

## FALL CONTRIBUTORS



### **Leela Cyd** | Writer & Photographer

Leela Cyd (“Where People Create,” page 72) is a photographer and writer based in Santa Barbara. Her focus is on food, travel and lifestyle. She shoots for publications such as *New York Times*, *Kinfolk*, *Food & Wine* and *Organic Life*. Cyd also runs a video production studio with her husband under the banner David Lee Studios, making shorts for social media. She has created a cookbook, *Food with Friends—The Art of Hanging Out*, to be published by Clarkson Potter in Spring 2016.

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# where people create

inside the  
inspiring homes of  
extraordinary artists

**WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY LEELA CYD**

Santa Barbara, with both environmental and academic assets—the coastal breezes, surrounding mountains, big blue sea, energetic university and vibrant city college—has beckoned artists with its bounty and geography for a long while. The artists featured here enjoy Santa Barbara as their oasis; they all show in places farther afield and travel for inspiration, but what they have in common is coming home to this relaxed environment, an ideal location to traverse the tricky balance between living well and holing up in the studio to create. Exploring their homes and personal styles is as inspiring as viewing their sculpture, paintings, videos, drawings and archival prints.

Clockwise from opposite left are the studio spaces, homes and works in progress of artists Maria Rendon, Jane Gottlieb, Hannah Vainstein and Nathan Hayden, and Joan Tanner.







## maria rendon

Maria grew up in Mexico City and moved to the U.S. more than 25 years ago. Coming from a large family of seven children, she was determined to go to Los Angeles and study design—she eventually got into Art Center College of Design in Pasadena and has lived and worked in California ever since. Maria taught at Art Center for many years and worked as an illustrator, before turning her attention toward fine art and earning her MFA at UCSB last year.

Her current work has to do with surface, paint, transformation and the concept of “ugly pretty.” Her large and small-scale paintings (Maria sometimes paints on post-its) on paper have sheer and opaque layers of paint in cellular, nebulous, womb-like forms. Maria makes deliberate marks as well as pools of pigment and water, leaving the paint to dry and the elements of the composition to chance. It is this overnight transformation she enjoys so much in the process, where acrylic paint, time and air mingle to create their own mark—imbuing the work with a sense of chance imperfection.

The palette of recent paintings dances between grays, muted tones and electric neons as well as pastels, and there are hints of figurative form, but mostly the circular, curvy shapes take you into their abstract embrace. Maria’s work investigates an edge of “ugliness,” demands the viewer to see beyond the pretty billows and transparencies and into the washes that go awry, the edges that meld and mash up with disparate colors, where lines and beginning/ending marks are blurred. For Maria, imperfection is more interesting than perfection and evokes a feeling we share as humans—the mix of good and bad, beauty with discomfort. It’s a haunting, yet beautiful sentiment; the resulting paintings share the same description.

