Yaddo is reborn again, and we offer a galactic thank you for all your support in helping us restore our historic Mansion—the architectural jewel, public face, creative hub, artistic sanctuary, refuge for the world’s leading minds, and yes, the soul of Yaddo.

It wasn’t easy: It took an unprecedented $7.6 million investment, 18 months of Mansion closure and construction; a carapace of specially engineered scaffolding; rehabbing all fixtures, including our iconic weathervane; fixing 756 window sashes in 338 windows; sealing our exterior envelope with 15 tons of mortar; a new roof; stabilizing the porte cochère—a magical feat of modern engineering; adding six new bathrooms; and upgrading our entire electrical and HVAC system, among other triumphs.

What else? We’ve given Yaddo a sustainable future; now it will be here for another century. Plus, with our other updated facilities and new live-work studios, we stand to increase the number of artists we host annually by about 25 percent, up to 270 guests each year.

In June, we welcomed the public back to the Mansion for our annual Yaddo Summer Benefit. More than 375 guests celebrated the party of the season with special guest Mike Doughty; together we raised just shy of $190,000 for our residency program. The celebration will continue at our Yaddo Gala in New York City on October 3 (see Yaddo.org for details).

With this big facilities lift behind us, we’re now focused on a matter of equal urgency—access to Yaddo. We know the need for space, quiet and community is more important than ever and we are working hard to make sure that writers and artists who are invited here can actually take us up on that gift. Thanks to an inspired gift from Musa and Tom Mayer, along with others, we will offer more Access Grants to help defray such expenses as travel, childcare, lost income and supplies, and do all we can to ensure that a diverse range of the world’s most exceptional artists have a seat at our table.

And now… reporting live: Our summer season is in full swing, with poets, sculptors, composers, filmmakers, painters, writers, graphic novelists, performers and more, all here to “augment the sacred fire within,” as Spencer and Katrina Trask put it in 1900. Artists have returned in full force to the Mansion!
Hot Summer Reads, a Cool Graphic Novel, and the Mighty Pen as Sword

WAR AND PEACE
Yaddo authors brave the battlefield this season with new fiction.

The Volunteer, Salvatore Scibona’s “disciplined and symphonic … masterpiece” (The New York Times) braids the narratives of a Vietnam veteran, his soldier son serving in Afghanistan and Iraq, and an abandoned grandson. The novel, in which “hope emerges as the wildest high” (The Economist), has garnered massive acclaim.

World War II sets the scene for several new novels, including Liza Wieland’s Paris, 7 A.M., which reimagines the life of her fellow Yaddo alum Elizabeth Bishop, who traveled to Paris in 1936 and helped rescue two Jewish infants smuggled out of Germany.

Catherine Chung’s The Tenth Muse follows a math prodigy as she attempts to solve the riddle at the root of her family tree, delving into Nazi-ravaged Europe in this “powerful and virtuosically researched story about the mysteries of the head and the heart” (Kirkus Reviews).


Maaza Mengiste’s eagerly awaited second novel, The Shadow King, follows an orphaned servant who takes up arms against the Italians during Mussolini’s 1935 invasion of Ethiopia, inspiring other women to fight fascism.

LONG STORY SHORT
Rick Moody gets personal in The Long Accomplishment: A Memoir of Hope and Struggle in Matrimony. Lewis Hyde probes memory and trauma in A Primer for Forgetting: Getting Past the Past. The late Bette Howland’s grit, humor and splendor are back in print with Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage. Karen Russell returns with the uncanny, fantastical collection Orange World. Nell Freudenberger fuses science and spirituality in Lost and Wanted, a novel that takes on physics and grief. Samuel R. Delany opens up in Letters from Amherst, which includes correspondence with fellow Yaddo artists Erin McGraw and Marilyn Hacker.

WRITER ONBOARD
This spring, we welcomed Victor LaValle to our board membership. We know the celebrated author from his fiction, genre-bending literary blockbusters that fuse noir, horror and humor to thrilling effect: Slapboxing with Jesus, The Ecstatic (a favorite of rapper Mos Def), Big Machine, The Devil in Silver, The Changeling, Lucretia and the Kroons and The Ballad of Black Tom, plus Victor LaValle’s Destroyer, which recently won the Bram Stoker Award for Graphic Novel. Not only is he highly regarded critically (with honors such as the Shirley Jackson Award, an American Book Award, and the PEN Open Book Award, among others), but as his fellow board member James Siena put it: “He’s one of those rare writers everyone seems to love!”
So far this year, we’ve held several terrific events, including a few new initiatives that were free and open to the public, with an all-star roster of Yaddo artists. In January, we partnered with MLK Saratoga’s Dr. King Celebration to host Kima Jones—poet, writer and founder of Jack Jones Literary Arts—for “Empowering Artists of Color.” Recently, we celebrated Stonewall 50 with “Yaddo Inspirations: A Queer Look Through Generations,” held at The Cell in Chelsea with Emmy-nominee Leigh Fondakowski (The Laramie Project) and a panel of artists: Glendalys Medina, Doron Langberg and RK Pérez. Our “Yaddo Presents” series in partnership with Northshire Bookstore opened with Amy Hempel in conversation with Yaddo President Elaina Richardson. In May, “Yaddo Variations” returned: Our national benefit series of intimate dinners and conversations featured acclaimed Yaddo artists Amitava Kumar, Sigrid Nunez, Meg Wolitzer, Melissa Meyer, Patty Volk, Neal Thompson, Jonathan Santlofer, Richard Price, Walter Kirn, Andrew Sean Greer, Joseph Keckler and John Kelly and raised more than $128,000 for our artist residency program.


