

# Yaddo

NEWS | SUMMER 2018



## SPECIAL ISSUE: Yaddo Renewed

---

### The Future is Now

From foundation to roof, what's really going on behind all that Mansion scaffolding

### Lost Skills

Local artisans resurrect old-world crafts to preserve 19th century treasures for a new era

### The Yaddo Summer Reading List

David Sedaris, Meg Wolitzer, Tommy Orange and a rich array of new releases



# THE FUTURE IS NOW

Renewing Yaddo, art and soul . . .

**H**ere we are—ready for the final big lift to honor and preserve our past while building a sustainable future for the next generation of artists and writers as well as our community, from our neighbors in Saratoga Springs to our varied artists and arts professionals around the globe.

Now is the pivotal moment, as we launch a multimillion-dollar stabilization and restoration of the public face of Yaddo—our historic Mansion, which serves both as refuge for individual artists and as creative common ground, where the world's leading minds gather to share ideas, energy and imagination. Guided by our mission to provide sanctuary for artists, plans for our renewed Mansion will also allow us to host programming that brings together our artists with the general public, offering resources and access to one of the Capital Region's cultural jewels.

Of course, change requires hard work and thoughtful preparation, especially for Yaddo, which has served artists for more than a century. We've thought long and hard about this magical place, about how to embrace this transformational moment, about the kind of neighbor we want to be in our thriving, rapidly evolving upstate community.



We began in 2012 with a Strategic Plan, the culmination of many listen-and-learn sessions, consultations with experts, and several conversations with our board, artists and community. In June of 2013, we commissioned a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan, which spotlighted the structural integrity of the Mansion, calling for stabilization of the building as key to the survival of Yaddo.

Soon after, we kicked off a Capital Campaign to raise funds for the work. With a goal of raising \$10 million and with almost \$7 million already committed, we signed a contract last year to begin preparations. First

focusing on architectural investigation and life-safety issues, preparation work proceeded slowly through this harsh winter. With warmer weather came scaffolding (foundation to roof!) and the necessary stabilization of some areas before work could begin. With our plans engineered, stamped and certified, we are now ready to charge forward to renew Yaddo for future generations.

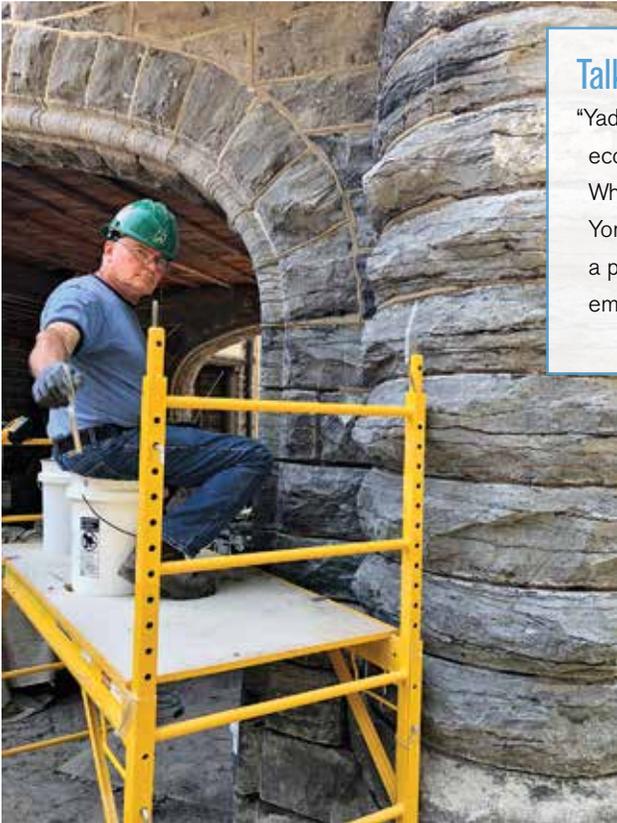
The time is now to protect Yaddo, to ensure that all it has meant to individual artists and to American culture is honored, and to go beyond that to build a version of Yaddo that is invigorated, burnished and fully prepared for our second century.



