The remaining trinity are often likened to the Three Graces of Greek mythology—beauty, charm, and creativity. Situated on the vacant pedestal, RoCoCo imagines the addition not of a fourth season, but of a fourth Grace—*Forgiveness, The Misplaced Grace*. “Forgiveness adds to our humanity in a way that the classical virtues cannot. Just as there is a missing statue at the foot of the Great Lawn,” the artists suggest, “*forgiveness* seems to be missing in our daily discourse and is difficult to visualize in the current and often *grace*-less world.” RoCoCo's project focuses on this coincidence in the context of reviving grace and cultivating a season of compassion, building upon prior projects that all started with a simple question: what does forgiveness look like? RoCoCo’s work most often takes form through sculptural installations, but has also included video, painting, and audience participation. RoCoCo began collaborating in 2015 and has shown their work at such venues as Mercury 20 in Oakland, and at MACLA in San Jose. They were artists-in-residence at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles from October through December 2017. They both teach at California College of the Arts in Oakland and San Francisco.

The Sally and Don Lucas Artists Program (LAP) is a creative incubator and cultural producer dedicated to investing in artists and nurturing their development and growth. It supports artists from all creative disciplines and geographical locations to create and present new and experimental work and undertake critical investigations of contemporary issues.

Montalvo Arts Center is a donor-supported nonprofit institution whose mission is to engage the public in the creative process, acting as a catalyst for exploring the arts, unleashing creativity, and advancing different cultural perspectives. Located in Silicon Valley's Saratoga Hills, Montalvo occupies 175 stunning acres and is home to the Sally and Don Lucas Artists Program (LAP), the Carriage House Concert Series, and a robust arts education program.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **Montalvo Arts Center** kicks off its annual **Art on the Grounds** exhibition program this summer with ***Threads: Weaving Humanity***, a series of new textile works that use braiding, stitching, patching, and mending as a metaphor for weaving the threads of our diverse communities into a shared social fabric. Many of the works on view will be created in collaboration with the local community and offer opportunities for conversation about connecting through our shared humanity, including practicing kindness, compassion, integrity, respect, empathy, forgiveness, and self-reflection.

WHEN: ***Threads: Weaving Humanity***: 6:00pm – 9:00pm, Friday, July 19
Arts on the Grounds 2019: Monday through Thursday, 8:00am – 5:00pm; Friday through Sunday, 9:00am – 5:00pm

WHERE: **Montalvo Arts Center**, 15400 Montalvo Rd., Saratoga

There is no on-site parking; free parking with shuttle service is available from West Valley College, Parking Lot 1: 14000 Fruitvale Ave, Saratoga (enter via Allendale Ave & Theater Way)

TICKETS: FREE

INFO: For information or to order tickets visit montalvoarts.org or call **408-961-5858**.

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PRESS: Contact Sydney Albin, Carla Befera & Co.
650.327.1200 | sydney@cb-pr.com

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here: <http://cbpr.co/press/threads>