now hear this!

an exercise in listening

july 21–october 22
monday–sunday, 10am–5pm
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is a brand new outdoor exhibition featuring five commissioned site-specific works of sound-based art, created by distinguished national and local artists Taraneh Hemami, Walter Kitundu, Hugh Livingston, Shane A. Myrbeck & Emily Shisko, and Stephen Vitiello.

Through a series of immersive soundscapes and interactive sound sculptures, we invite you to experience Montalvo’s picturesque grounds in new ways and listen more attentively to the world around you. Some works provide counterpoints to the sounds of Montalvo’s park and explore the complexities of communication in the natural world—often unheard and unseen by us. Others unsettle the relationship between natural and fabricated sonic realities. Some participating artists use the human voice as a sonic tool to explore the reverberating presence of those no longer with us or to imagine how listening and making your voice heard can help build intimacy and shared community. All of the assembled works use sound to disrupt our habitual sense of place and space and invite us to listen differently.

*Now Hear This!* also features the launch of *Soundings: Lucas Artists Composer Fellows*, a new series of immersive audio walks providing visitors with the opportunity to explore Montalvo’s grounds while listening to a diverse range of sonic work by Lucas Artists Fellows and their collaborators.

This exhibition is presented as part of the Lucas Artists Program’s Art on the Grounds initiative at Montalvo Arts Center. Art on the Grounds is a commissioning and exhibition program providing artists with opportunities to develop and present works of art in the context of a 175-acre public park. Learn more about the exhibition and the Lucas Artists Program by visiting [montalvoarts.org/nowhearthis](http://montalvoarts.org/nowhearthis).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of our lead sponsor, the Marcus Family Foundation.

Additional support provided by the Jo and Barry Ariko Fund for Artistic Programs • Center for New Music • Jennifer & Philip DiNapoli • Foundation for Contemporary Arts • William and Flora Hewlett Foundation • Istituto Italiano di Cultura San Francisco • Wanda Kownacki • Sally & Don Lucas • National Endowment for the Arts • David and Lucile Packard Foundation • The City of Saratoga • Stoneman Studios • Colleen Wilcox & Richard Ressman • Mitchell & Kristen Yawitz.
Hemami has created an interactive sculpture installation designed for visitors to share messages, stories, lullabies, secrets, and shouts. Located in Montalvo’s Italianate Garden, the work draws inspiration from technologies like the voice pipe and speaking tubes—artifacts from an earlier communications revolution that preceded the invention of the telephone. Working in close collaboration with metalwork artists and fabricators Grant Irish and Michael Svendsen as well as sound artist and acoustician Shane A. Myrbeck, Hemami has crafted an installation that consists of reflective stainless steel tubes of varying lengths designed to convey sounds of varying pitches and tones. In Persian, *yek seda* means “one voice” or “shared sound/voice.” Likewise, Hemami intends for her sculpture to be a place for visitors to come together in the spirit of play and curiosity to combine their voices, listen, and be heard. Please play with the sculpture!

**Taraneh Hemami** is a multidisciplinary artist whose work often serves as a platform for interaction and engagement, personal reflections, and public actions. Her diverse practice includes site-specific installations, glass work, sculpture, textile production, and community-driven projects that primarily address themes of displacement, memory, and representation within the Iranian-American experience. She is a recipient of a Eureka Fellowship from the Fleishhacker Foundation and a Kala Fellowship Award from the Kala Art Institute, and has received awards from Creative Capital, Creative Work Fund, Center for Cultural Innovation, and the California Council for the Humanities. Her works have been exhibited at various venues, including the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Southern Exposure, the Boghossian Foundation, and others. They are also included in the permanent collections of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Read more at [taranehhemami.com](http://taranehhemami.com).
Nafasi Yako Ni Ya Kijani (Your Place is Green) consists of a handmade rocking chair installed on a low circular deck on Montalvo’s expansive Great Lawn. Visitors are invited to take a moment for quiet reflection and listen to the sounds around them. When activated, the chair engages a mechanism that transmits a radio signal to small receivers hidden in the trees surrounding the lawn. Brief compositions and field recordings, voices, and other sounds emerge from drum-like vessels suspended in the boughs above. The work is intended to be experienced in more than one way and will reveal itself to people strolling around Montalvo’s grounds quite differently than to the person activating the piece from the chair. The title, *Nafasi Yako Ni Ya Kijani*, is a translation into Swahili of an Iranian saying meaning “there is grass growing where you should have been” and pays homage to those no longer with us; whose lives and contributions can still be heard resonating around us—if we only listen.