▲ To stabilize the porte-cochère, the chimney above Spencer's wing has been buttressed, while the stairwell is dismantled, with limestone pieces organized for reassembly.

## SCOPE OF WORK

The Yaddo Mansion covers 29,000 square feet and is the architectural centerpiece of our 400-acre property. The home holds 55 rooms and was built in 1893 by Yaddo founders Spencer and Katrina Trask. The scope of planned restoration is comprehensive—structural repairs, abatement, window repair and replacement, gutter and roof repairs, HVAC installation—and will include extensive work to the exterior as well as to systems that will enhance the interior livability and comfort of the Mansion. We are also bringing in all new three-phase power to upgrade the heating (and add air conditioning) in the dining room, among other common areas—as well as laying the groundwork for future upgrades.



### Talk of Our Town

"Yaddo's restoration project will assure the long-term viability of this cultural and economic resource, further promoting Saratoga and the greater Capital Region. While the arts are crucial to the economic and cultural fabric of the entirety of New York State, this is especially true in the City of Saratoga Springs. Yaddo has played a pivotal role in shaping both our region's and state's rich artistic life... and as an employer committed to working with local firms."

– Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner, letter to the Assembly of the State of New York, July 18, 2017

◀ Masonry: seams will be repointed to seal the Mansion's exterior envelope.

Windows will be removed and replaced or repaired, if needed, with spring-loaded brass weatherstripping added. With some 550 window sashes in the Mansion, this project will happen in phases, with specialists on site.



▶ Roofing from the tower—the highest point on the Mansion—will be removed, with a protective rubber membrane added. New copper and slate tiles will replace the old roof.



## LOST SKILLS



Seen through the lens of community, we know that renovation of our historic Mansion acts as an economic engine for our upstate New York region, and access to creative communities increases the resilience of neighborhoods while also stimulating investment and growth.

But we also were faced with the practical concern of who could *do* the work, especially given the detailed 19th century craftsmanship that went into creating a Victorian-era “Normanesque Mansion... with a core architectural character that is non-archaeologically derived from Haddon Hall in Derbyshire, U.K.,” that is, modeled upon a medieval manor house, per the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, which named Yaddo a National Historic Landmark in 2013. Simply put, the Trasks were great tinkerers and experimentalists; they picked stuff they liked and put it all together into

a house. Fortunately, we have no shortage of extraordinarily skilled craftspeople in our region. The Albany-based firm Lacey Thaler Reilly Wilson Architecture & Preservation is the lead on the project, with specialty fields assigned as needed. Currently, the Yaddo weathervane, made from copper and bronze, is in a workshop with Horst Around The House, a family-run business in Lagrangeville, New York, where the talented metallurgist is repairing the weathervane (replacing the missing W!) and refinishing the piece. Most of the other decorative metal work is also with Horst, whose artisans are using traditional and modern processes to recreate some

of the pieces that have deteriorated over the years, resurrecting skills required by old-world maestros to bring the Yaddo Mansion back to glory.

**TOP LEFT:** Talented artisans at Horst Around The Home, a local, family-owned business, are refurbishing the Mansion’s metal work, including the Yaddo weathervane!



## CABIN(s) IN THE WOODS

Prior to closing the Mansion for restoration, we expanded our capacity to broaden the range of experiences available to guests and to house artists who continue to be in residence during construction.



In concert with Phinney Design Group, based in Saratoga Springs, Yaddo completed five new live-work studios in April of 2016. In March of this year, Phinney won The American Institute of Architects Eastern New York (AIAENY) Honor Award for their design. Upon hearing the news, Yaddo President Elaina Richardson collaborated with Phinney on a press release and issued the following statement: “The five new live-work studios have been an outstanding success, signaling that Yaddo is moving boldly into a vibrant second century of providing support and excellent working conditions to the world’s leading writers and artists. The studios have received raves from the artists who have been in residence and have allowed us to move our facilities away from the noise of the Northway, while brilliantly opening-up hitherto unused portions of the estate. These new studios have proven to be an exhilarating and aesthetically compelling way of communicating Yaddo’s commitment to providing the highest quality environment for creative work.”

