• **Seriously!**  
  Resilience, laughter,  
  and making art in challenging times

• **Speak up:**  
  *Shadow // Yaddo* and  
  the best podcasts around

• **It’s a Wrap:**  
  Books for everyone on your list

• **Our Virtual Art Auction Slayed**
RESILIENCE?

Boy, has this been The Year of Coffee. As in, More please. We have so badly missed having artists here at Yaddo. Our buildings and grounds are aching for their return.

To that end, an update: 2021 will be our do-over year, with invitations issued to those whose residencies were postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on a survey of artist availability, and with the assumption that we’ve learned enough these past months to mitigate the risks of Covid transmission, the first residency invitations will be issued soon. We gauged comfort level among returning guests and put new policies in place to protect our community. We’re doing everything under the sun to create a safe, supportive environment to welcome guests back to Yaddo despite global upheaval and unprecedented difficulties.

In short, we are facing the greatest challenge to the arts in our lifetimes. We know that individual artists, many of whom were already “living on air,” have been hard-hit by economic uncertainty. It’s a time of tumultuous change coupled with a long overdue movement demanding racial and social justice, with artists and arts organizations frequently on the frontlines.

In October, AEA Consulting—the group that helped Yaddo develop our Strategic Master Plan—released a report detailing how arts organizations have been impacted by and are responding to Covid-19, proposing that “however the U.S. emerges from the immediate crisis, it will be into a less predictable and more turbulent operating environment; a need to engage with virtual content in a systematic and strategic way as a permanent part of artistic creation and distribution; a greater openness to experimentation and innovation; and a realization that … social impact will be paramount.” The report goes on to suggest that flexibility and resilience offer the best path forward into a future of unknowns.

This is not the first time Yaddo has weathered crisis. As you may know, the original mansion burned to the ground and was replaced by the current iteration in 1893, with the Tiffany phoenix emblazoned above the fireplace: “Famamis invicta per ignem Yaddo resurgo ad pacem” or Unconquered by flame, Yaddo is reborn for peace.

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NONFICTION FOR TRUTHSEEKERS

1 Life and Times

Post and performer Pamela Sneed’s Funeral Diva is a Black, queer Bildungsroman collected in poems and essays that trace both the author’s early life in an AIDS-ravaged New York City and an adulthood marked by state violence, invoking Hannah Arendt and Beyoncé with equally effortless verse.

20th Century Legends

In Max Jacob: A Life in Arts and Letters, Rosamaria Warren tenderly covers a poet often neglected historically for his homosexuality and ethnic Judaism who she argues constituted “a larger force in the creation of modern French literature than has been recognized.” Jacob’s friendship with a young Pablo Picasso defined his life, and the champagne toasts among literati to the mystic silence of a Benedictine community, until his tragic death in a Nazi transit camp.

FICTION FOR STORY-SEEKERS

Contemporary Responses

In Danielle Evans’ sensual collection of stories, The Office of Historical Correcrions, seven discrete excavations of longstanding social ills pulse with acerbic precision. Anchored by an enigmatic mystery novella that follows a Black scholar on assignment to a synching site, Keke calls this follow-up to Evans’ exciting debut “gripping on every level and brilliantly crafted.”

Digital Revolutions

In The Arrest, Jonathan Lethem’s latest timely trawl of the American psyche, Sandy Duplessis (aka The Journeyman) receives a visit from his extraterrestrial college roommate after a major disaster wipes out both television and the internet. As the two former Hollywood writers joust through a bleak, analog landscape in a nuclear “supercataclysm,” Sandy realizes there may be ulterior motives to their journey.

POEMS FOR ALL

Dazzled by the whimsical chance at existence and dazzled with a faith that the world honors and fulfills the love we give it, Vincent Katz’s Broadway for Paul finds comfort as unheralded as zipping up a winter coat. Katz’s verse-biographical poem collection, Steeped in phenomenological pondering encompassing both a cosmic and deeply individual scale, A Treatise on Stars by National Book Award Finalist Mei-mei Bresenbrugge covers vast distance with gentle ease. Katz weaves prose with expansive lines wind from the natural world to the viewpoints of thoughts, leaving trails of connective tissue that manifest a communal eeriness.

If Men, Then...

If Men, Then... is the second poetry collection from Eliza Griswold, submits a searing eye to the twenty-first century’s self-inflicted ills and answers them by relinquishing the ego. Griswold balances an unflinching spotlight on the passage of violence across continents and cultures with a persistent inquisition of what it means to exist.

Desiree Alvarez’s Ruff of Flame merges the historical with the personal and familial. Tracing the lineage of colonial power’s rampage through Central America, Alvarez writes from her own perspective as easily as she gives voice to indigenous works of art. Knowing on the door to history with a warrant for its grave sins in hand, this collection is an insistently alive elegy.

