

**MONTALVO ARTS CENTER KICKS OFF
SOCIAL: RETHINKING LONELINESS TOGETHER WITH
THE MENDING PROJECT**

September 19 – December 8, 2019

SARATOGA, CA (9 September 2019) — **Montalvo Arts Center** begins its new programmatic series *SOCIAL: Rethinking Loneliness Together* this fall with *The Mending Project*, an interactive installation featuring thread, color, and sewing as a point of departure to create meaningful connections between strangers. Originally conceived as a gift exchange, an installation that would bring strangers together in conversation, *The Mending Project* by internationally acclaimed visual artist **Lee Mingwei** premiered in 2009 at Lombard-Freid Projects in New York and has since been featured at the Venice Biennale among other international exhibitions. Participants are invited to bring an article of clothing to the exhibit, where they meet with a “mender” who repairs or embellishes the clothing while engaging in conversations, sharing stories, and taking the opportunity to learn more about a stranger. With the participant’s permission, repaired clothing is then added to the installation, attached to a colored spool on the wall, until the end of the installation when it is returned to its owner. The installation will grow as each new participant adds a personal story and piece of clothing. *The Mending Project* will be open **12:00pm - 4:00pm, Thursdays - Sundays, September 19 – December 8, 2019** 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**.

Montalvo’s new 2019–2020 programming initiative *SOCIAL: Rethinking Loneliness Together* is a series of public engagements that will invite audiences to join in a shared conversation exploring loneliness, together. Today, people are more connected than ever through social media, text messaging, e-mail, and more. Still, loneliness has emerged as a major global public health crisis. In 2017, the US Surgeon General, Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy, called loneliness the “most common pathology” he encountered in all his years of medical practice. In 2018, the UK appointed a minister for loneliness to address social and health issues caused by social isolation.

In Japan, robots designed to provide companionship are now emerging to combat rising loneliness in a country where 40% of its citizens will live alone by 2040. Through workshops, walks, screenings, exhibitions, and new artist commissions on Montalvo's grounds and beyond, guests will be able to engage with artists and find how meaningful connections can be built in a digital world.

The Mending Project aims to connect people through conversation, as participants bring clothing items in need of repair and share personal stories with menders prepared to listen. Using thread, color, and sewing as a point of departure, each "mender" will invite visitors to engage in meaningful dialogue and offer active listening, receiving, and sharing. Since its 2009 premiere at Lombard-Freid Projects in New York, *The Mending Project* has been exhibited around the world and continues to be a catalyst for connection.

Born in Taiwan in 1964, **Lee Mingwei** creates participatory installations that are open-ended experiences geared towards meaningful human interactions. Lee received an MFA from Yale University in 1997, and his work focuses on fostering trust, intimacy, and self-awareness through one-on-one encounters filtered through artistic collaboration. It has been featured in numerous solo exhibitions in such venues as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, Mori Art Museum, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, and in biennials in Venice, Lyon, Liverpool, Taipei, Sydney, and in Asia Pacific Triennials. Lee Mingwei was a Lucas Artists Program Guest Artist at Montalvo in 2009. Communicating with strangers as they eat, sleep, walk, and wonder, each of his projects is shaped by the involvement of participants, making each a unique evolving experience over the length of the installation's stay.

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** begins its new programmatic series ***SOCIAL: Rethinking Loneliness Together*** this fall with ***The Mending Project***, an interactive installation featuring thread, color, and sewing as a point of departure to create meaningful connections between strangers. Originally conceived as a gift exchange, an installation that would bring strangers together in conversation, ***The Mending Project*** by internationally acclaimed visual artist **Lee Mingwei** premiered in 2009 at Lombard-Freid Projects in New York and has since been featured at the Venice Biennale among other international exhibitions. Participants are invited to bring an article of clothing to the exhibit, where they meet with a “mender” who repairs or embellishes the clothing while engaging in conversations, sharing stories, and taking the opportunity to learn more about a stranger. With the participant’s permission, repaired clothing is then added to the installation, attached to a colored spool on the wall, until the end of the installation when it is returned to its owner. The installation will grow as each new participant adds a personal story and piece of clothing

WHEN: **September 19 – December 8, 2019**
Thursdays - Sundays, 12:00pm - 4:00pm

Closing Reception & Garment Pick-up:
2:00pm - 3:00pm Sunday, December 8

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

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/themendingproject>