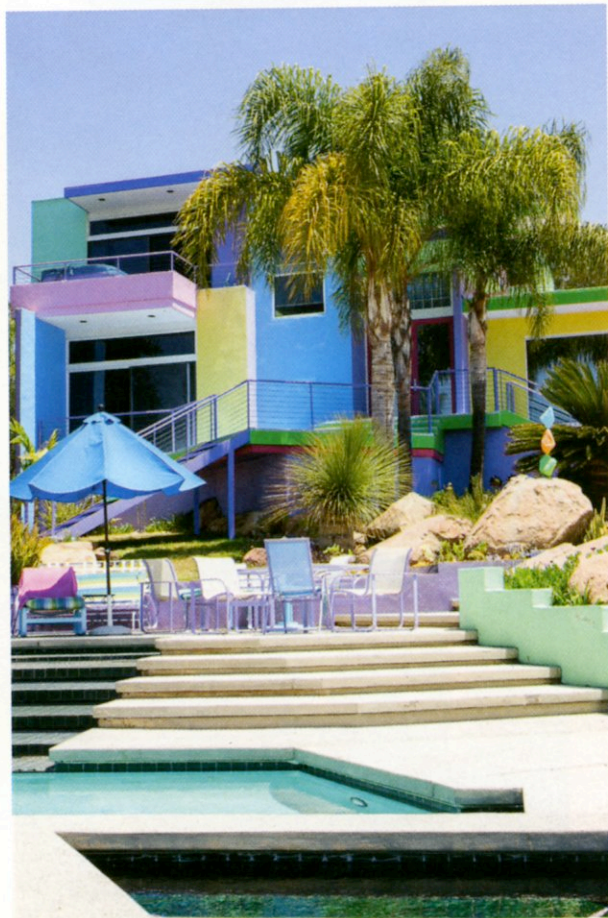
Maria lives with her art director husband, Robert Giaimo, and their 15-year-old Fox Terrier, Mimi. Their home reflects their mutual interest in all things Latin—Italy and Mexico are strong design influences—as well as the desire to be cozy and comfortable. The home dates back to the 1930s and has had four owners, none of whom made major structural changes, so the air of old school Santa Barbara Spanish style architecture is still very present in the tall vaulted ceilings, curved entryways, tiled floors and built-ins perfect for displaying art collected from friends, fellow artists, travels and former students. The vibrant warm hues of the walls are a dramatic backdrop to these works, collected over a lifetime of working in art.



Clockwise from opposite left: Maria Rendon in repose, in her studio. This wall features one of Maria’s favorite collections of Mexican Milagro paintings. Maria’s kitchen has a collection of pottery from Mexico and Italy. Maria’s view from the entryway into her dining room features some of the same color palette as her paintings.



Clockwise from opposite right: Jane Gottlieb's dining area and a peek into her kitchen. The entryway showcases Jane's work and a few pieces of her extensive hand-blown glass collection. A view of the house from the pool. Cuddles greets guests. Jane and Pepper in her studio.



## jane gottlieb

Jane Gottlieb's work and home exist in an amazing Technicolor dream that even Joseph and his coat would envy. Jane grew up in Los Angeles, then lived in the Bay Area, Italy, New York and Santa Monica before moving up to Santa Barbara 18 years ago with her husband, David Obst, a film producer, writer and literary agent.

Jane is equal parts painter, photographer and, most important and perhaps a more apropos term, colorist. She began her career painting Cibachrome prints of her images created all over the world during her life as a commercial photographer, traveler and art director. Now Jane has embraced the digital age, creating vivid paintings and collages in Photoshop using her extensive archive of imagery as her jumping-off point, resulting in limited-edition archival prints on paper and, more recently, aluminum. Color is really Jane's medium; the vibrancy of her palette is visually arresting, bright beyond measure and relentlessly joyful. A major aspect of Jane's work is the base images she uses—slides, mostly 35mm, some wide angle and an occasional fisheye, shot from 1970-2005, which have a strong graphic quality and dynamic composition. She's a wonderful photographer, and the resulting paintings she creates on top of these images retain those compositional qualities—only the colors are larger than life, completely unnatural and totally playful. There is an irreverent sense of exploration in terms of color—bright, seemingly incongruous, yet artistically compelling—and memory, using images shot more than 30 years ago and bringing them back into the conversation, that drive Jane's practice.

Jane's home is an extension of her expression as an artist. It's as if one of her prints came to life, the electric colors and bold shapes leaping off the aluminum and into shelter form. Tucked away in the foothills near Sheffield reservoir, after a long and winding road up the mountain, lies Jane and David's oasis, the bright lavender gate and multicolored building rises above the brush and brown grasses like a giant cartoon-colored tropical bird. The home was built more than 20 years ago; Jane opened up a lot of the walls and repainted them in her signature highly saturated palette. Her furniture is mostly mid-century Italian pieces that she's reupholstered to suit the various incarnations of the home. With the acquisition of several adorable dogs, the walls have gotten darker over the years (easier to cover wear and tear). Jane's collections of 1950s Italian glassware, vintage bathrobes and intricately hand-painted jewelry boxes all have dedicated shelving and are displayed throughout her home. Her work occupies most of the walls' real estate and complements the bold space perfectly.