Fiona Sze-Lorrain’s Rain in Plural is a lush and intimate study of the porous boundaries of personal life. Inflected with quiddity and hardened by rigorous examination, Sze-Lorrain’s careful eye ranges over landscapes both within and outside the self, mining language for new entry points.

Stumped in the challenges of safely and effectively opening the dialogue that is essential to the understanding and intent behind poems that have dazzled generations of readers.

New releases by Yaddo authors offer something for everyone on your gift list.

Poetry

Heather Clark’s Red Comet: The Story of Blazing Art of Sylvia Plath is a comprehensive study of the singular poet’s enduring and complex legacy, tracing Plath’s youth, ambition, and marriage as means to understand the context and intent behind poems that have dazzled generations of readers.

The Beat of Me, the new collection from David Sedaris, underlines the malevolence of petty cruelty as well as his refinement and nurturing of that ability to lighten any darkness very judgements.

Sedaris’ The Best of Me, who stalks hungry girls, and skinless men. Machado’s signature eye for the artwork of renowned painter Doug Nufer’s multi-lingual poetry palindrome, ART BOOKS FOR VISIONARIES

2 Prayed Threads

An endless Arctic night frames a couple’s weary search for an orphanage to approve their adoption in What Happens at Night by Peter Cameron. A laud and surreal account of desises lost in pursuit of connection, this new novel unfurthnichly maps the space between hearing and moving forward.

Maryse Meier’s debut novel The Seventh Mansion follows Xie, a fifteen year old expelled from her Southern California high school for nascent antematial activism. Via Xie’s ensuing creeping alienation, Meier investigates the divergences between ethics and selfhood, and the balancing act they demand.

BOOKS FOR IMAGINATIVE TECIES

American Dreaming

Novelist and essayist Porochista Khakpour returns with Brown Album: Essays on Exile and Identity, a meditation on her family’s immigration to Los Angeles after fleeing the Iranian Revolution. Khakpour investigates the presence and absence of Americanization within her own adolescence, as well as across the Iranian diaspora.

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Shadow
Yaddo
Read. Listen. Tinker.
Walk a mile in another’s narrative, with Yaddo artists as your guide.

On September 17, we launched Shadow // Yaddo hosted by Elaina Richardson, with the aim of shining a light on the transformative vision of Yaddo’s artists through conversations about art, literature, activism, ecology, inspiration and daily life. A terrific roster of Yaddo artists have contributed so far, including Sheri Fink, Oddi Donald Odita, Jonathan Lethem, Victor LaValle, Mary Gaitskill, David Thoreau, among others. We’ve enjoyed these podcasts, which an American cruise ship commodore describes as “an epic book that’s about a real life theater.” Check out playwright Trish Hamlet’s fictional madcap adventure about an American cruise ship that tries to rebrand following a disastrous event. The lively script is performed by actors and was commissioned by The Play Company.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

MORAL REASONS TO TUNE IN!

Several Yaddo artists have podcasts:
Here are some we find especially galvanizing.

1. Rancho Thatchmo
Photographer and visual artist Thatcher Keats hosts this broadcast of secret lists, poems, journal entries and curated readings from literature, journalism and popular culture. A wide and diverse group of contributors record segments in the field.

2. The MS Phoenix Rising
Missing live theater? Check out playwright Trish Hamlet’s fictional madcap adventure in which an American cruise ship commodore tries to rebrand following a disastrous event. The lively script is performed by actors and was commissioned by The Play Company.

3. Whirlwind
From tensions during the Cold War to the fall of the Soviet Union and Russian meddling in our 2016 election, Pulitzer Prize-winning and bestselling author Tim Weiner is joined by former HKB, FBI and CIA officials for this 10-part documentary series that unravels U.S. relations with Russia.

4. The Moment
This broadcast explores pivotal moments that fueled creative careers with host Brian Koppelman, who interviewed Elvis Castillo, Mike Campbell (Tom Petty’s creative partner), Suzanne Vega and Judd Apatow, among other luminaries.

5. TK with James Scott
Hailed as “New and Notable” by Apple, this offering by author James Scott (The Kept) explores writing and editing with literary all-stars, agents and book lovers.

6. In the Atelier and Thoreau’s Leaves
Author M. Allen Cunningham (The Green Age of Asher Witherow, Lost Son, Perpetua’s Kin) hosts a couple of podcasts, one featuring audio essays about literature, writing and the life of the imagination, and the other focused on the world and work of Henry David Thoreau.

7. The Unspeakeable
Our favorite contrarian Meghan Daum (How to Misspent Youth, The Problem with Everything, Unspeakeable) challenges prevailing cultural and moral assumptions, with candid interviews of artists, scientists, entertainers and others.