Walter Kitundu is a sound artist, installation artist, and inventor of original musical instruments called *Phonoharps* (hybrids of turntables and stringed instruments) that navigate the boundary between live and recorded performance. Many of Kitundu’s installation projects reflect his ongoing interest in the interaction between technology and the natural world. His work has been exhibited and performed at such national and international venues as the Science Centre Singapore; Gunnar Gunnarson Institute in Iceland; Walker Art Center in Minneapolis; Museum of Craft and Folk Art in San Francisco; and the Auckland Arts Festival in New Zealand. He has been an artist-in-residence and visiting faculty member at both Northwestern University and Columbia College. A 2008 MacArthur Fellow, he lives and works in Chicago. Read more at kitundu.com.
In recent decades, ecologists have uncovered how trees communicate with each other: through expansive underground fungal networks of mycelium. This hidden communication has been found to be a symbiotic infrastructure of resources, passing nutrients, defense signals, and even acknowledgment of kin. Inspired by this research, Myrbeck and Shisko have created Hyphae—a multichannel immersive sound installation on a switchback trail leading from the Lucas Artists Residency to Montalvo’s upper grounds—that interprets the structure of the mycelium networks used for communication in our forests. Combining field recordings with electronics, the work consists of three sonic movements, each an abstraction of parts of this process. In the first movement (Sirens and Fire), the trees receive a warning signal from the outside world; movement two (Mycelium) is alive with electricity, imagining the communication protocols underground; the third movement (Trees Speak) is slow and sonorous, meant to transport the listener to the alternate perception of time experienced by our forests. Mycelium are interpreted visually by strands of material arranged in a form inspired by the filaments (or hyphae) of the fungal networks.

Shane A. Myrbeck is a sound artist, composer, and acoustician living in Oakland whose work explores the visceral and immersive nature of sound through spatial audio display, architectural form, and multisensory phenomena. His work has been exhibited at such venues as the World Science Festival, the Huntington Gardens, California Academy of Sciences, the Contemporary Jewish Museum, and on the streets of San Francisco. Read more at shanemyrbeck.com.

Emily Shisko is an Oakland-based composer, performer, and educator. Her current works live in the intersection between traditional compositional methods and experimental and electronic performance and installation practices. Recent commissions include Fathom: Self Assembling Music, an interactive exhibit completed during an artist’s residency at San Francisco’s Exploratorium, and A Wilderness of Sea, for Resound Ensemble. Read more at emilyshisko.com.
Hugh Livingston •  
*Birds of Invention: A Field Opera*

Livingston presents a unique sonic menagerie of invented birds in an installation located in Montalvo’s Italianate Garden. After recording the dawn chorus of native birds in the nearby foothills, Livingston used a software algorithm for audio detection to extract the rhythms of their song. He then mapped alternative sound samples, including identifiable local soundmarks that reference the region’s history, ecosystem, and vital cultural voices onto these extracted rhythms to create newly invented “birdsong.” The work is presented using audio transducers mounted on very large resonant glass plates. Graphic elements painted on the glass surfaces reference real and imagined natural histories of Montalvo’s environs, in addition to notations describing the intricacy of bird vocalizations. Keep an ear out for an upcoming family-friendly workshop where visitors will invent their own birdsong to be added to Livingston’s menagerie. Check [montalvoarts.org](http://montalvoarts.org) for more details.

Based in Oakland, Hugh Livingston is a performer, composer, and sound artist who creates site-specific, immersive sound environments and performs exploratory cello music. Livingston was a 2012 McKnight Foundation Fellow Composer in Residence in Minneapolis with the American Composers Forum, and is the recipient of numerous grants from such foundations as Rockefeller, Getty, Doris Duke, Andrew W. Mellon, Walter and Elise Haas, and others. He composes situational music in which he responds to spaces, landscapes, history and people, and has created public sound environments in gardens, museums, galleries and resonant spaces. Currently a 2017-2018 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow, Livingston has been an artist in residence at the Dumbarton Oaks Gardens in Washington, DC; Fort Mason Center for Arts and Culture at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area; among others. Read more at [livingstonsound.com](http://livingstonsound.com).
Stephen Vitiello •
Taking Sound Cues from Wings

Vitiello presents a multichannel work in Montalvo’s Lilian Fontaine Garden Theatre that will play at timed intervals throughout the day. The work is a sonic response to the script and musical score for the 1925 play Wings by Joseph S. Thompson, which Vitiello discovered in the collection of Montalvo’s Phelan Library. Vitiello describes being drawn to “an art deco-inspired drawing on the cover depicting beautiful winged creatures flying over mischievous spiders and script notes describing such actions as, ‘the curiously syncopated theme of the earth bugs.’” Created in collaboration with French horn player Dan Callaway, cellist Nora Krah, flautist Jane Rigler, violinist Sara Soltau, and Foley artist Shelley Roden, the resulting piece is a theatrical, vibrant sound installation not intended to illustrate the play but envisioned as a companion piece filled with the fabricated flutter of wings, padding steps through a spider’s web, and a propulsive musical track. Taking Sound Cues from Wings animates a space that—aside from scheduled concerts—sits empty. The work conjures various associations including plays that could have been performed there, live broadcasts of radio dramas in the 1920s, and movie soundscapes. The work includes a takeaway program with original artwork by Orla Mc Hardy (pictured above), inspired by a collage created by Vitiello, which he based on uncredited artwork on the cover of Wings.