**AT LEFT:** The Frankenthaler studio, one of five new live-work spaces we completed in 2016 in concert with Phinney Design Group, which won an architectural award for the design in March.

*"Somehow the scientists always seem to get the penthouse while the artists are in the basement," observed former President Lyndon Johnson. Here at Yaddo, we elevate artists.*



## WHY YADDO?

When Katrina and Spencer Trask founded Yaddo in 1900, they had a clear and simple mission in mind—to provide the gift of space and time to artists at no cost. As importantly, they had a profound understanding of *why* the founding of Yaddo was urgent and necessary. They shared with others of their time and class a deep anxiety about social conditions, about the rise of fascism and concomitant wars, about what Katrina referred to as the “hardening of man’s soul and a growing deafness to the cries of the many and the wisdom of the artist.” Yaddo was to be the antidote. It was to offer working writers and artists sanctuary—a respite from urbanization, income inequality, the demands of the marketplace, noise, political and economic upheaval. In the 117 years since the Trasks inaugurated Yaddo, these factors have only intensified, and the need for artists to have a place of retreat to dive deeply into their work is

more necessary than ever. While at Yaddo, residents often tackle the most complicated matters of our day—from genocide to elder abuse, race relations to gender equity—using a plethora of media, and via methods both subtle and provocative, engendering hope, understanding, provocation and beauty.

Offering a safe space to explore dangerous ideas is in Yaddo’s DNA. For example, as the economic crisis of the Depression precipitated the rise of European fascism and World War II, Yaddo increasingly came to host individuals escaping the expansion of the Third Reich. The tradition of offering protective space to gifted artists continues.

Last spring, we hosted Rania Abouzeid, who writes about human rights in conflict zones for magazines such as *The New Yorker* and *Foreign Affairs*. Her first book, *No Turning Back: Life, Loss and Hope in Wartime Syria* came out in March. She overlapped with Osama Alomar, a Syrian

author who had found asylum in Chicago. At the time, he was working long hours as a cab driver, often every day, so his creative time was non-existent.

Following his residency, Alomar told us a bit about his experience at Yaddo by email: “The moment I arrived at this magical place, I got on a bike right away and began to discover the beauties of the retreat where I would spend close to two months laying the groundwork for a novel on the Syrian war. The ripe fruits of inspiration were everywhere, waiting to be harvested and turned into creative work: the studio where I stayed, whose beauty was a generous source of ideas, the distinguished artists and writers whom I was honored to meet, the evenings of music and readings that we put on, the great care and sincerity of the foundation staff in their efforts to make everything easy for the writers and artists to reach their creative goals. Yaddo is an experience that can’t be forgotten.”

# Summer Reads, Brought to You by Yaddo

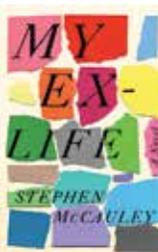
With so many great books (65 and counting!) by Yaddo authors already out this year, a rich array of summer reading beckons. Here's a sampling for your beach bag.



Another instant bestseller, **David Sedaris's** *Calypso*, his 10th essay collection, includes 21 of his deliciously dark, funny ruminations on life as an expat, health and mortality, and his beautifully bizarre family.



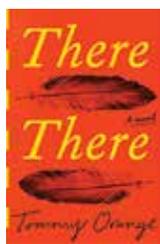
*Florida* by **Lauren Groff** (*Fates and Furies*) spans "The Sunshine State" with tales of both wild and domestic life in a collection called "gorgeously weird and limber" by *The New Yorker*.



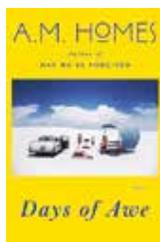
**Stephen McCauley's** *My Ex-Life* follows a long-divorced couple whose paths have once again merged. This comic novel, an Amazon Top 20 Editors' Pick, has gotten rave reviews, including one from *Kirkus Reviews* that called the book "gin and tonic for the soul."



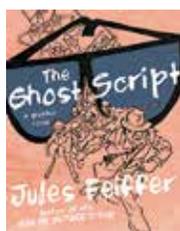
*Motherhood*, a new novel by **Sheila Heti** (*How Should a Person Be?*), focuses on an unnamed narrator over several years as she brings her candor and humor to big ideas of biology and what womanhood means in our modern era.