# joan tanner

Joan has lived and worked from her Montecito studio, set upon a rambunctious tangle of drought-tolerant plants and large-scale sculptures laid out to pasture, since the early 1970s. The home dates back to the mid-1920s (records were lost in a fire) in a classic Spanish adobe style, with untreated redwood ceiling beams, original mahogany wood floors, whitewashed walls and several patios to unwind with a glass of wine at the end of the day. The décor is an eclectic hodgepodge of furniture, mostly purchased at secondhand stores, handmade by friends, cast away by family members and collected over a lifetime of scouring flea markets and garage sales.

Joan's art collection is lavish; nearly every wall surface contains a treasure she created herself, or made by friends, students and colleagues, including works by Richard Dunlap, Karl Petrunak, Nathan Hayden, Keith Puccinelli, Wayne McCall and Dane Goodman. It is the controlled, stylish chaos that make this home a rich visual feast—a place you cannot stop drinking in, no matter how many times you visit, as Joan scuttles around in the kitchen to create a cheese plate or pour a dram of whiskey.

Joan is tireless in her own work—she pursues any medium relevant to her current vision. She began her career about 50 years ago as a painter, then moved to assemblage made from a mixture of unlikely materials such as screens, wires, screws, lint, plywood, plastic containers, apples and more—no hardware store or junk pile was safe from Joan's curiosity—then on to photographs of these assemblage pieces and now to large-scale installation works, with a site-specific piece being shown in Seattle at Suyama Space from January 18–April 16, 2016. Drawing has been a continual thread throughout her lifetime of art making, her sometimes calculated and often wildly messy lines and gestures relate implicitly to whatever sculptural forms are going on in the studio. The drawings act as a tool to imagine, rework and re-see the interactions and potential between the over-10-foot-tall pieces.

The large installation she's preparing now involves several pillar shapes, wrapped in sand paper, industrial tarps and construction netting with a number of troth-like trapezoidal forms created from plywood, sheet metal and wires. The forms will hang from the ceiling at various heights, some kissing the floor, others suspended higher. Nothing quite fits together seamlessly; the hinges and joinery are purposefully off, creating an uncomfortable, yet dazzling, slightly unhinged experience for a viewer. Joan is not interested in the slick, but rather the notion that things are coming undone or just hanging together. The forms are strange in their mad max visceral sense of material (like a Home Depot acid trip), formidable and oddly elegant.



Clockwise from opposite left: Joan Tanner in her studio. Joan's living room workstation, the large navy painting is by Richard Dunlap. Joan's kitchen has a vintage Wedgewood stove and wallpapered cabinets. The art-inspired drawing room with a view into Joan's living room.





## hannah vainstein & nathan hayden

Nathan Hayden and Hannah Vainstein are an unstoppable duo—both are fine artists as well as life-stylists, the line between their work, home, garden and practices is a blurry one, each activity feeding the other in a symbiotic circle. To be invited into their studio, a converted garage to the side of their 19th-century colonial home, is to also be treated to the coziest cup of British style tea (loads of milk and sugar) served in a beautiful mug (likely made by Hannah) and then an invitation to linger for a homemade lunch of tabbouleh and fresh fruit tart, all the while discussing work, life and the intersection that makes up their practices.

Hannah's work takes on many different forms throughout the year. Her ideas are largely informed by seasons—in fall and winter, beeswax candle dipping, as well as knitting and weaving; in spring and summer, painting, performative works and hosting workshops outdoors come into focus. She runs creative workshops and a vintage boutique through her artist salon, the Lower Lodge. Ceramics and video are also a constant thread in her work.