8. JAMIE CARO
is an attorney who specializes in securities law. She transitioned early in her legal career to work in the beauty and wellness industries and found a niche writing for and collaborating with company founders to bring to fruition their creative visions while also complying with complex regulations. We’re delighted to welcome Jamie, who brings her enthusiasm for the arts, for creators and for Yaddo, to our board.

9. BRIDGET FAWCETT
is a powerhouse in the finance industry. She’s the Global Head of Strategy for Citi’s Banking, Capital Markets and Advisory business, where she is responsible for global strategy, client engagement and business development efforts. She has spearheaded women’s equity and inclusion initiatives and has been involved with various nonprofits, including the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) and the Berkshire Theatre Festival. Plus, she speaks Russian.

10. WARM WELCOME
This fall, five new Members were elected to our Board.

11. JUDD APATOW
is an interdisciplinary visual artist whose electric work blends photography, installation, fashion, surface-design and sculpture. He was born in Washington, D.C., then relocated to Barbados, followed by moves to The Bahamas, Belgium and finally (we hope) the Bronx. Inspired by architecture, behavioral psychology, cognition and technology, Mark’s research-focused work has been exhibited in Amsterdam, Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados, Breda, Glasgow, Kerkrade, London, Maastricht, Miami, New York, San Francisco, Vancouver, and Washington, D.C. He’s been a favorite Special Assistant to the President (SAP) among artists here at Yaddo.

12. MANUEL SOSA
is a Venezuelan American composer whose orchestral and chamber music has been performed in North and South America, Europe, and Asia. He has collaborated with pianists, dancers, and sculptors in the creation of multimedia environments, and has received a fellowship from the John S. Guggenheim Foundation. Manuel generously translated from English to Spanish the application guidelines for artists on our website. He has been an artist in residence at Yaddo several times, most recently in 2019.

13. MARK KING
is an interdisciplinary visual artist whose electric work blends photography, installation, fashion, surface-design and sculpture. He was born in Washington, D.C., then relocated to Barbados, followed by moves to The Bahamas, Belgium and finally (we hope) the Bronx. Inspired by architecture, behavioral psychology, cognition and technology, Mark’s research-focused work has been exhibited in Amsterdam, Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados, Breda, Glasgow, Kerkrade, London, Maastricht, Miami, New York, San Francisco, Vancouver, and Washington, D.C. He’s been a favorite Special Assistant to the President (SAP) among artists here at Yaddo.

14. CANDACE WAIT
is the former Program Director of Yaddo, where she spent decades as “the chess grandmaster,” observed novelist and Board Member Allan Gurganus, in a retirement tribute he wrote in 2017. Candace came to Yaddo in 1981 following a career as a newspaper reporter and theater and dance critic. “I recall my first sight of Candace,” Gurganus continued “You knew at a glimpse this young woman was as assertive to false sentiment as she was full of feeling. She has proved a true democrat, a brilliant judge of character, someone unusual in being as idealistic as she is practical.” We are delighted to welcome Candace back to Yaddo!
TIP OF THE ICE

A monumental installation on our precarious relationship with the natural world

Nature can play wonderful tricks on us—we are soothed by the sound of the ocean, though we know its turbulent fury is washing parts of our world away. We have an aha moment courtesy of a snow-topped mountain, subliminally aware that there’s less ice on the peak than ever before. Yaddo artist Blane De St. Croix, teases us with such prosaic dissonance then reaches for the sublime in How to Move a Landscape, his astonishingly ambitious show at MASS MoCA, on view until September 6, 2021. Based on decades of research and first-hand visits to places such as the Gobi Desert and the Arctic, this current exhibit makes inspired use of the triple-height enormity of MASS MoCA’s galleries. Mixing landscape painting, video, sculpture and research data, the rooms are both sobering and inspiring. If you can’t go in person, you can learn more about the artist and download the insightful exhibition guide at www.MassMoca.org.

Yaddo

Yaddo Remembers

Jim Silberman was a revered book editor who worked with many esteemed writers including Hunter S. Thompson, John Irving and Yaddo authors James Baldwin and Betty Friedan, among others. In 1986, he was elected as a Member of our Board and later went on to become a Director. He coordinated our first appeals to the publishing industry and chaired many committees for Yaddo. In 2004, Jim and his wife, Selma Shapiro, endowed a residency for a writer, which is awarded bi-annually and has supported residencies for such acclaimed writers as Zia H. Rahman, Gish Jen and Gary Shteyngart, to name a few. Jim was “a natty dresser, a dashing wheelman (he became an amateur pilot at 50 and drove a Mazda RX-7 convertible sports car on weekends) and a scrupulous wordsmith who at 86, even after suffering a stroke, finished editing two books” (The New York Times). As an editor he sought to “help the author write the best book he or she can write at that moment in time,” he once said. This summer, he passed away at his home in Manhattan at age 93 following complications from a stroke. We will miss him and are forever grateful for all his contributions to Yaddo.