**Tommy Orange's** debut novel *There There*—called "an ambitious meditation on identity and its broken alternatives" in *The New York Times*—explores the contemporary experiences of Native Americans in Oakland, California.



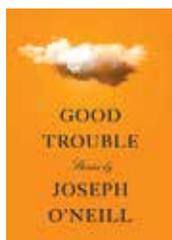
Shoppers convince a stranger to run for president; a love affair is sparked at a genocide conference; a family competition pits boys against girls. These are a few of the scenarios in **A.M. Homes's** new collection *Days of Awe*, which exposes the uneasy heart of America.



**Jules Feiffer** concludes his *Kill My Mother* trilogy of graphic novels with *The Ghost Script*, a feverish crime story set in 1950s Hollywood, where a private eye, a writer-director, a starlet, and anticommunist investigators flicker across the noir pages.

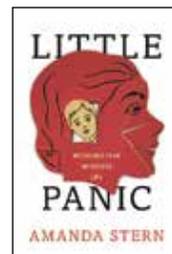


"I'd lost my sounding board, my reality check, my echo," **Jonathan Santlofer** writes in his new memoir, *The Widower's Notebook*, described by *Publisher's Weekly* as a "quiet stunner" and a "tender, resonant account of how life continues."

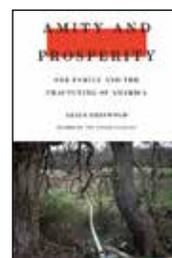


**Joseph O'Neill's** stories have graced the pages of *The New Yorker* and *Harper's Magazine*. Described by *Kirkus Reviews*

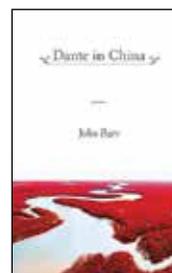
as "a thoroughly enjoyable collection in which O'Neill treats his characters with a wry sympathy and a sense of fun," *Good Trouble* is the latest from the best-selling author of *Netherland*.



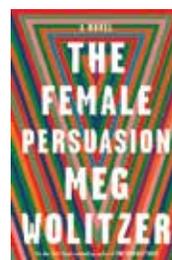
From **Amanda Stern**, a new memoir *Little Panic: Dispatches from an Anxious Life* explores life on the ledge of panic disorder in prose that's "frank and funny," per *O, The Oprah Magazine*.



Drawing on seven years of immersive reporting, **Eliza Griswold** focuses on the impact of fracking in a small Pennsylvania town and how a nurse transforms from single parent to activist in *Amity and Prosperity: One Family and the Fracturing of America*.



The ancient masters encounter the modern world in **John Barr's** inventive new poetry collection *Dante in China*, a book that poses a triple threat: entertaining, educational and enlightening.



A pillar of the women's movement mentors a shy college freshman, changing her life forever, in **Meg Wolitzer's** *The Female Persuasion*, a much-lauded novel about power, self-determination and ambition that's set to become a feature film starring Nicole Kidman.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**  
YADDO ARTIST REUNION NOV 7

With presentation of the 2018 Yaddo Artist Medal to **AMY HEMPEL**  
6-9 p.m., Harlem Stage, New York

# Celebrating Yaddo

Success! Our two biggest fundraising events of the year, **Yaddo Variations** and the annual **Summer Benefit**, together drew more than 600 supporters and raised nearly half a million dollars for the artist residency program. Newly expanded



Elizabeth Strout

to 16 events across five cities on several evenings in May, Variations brought together superstar Yaddo artists from multiple disciplines—Laurie Anderson and A.M. Homes, Jonathan Ames and Jason Reitman,

Alfred Leslie and Alexi Worth, Lisa Cortés and Victor LaValle, Michael Cunningham, Andrew Solomon, Philip Gourevitch, David Cale, Eisa Davis and more—at a series of intimate dinners and

performances (for a complete listing, please see [yaddo.org/variations](http://yaddo.org/variations)). Special thanks to our corporate sponsors Amazon and Jones Day, our generous hosts and guests of honor.