In her latest series of watercolors and videos, Hannah explores the notion of paradise and traces the word back to its etymological root definition, the exquisitely manicured gardens and menageries of Persian Kings. Often women are represented in these cross-cultural paradise notions, and Hannah reinterprets these figures and their lush environments into a contemporary context and location. Many of the trees she features in the paintings are grown in Southern California, where she is from. Hannah creates her own mythology surrounding these women, often goddesses, with the episodic videos, wherein a loose narrative guides viewers through a supernatural world where snakes, sacred plants, geometric shapes and dancing figures co-mingle and interact in a hypnotic looping animation.

Nathan's work is an equal mixture of surprise, pattern and vision. He employs many different mediums, seeing them all as drawings—sometimes they manifest in 3D, on felt as paintings, in detailed large-scale pattern-driven installations and as tiny cards painted on watercolor paper (ranging from baseball-card size to postage stamp), the backs of which are scrolled with imaginative phrases that titillate rather than illuminate the viewer as to the drawing on the front of the card.

For his paintings, Nathan makes most of his paint from materials close to his home (gathered on daily beach walks or mountain treks), as well as collected from all over the world by him-

Clockwise from bottom right: The couple, who have a dance troupe as one of their many shared interests, dance the afternoon away to an old record in their living room, where Nathan Hayden's sculptures hang from the ceiling. More views of the living room, where Nathan's paintings adorn the walls (ink on felt), a wild bouquet of local wild flowers Hannah Vainstein created sits atop the table, and a cabinet showcases a myriad of found/gifted treasures.



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Hannah Vainstein begins a painting by outlining a grid on canvas. Below, inside Hannah and Nathan's shared studio.





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act of making his own paint imbues each piece with a sense of place and a restricted earth-toned palette. The imagery and forms Nathan sculpts, draws and paints are related to the earth, sun, growth and architecture, and all subjects are depicted in a stylized hieroglyphic-esque style. Nathan has created a visual language to react and engage with the natural world, its rhythms and particulars that is not unlike an ancient depiction of life cycles. His work is a dialogue with the physical realm, explaining and symbolizing it in many forms, but there is definitely an air of the supernatural at work as well. Nathan's spell is strong, and one can happily get lost in the finest gesture within a character on a card or immersed in a room of overwhelming black and white pattern play.

Hannah and Nathan's home, "the carriage house," thus named because it was the garage and the chauffeur's home for two large mansions in the Mission Canyon area of Santa Barbara, was built in the 1890s. Its colonial style, with tall ceilings, ornate moldings and large wood porch, stands out as unusual in the city so dominated by Spanish architecture. Most of the couple's furniture is from the mid-century, found on Craigslist or by scouring thrift shops. Little treasures such as sage, gems, shells and feathers, all found on walks, are scattered throughout the home, carefully placed atop a shrine-like altar or within an ornate cabinet of curiosities. The large plants give off a natural sense of life and place, the wooden vintage furniture and dramatic artwork on every wall (including local artists' work such as the drawings of Eric Beltz and paintings by Jane Callister) create a romantic bohemian vibe that is irresistibly cozy. Enjoying the breezes from the porch or wandering through the vegetable garden, there's nowhere nicer in Santa Barbara to be than here, sipping on one of Hannah's signature greyhound cocktails. ✨

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### LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE ARTISTS:

**Jane Gottlieb**, [janegottlieb.com](http://janegottlieb.com)

**Nathan Hayden**, [nathan-hayden.com](http://nathan-hayden.com),  
[thelowerlodge.com](http://thelowerlodge.com)

**Maria Rendon**, [mariarendon.net](http://mariarendon.net),  
[mariarendon.com](http://mariarendon.com)

**Joan Tanner**, [joantanner.com](http://joantanner.com)

**Hannah Vainstein**, [hannahvainstein.com](http://hannahvainstein.com),  
[thelowerlodge.com](http://thelowerlodge.com)





Top, Hannah Vainstein contemplates her next project, which could be just about anything given that her multi-disciplinary practice includes animation, performance, painting and exploration of everyday ritual. Below is another view of Vainstein and her husband Nathan Hayden's shared studio space, also known as The Lower Lodge, which hosts, promotes and participates in cultural events in Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, New York, London and Berlin, with the aim of fostering a local and global creative community.