



Bia Gayotto, *Somewhere in Between: Silicon Valley*, video still, 2012. Photograph courtesy of the artist

# ‘In and Out of Place’ completes Montalvo’s centennial series

By MARY GOTTSCHALK

If you’re looking for a brief respite from holiday events, music and shopping, head to the Montalvo Arts Center for some thought-provoking art.

“In and Out of Place” is the final part of Montalvo’s 2012 centennial series “Montalvo: Past Present and Place—a year-long consideration of the historic villa’s history, diverse communities and its relationship to Silicon Valley in a broad context.”

It features the art of Bia Gayotto and Ruth Boerefijn, completed during their respective residencies at the Lucas Artists Residency Program at Montalvo.

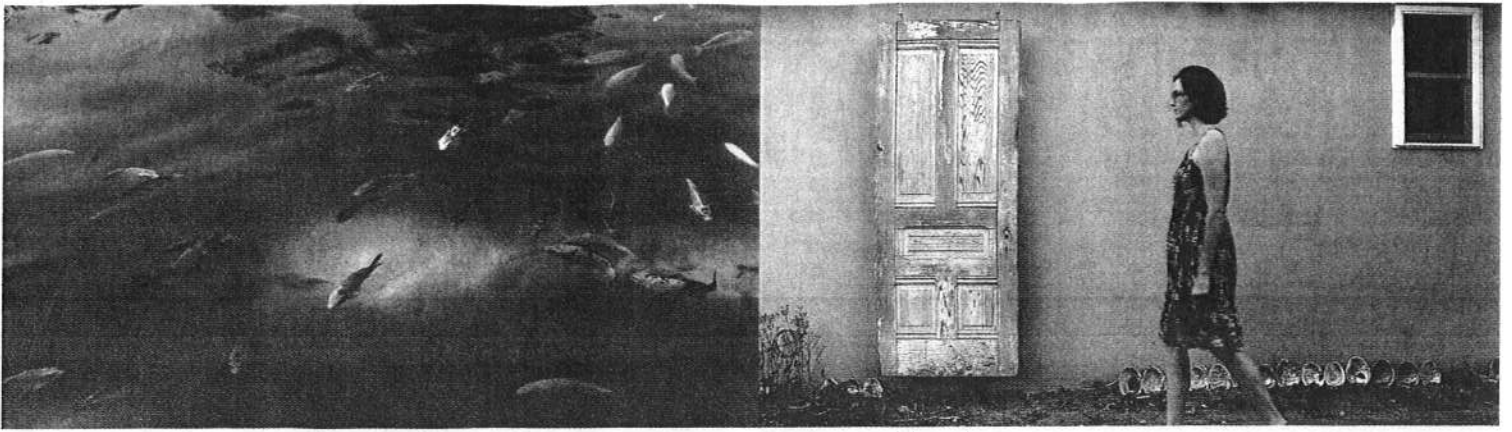
Gayotto’s work is titled “Somewhere in Between: Silicon Valley” and is a video installation that shows the experiences of first and second generation immigrants living here, juxtaposed against domestic settings, architecture and cityscapes.

One of the most fascinating aspects of it is Gayotto’s choice of camera angles. She takes familiar places and Silicon Valley landmarks and shows them in unfamiliar ways. She also shows beauty in unexpected places, such as the side of a stucco house with a wood frame window and a row of abalone shells lined up below.

It is calming to sit and watch the two-screen presentation and listen to voices with lilting accents from far away places as they discuss their feelings about their homeland, culture and identity now that they are Americans.



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Those featured volunteered for the project, although their faces aren't always shown while you hear their voices. Gayotto's goal was to cultivate a sense of what it is like to navigate and inhabit two or more places and cultures in a visual form.

She achieves it and leaves you with much to consider.

Boerefijn's piece is *Communicated Experience* and it is a site-specific installation inspired by the lives of a trio of early 20th century women who impacted Santa Clara Valley.

It is very abstract, with delicate floor-to-ceiling sculptures utilizing fishing line and tiny pieces of colored paper with hole-punched paper fragments seeming to float throughout.

The shape of the sculpture is different for each woman.

A circular shape is done for Alice Phelan Sullivan, sister of James Duval Phelan who built Villa Montalvo. Sullivan founded the Little Children's Aid Society that eventually became Catholic Charities.

A lazy S curve symbolizes Alice Iola Hare, a photographer who documented life in the area.

Her photographs appeared in two issues of *Sunset* magazine in 1902, the same year she published *San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley*, a collection of photos of such varied subjects as prune farming, St. James Park and the Santa Clara Mission.

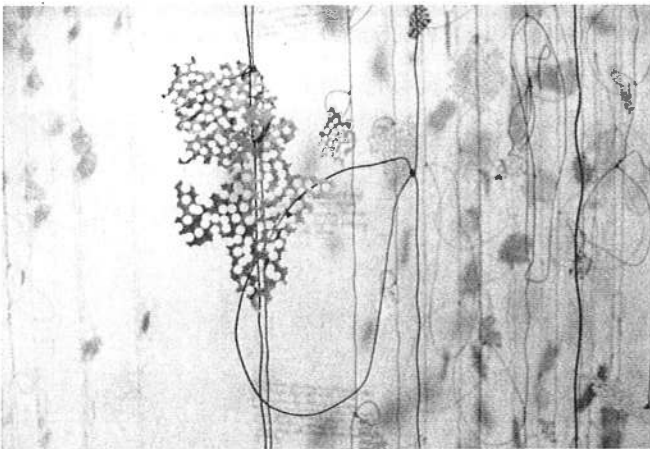
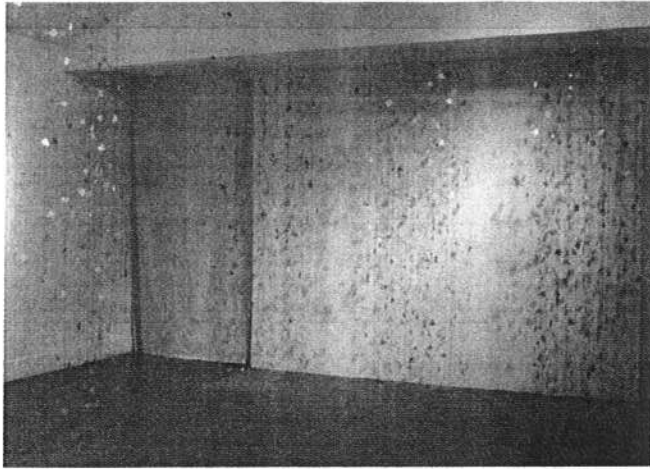
She was one of the founders of the Santa Clara Women's Improvement Club, which worked to maintain historic neighborhoods and fight blight, including billboards.

Some 575 silver gelatin photographs by Hare are in the Bancroft Library in Berkeley.

Three squares pay homage to Clara Shorridge Foltz, the first woman to pass the bar and become a practicing attorney in California.

Foltz was the first person to propose the creation of a public defender's office; a strong proponent of women's voting rights; and the founder and publisher of *San Diego Daily Bee* and *New American Woman Magazine*.

The exhibition of work by both artists continues through Jan. 13 at Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga. The Project Space Gallery is open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday through Sunday. Plan a bit of extra time to walk through the beautiful gardens. For additional information visit [montalvoarts.org](http://montalvoarts.org).



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