At our sold-out Summer Benefit in Saratoga on June 28th, nearly 300 guests celebrated “under the pines” on the Yaddo grounds. Special guest Elizabeth Strout spoke movingly about the importance of Yaddo’s mission to her and to all the artists who come here for the time and space to create, then entertained the capacity crowd with a reading from her latest novel, *Anything is Possible*. Thank you to



Laurie Anderson and A.M. Homes, with Variations hosts Joni and Kevin Kimberlin



Janice Lee and Michael Cunningham

all our donors, our committees, and the local businesses who gave food, flowers, and items for the silent auction. Proceeds from these two events play a crucial role in ensuring Yaddo’s residency program continues to flourish.



## IN MEMORIAM: Nancy Sullivan

JULY 3, 1929 - MARCH 18, 2018

By Peter Kayafas

As I sit to write this, I can hear Nancy saying something like, “I’d prefer you use the space to talk about what’s important: Yaddo.” Nancy was always right about how to celebrate Yaddo and how to keep herself in the background, while still being a highly effective advocate

for the arts. Even in the years after her long, influential stint as a Director and Vice-Chair, she remained a constant moral bellwether on the subject of how to fulfill Yaddo’s essential mission. She was a celebrated poet; her 1965 book, *The History of the World as Pictures*, won the first annual Devins Memorial Award. She was the editor of the inimitable volumes *The Treasury of American Poetry* and *The Treasury of American Short Stories*. She taught at Brown University and Rhode Island College, and contributed regularly to *Poetry*, *Ramparts*, *The Quarterly Review* and *The Massachusetts Review*. She had a way with words, her own and those of others.

In the introduction to the 1978 edition of *The Treasury of American Poetry*, Nancy observed that “To write against the grain of American life is to write in its grain, since the American experience has always involved controversy and diversity.” She lived her life and her decades-long commitment to Yaddo by this standard, and perhaps even more by what is represented in these lines from her 1975 poem, “Telling It”:

*Poetry is the soup,  
not the can or kettle  
wrapped around it.  
Telling it, telling it clean  
is the meat.*



**ON THE COVER:** The Mansion, primed for restoration.  
Photo by Lynn Farenell.

# Yaddo

P.O. Box 395  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SARATOGA SPGS, NY  
PERMIT NO. 52

## Yaddo

### Saratoga Springs

The Corporation of Yaddo  
P.O. Box 395  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
518.584.0746

### New York City

The Corporation of Yaddo  
20 West 44th Street, Suite 408  
New York, NY 10036  
212.307.7685

### www.yaddo.org

yaddo@yaddo.org  
@yaddocommunity  
@yaddotoday  
@yaddotoday

Design: Beth Rowen  
Printing: Velocity Marketing  
Asset Management

© 2018 The Corporation of Yaddo

## spotlight

**W**hen 29-year-old **Clyfford Still** first came to Yaddo during the Depression, he painted on small window-shade fragments because they were cheap and easy to find. These 19 oil paintings, made here during the summers of 1934 and 1935, became the basis of a major creative breakthrough: “Yaddo ignited visual energies that ultimately inspired [him] to create some of the mid-twentieth century’s most unprecedented modernist paintings,” says Patricia Failing, curator of the exhibition *A Light of His Own: Clyfford Still at Yaddo*, on view now through September 9 at the Clyfford Still Museum in Denver. A companion catalogue with full-color photographs showcases Still’s early work and his time at Yaddo, from which he drew lifelong inspiration.



PH-653, 1934. Oil on window shade, 8.375 x 10.75 in.  
© City and County of Denver / ARS, NY

**YADDO IS A RETREAT FOR ARTISTS** located on a 400-acre estate in Saratoga Springs, New York. Its mission is to nurture the creative process by providing an opportunity for artists to work without interruption in a supportive environment. Yaddo offers residencies to artists from all nations and backgrounds working in the following disciplines: choreography, film, literature, musical composition, the visual arts, performance, and video. They are selected by panels of other professional artists without regard to financial means. Residencies last from two weeks to two months and include room, board, and a studio. Yaddo’s extensive grounds and buildings were designated a National Historic Landmark in 2013.