

We want to hear your

voices

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO SAY?
WRITE A LETTER OR AN ESSAY!

Please follow these guidelines
for consideration:

1- Letters should respond to
SN&R stories or local issues.

2- Letters can be a maximum
of 150 words.

3- Essays should focus on local
issues.

4-Essays can be 550-600 words
and must not be previously
published.

5- Email your letters and es-
says to foonr@newsreview.com



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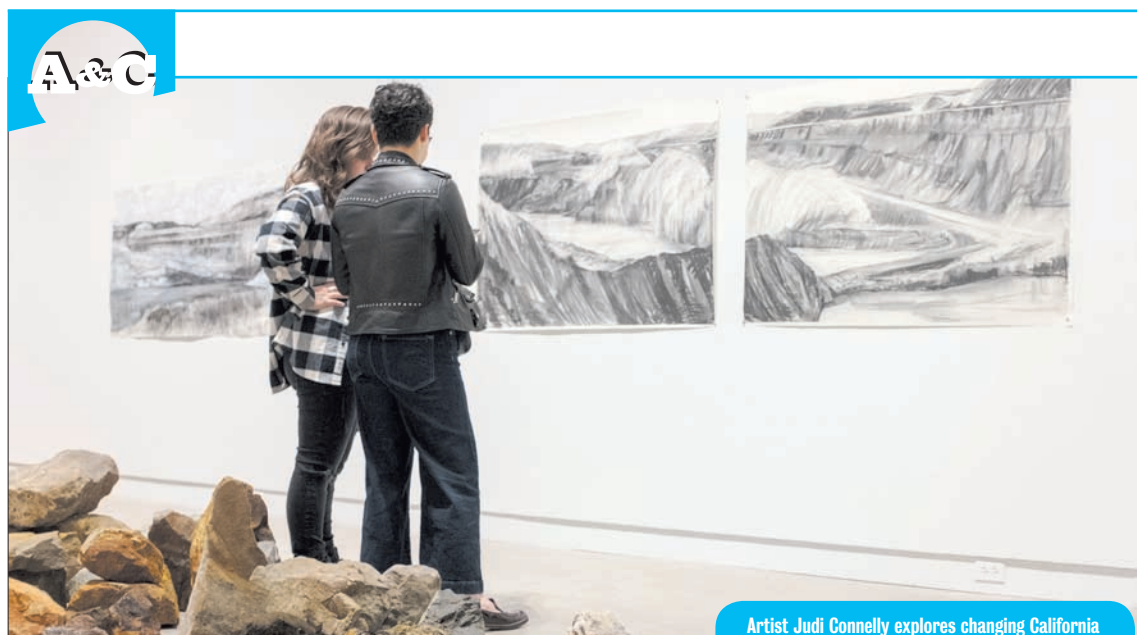


PHOTO BY PATRICK HYUN WILSON

Artist Judi Connelly explores changing California
landscapes.

In memoriam

BY PATRICK HYUN WILSON

As a developer and humanitarian, Ali Youssefi drove the development of the Warehouse Artists Lofts on R Street, served as a board member at Verge Center for the Arts and was a key figure in the redevelopment of Sacramento's K Street.

Youssefi lost his battle with cancer and passed away on Mar. 10, 2018, but his legacy continues to influence and guide the arts in Sacramento. Ali's sister Ladi and wife Azzie formed the Ali Youssefi Project, and with the help of Verge, put together its first initiative last spring.

"Ladi and Azzie asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in his name," says Liv Moe, founding director at Verge. "Then they decided like, 'What are we going to do with this and how are we going to use that fund to make a difference doing something that he cared about?'"

They announced a three-to-six month-long artists in residency program, which would provide studio space at Verge and a \$500 monthly stipend, and culminate in an exhibition at Verge.

The inaugural recipients, local artist Jodi Connelly and New York artist Michael Pribich, were chosen by a panel of judges including Ladi Youssefi. Their exhibitions opened on Dec. 14.

"They both have a lot of confidence in their work and in the message that their work sends," Ladi says. "I thought that they were using art as way to convey a message, and to me that's the most powerful kind of art."

Connelly's show—titled *Before You Were This Place, You Were Another Place*—encapsulates her search for transformation in her art and the connection she has to the environment.

"I moved here from the East coast, so when I got here, I was really interested in how different the land is and how brown everything is most of the year," Connelly said. "When I learned that 90% of the grasses

in Northern California are non-native or invasive species, I was hooked."

Connelly worked with the McLaughlin Natural Reserve, spending days removing a 600-foot line of non-native grass and replacing it with native grasses.

The work resulted in a time-lapse video documenting the changing landscape, which is screened in front of a bench set up next to bushels of the removed grass. Projected high over the bench, sunrise and sunset rapidly speed by as a thin path cuts through an expansive landscape of golden brown. The image evokes a strong sense of the massive amount of labor that the project required.

Michael Pribich's exhibition *Backstitch* explores local agricultural labor, the shift from hand to machine and Sacramento's colonial history.

"The idea that I developed—a process called de-weaving where I started taking the bags apart—is kind of a metaphor for de-weaving history," Pribich explains.

Unraveled bulk bags, restitched into tapestries adorned with orange and black trim, hang from the walls. On it, printed words such as "rice" or "walnuts" take on abstract forms divorced from their original meaning.

"I have a physical process that I'm doing, but I'm thinking about the history of the Valley and how histories were changed, language was changed, people were moved and the place was colonized," Pribich says. "My art is trying to look at the possibility of a decolonized setting."

Ladi hopes that the initiative is the first of many to bear Ali Youssefi's name and carry on his legacy in Sacramento's arts community

"I just hope that we can keep growing and be able to reach more creatives and innovators and artists in Sacramento and beyond," she said, "and develop the artists in residency program, but create other initiatives that add to our community to continue to keep Ali's name going." □

Check out two new shows by artists Jodi Connelly and Michael Pribich at Verge Center for the Arts, 625 S St., vergeart.com. Through February 16.



12/26 • 7:00 PM **SCROOGED**

12/27 • 8:30 PM **HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE**

12/28 • 2:00 & 7:30 PM **SELENA**

12/29 • 2:00 PM **ALADDIN**

1/2 • 7:00 PM **INDIANA JONES & THE TEMPLE OF DOOM**

1/3 • 7:30 PM **GREASE**

1/4 • 6:30 PM **THE BIG LEBOWSKI**

1/7 • 7:30 PM **CONAN THE BARBARIAN**

1/8 • 7:00 PM **BLUE HAWAII**

1/12 • 2:00 PM **TOY STORY DOUBLE FEATURE**

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