Stephen Vitiello is a visual and sound artist and electronic musician. His sound installations, photographs, and drawings have been exhibited at museums and galleries including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The High Line, New York; and 15th Biennale of Sydney, Australia. His works are collected by the Museum of Modern Art, Lyon’s Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others. He has performed nationally and internationally at locations including the Tate Modern, London; the San Francisco Electronic Music Festival; and the Cartier Foundation, Paris. In 2011, ABC-TV Australia produced the documentary Stephen Vitiello: Listening With Intent. He has received notable awards including an emerging field Creative Capital grant as well as a Guggenheim Fellowship. Read more at stephenvitiello.com.
Presented in partnership with Detour—an immersive audio walking tour platform—*Soundings* is a curated walk that brings the concert stage to the great outdoors. We invite you to explore Montalvo’s grounds while listening to a diverse range of sonic work by Lucas Artists Composer Fellows and their collaborators. *Soundings* features works by some of the US’s leading contemporary composers, many of whom have been lauded for their innovative approach to music and sound. Participating composers include Carmina Escobar, Mike Gamble, Motoko Honda, Wayne Horvitz, Jen Shyu, Henry Threadgill, Theresa Wong, and Nina C. Young. This new digital platform allows for synced listening, where visitors can enjoy the immersive auditory experience with friends and family on their personal smart phones. To listen to *Soundings*, download the Detour app and make your way to Montalvo’s Box Office Pavilion to begin your tour.

Through November, join us for Open Access: your unique opportunity to connect with Lucas Artists Fellows and visiting artists. Don’t miss this exciting series of events that excite and engage guests in the creative process. Check out the schedule at montalvoarts.org/openaccess.

Plus, get behind-the-scenes access to the Now Hear This! artists—along with invited guest artists and current Lucas Artists Fellows—by visiting the Open Access blog at blog.montalvoarts.org. With interviews, articles, essays, and photos, the blog is a window into the creative incubator that is Montalvo’s Lucas Artists Program.
ABOUT THE LUCAS ARTISTS PROGRAM

MISSION AND HISTORY
The Sally and Don Lucas Artists Residency Program (LAP) offers artists from a range of disciplines an environment conducive to individual and collaborative creative practice. Seeking to stimulate an energetic exchange of ideas between culturally diverse Fellows and across varied artistic fields and scholarly disciplines, the residency has earned international recognition as a model of curatorial practice supporting the development of new and challenging contemporary work.

LAP FELLOWS
Prospective LAP Artist Fellows are identified through an international nomination process that ensures support for highly qualified artists with the potential to become major voices in the next generation of creative thinkers. The residency also seeks to support underserved artists who might not find their way into a residency program. Nominated artists are invited to submit their work, which is then juried by professionals in their respective fields. Selected artists are offered a three-month fellowship. The LAP welcomes over sixty artists a year into the program. Residencies are offered in all contemporary artistic disciplines, including the visual arts, design, literary arts, film, choreography, performance art, music and composition, as well as culinary arts. The LAP also welcomes artists’ collaborators from overlapping fields, including science, research, and technology.

LAP PROGRAMS
LAP Fellows enjoy unique access to the resources of Montalvo Arts Center, enabling them to present their work to Silicon Valley and Bay Area audiences. As a creative incubator and presenter, the LAP both supports its Artist Fellows to create new work and offers presentation opportunities. This can take the form of new commissions on and off site; exhibitions in Montalvo’s Project Space Gallery and on its grounds; and participation in monthly Open Access public programs. The LAP is dedicated to the idea that arts and culture should be at the center of creative and innovative thinking about the pressing concerns, questions, and controversies of our times.

MAKE A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE
As a member-supported non-profit organization, Montalvo relies on the generosity of donors in order to serve the Silicon Valley public with arts education and arts-related public programming throughout the year. Sign up today at montalvoarts.org/membership or call 408-961-5849.

SPECIAL OFFER: When you join at the $250+ level and reference Now Hear This!, you will receive a special invitation to a dinner at the Lucas Artists Residency, where you will meet current Artist Fellows over a delicious meal!
@montalvoarts on #social_media
Share your photos, videos, thoughts, and sonic adventures.
We can’t wait to hear what you think!

@montalvoarts #NowHearThis