**YADDO REMEMBERS: Jo Andres**

Filmmaker, choreographer, artist and Board Member Jo Andres was one of our multimedia pioneers, integrating dance, light projections and film in her work, which was featured in downtown New York City hotspots like LaMaMa Experimental Theatre Club, The Performing Garage and PS122 Gallery during the kinetic ’80s. She first came to Yaddo as a film and video artist in 1998, and was elected to our board in 2009. Among other films, Jo directed the indie-favorite Black Kites, adapting portions of Izeta Gradevic’s diary of time she spent confined during the siege of Sarajevo, early in the Bosnian war. Jo shot the film in her basement in Brooklyn, with roles played by her husband, Steve Buscemi, and son, Lucian. She once described her aesthetic style as “perceptual mischief,” and many of her artworks are on view on her website, Joandres.com. Jo, who passed away in January, was a great friend to Yaddo, an inspiration to other artists, and a vital force in our community. She will be missed!
New Age for Opera

Opera is all the rage lately with new works out by both emerging artists and maestros—along with a few surprising librettists. This spring saw several hot-ticket premieres: Composer Tarik O’Regan’s The Phoenix—a drama about Mozart’s scandalous collaborator—debuted at Houston Grand Opera and was dubbed “sublime, incantatory!” by Houstonia magazine. Tom Cipullo’s The Parting, a lauded rumination on the life of Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti, premiered in Seattle and San Francisco.

Literary authors and composers traded places: Daron Hagen released a memoir, Duet with the Past, while A.M. Homes wrote her first libretto, Chunky in Heat, a coming of age story about a Los Angeles girl struggling with body image and sexuality. With music by six composers, including her fellow Yaddo alum Paula Matthusen, the opera debuted in June. Of her experience, Homes told Opera Wire, “It’s like a ride at an amusement park. I want to do it again!” Colm Tóibín also earned librettist stripes with Winter Journey, an oratorio that follows an emigrating family and opens October 4 at Teatro Massimo in Palermo, Sicily.

In mid-July, Sahra Motalebi will be at the Whitney Biennial for a two-week immersive installation of Directory of Portrayals—an open-form opera with text, maquettes and video as well as live performances.

On the horizon are some cool commissions: Missy Mazzoli is adapting George Saunders’ Lincoln in the Bardo for Metropolitan Opera, which will also present one of her chamber works at Brooklyn Academy of Music. Michael Sam Korie and Stewart Wallace are collaborating on two projects: a new version of Harvey Milk for Opera Parallèle San Francisco Contemporary Opera and Supermax for Opera Saratoga, only a short distance from Yaddo!

Mark Your Calendars:

Our Artist Reunion will be held in November, with presentation of the 2019 Yaddo Artist Medal to Alfred Leslie. Stay tuned for details on Yaddo.org.

VISUAL SMARTS

Lisa Warren—recently elected to our board—is a painter and visual artist based in New York and Connecticut. She received her MFA from Yale University and BFA in Painting from Rhode Island School of Design. Her work has appeared in solo and group shows nationally at venues such as the Center for Contemporary Art, NJ, the A.I.R and Trestle galleries in Brooklyn, NY, and Mattatuck Museum, CT, among others. Forthcoming in February, her exhibition of new work will be on view at Standard Space in Sharon, CT. She recently finished a commission by NU Hotel in downtown Brooklyn, painting a mural based on the life and work of her fellow Yaddo alum, Truman Capote. “I’m inspired by him,” She told us. “He once said, ‘anyone who ever gave you confidence you owe them a lot!’ While finding this both impossible and true, I’ll say thank you to Yaddo for giving me the added confidence so needed to sustain a life dedicated to art.”
On the cover: Illustration by Pat Palermo

Yaddo
312 Union Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

First a guest at Yaddo in 1979, Martin Puryear is representing the United States this year at the Venice Biennale with “Liberty/Libertà,” an exhibition of new work on view through November 24. Thus far, the eight sculptures have received rave reviews from many outlets, including The Wall Street Journal, which called the show “a fusion of soul-stirring political content and galvanizing, beautiful form.” Seen by some critics as a battle between light and dark, the new work from one of our nation’s most distinguished sculptors (and the 2016 recipient of our Yaddo Artist Medal) draws on themes of justice, race, class and a divided nation striving for redemption.

Martin Puryear, A Column for Sally Hemings

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.

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