

Danville  SanRamon

# 'Modern Landscape' to debut in Danville

Upcoming Village Theatre exhibit features six artists from across U.S.

by Jeanita Lyman / Danville San Ramon

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"Looming Pine" by Brian Rutenberg. (Image courtesy Village Theatre Art Gallery)

The latest exhibit at Danville's Village Theatre and Art Gallery is set to kick off this weekend, aiming to offer a modern twist on a classic artistic tradition.



"Darkness Falls" by John Karl Claes.  
(Image courtesy Village Theatre Art Gallery)

"Modern Landscape" -- opening Saturday -- will feature the landscape paintings of six artists from across the country, and see the return of curator and artist Ellen Levine Dodd.

"These paintings will allow art-goers to experience vistas through the eyes of a modern artist," Marija Nelson Bleier, the town's visual arts coordinator, said in an announcement. "Gallery visitors will be transported to scenes unreal and dreamlike in these bold and colorful works of art."

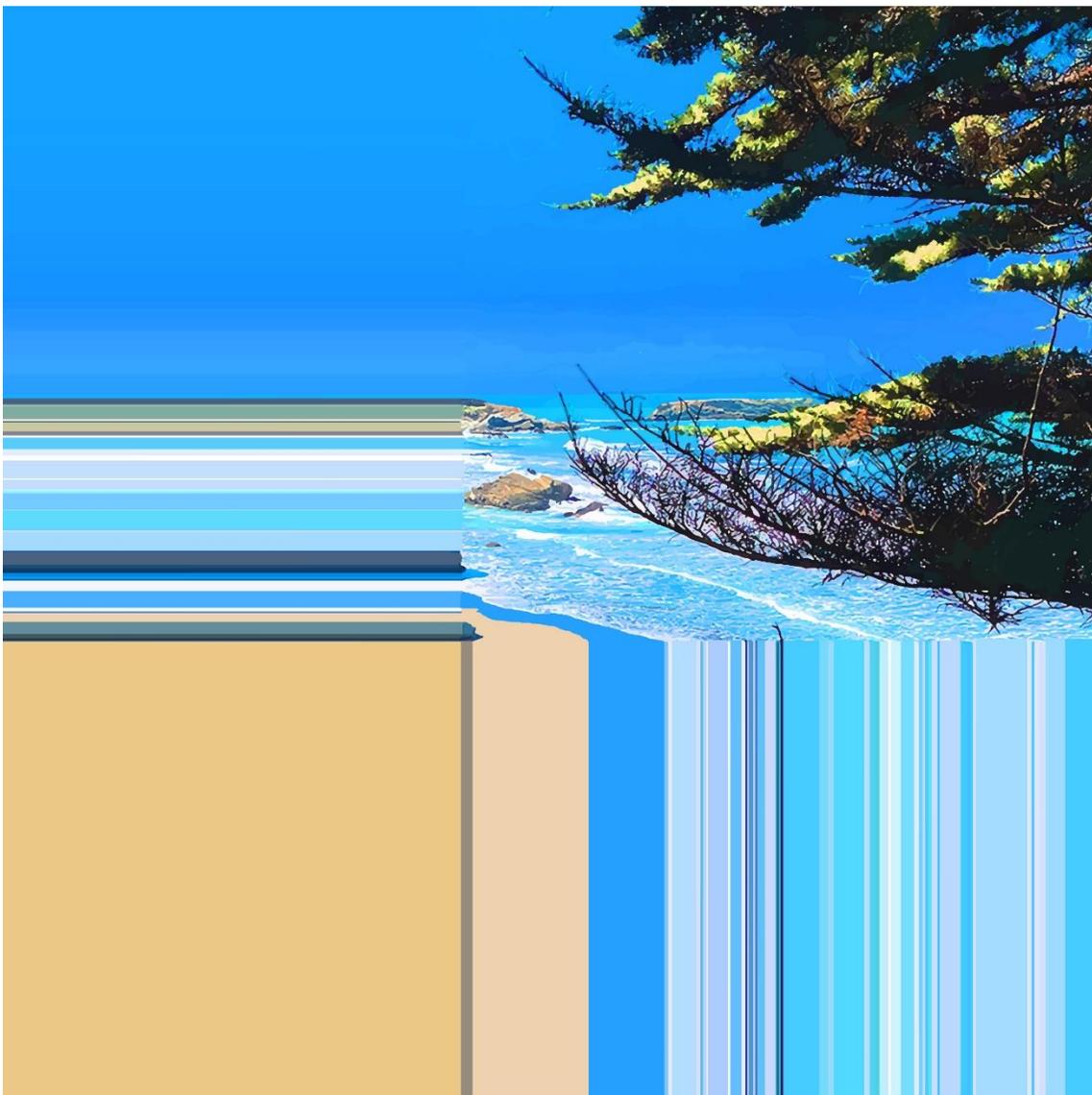
Sacramento-based painter

John Karl Claes will be among the artists featured in the upcoming exhibit. Claes specializes in landscape paintings inspired by California and the western United States, with his work featured in galleries ranging across the same region.

"I work from my memories of what I have seen, rather than from photographs, and as a result the paintings are a mix of this and my imagination creating semi abstract images of real things I've seen," Claes said in his artist's statement.

"I use color to elevate my abstracted landscapes, they are representations of places that always return to my memory," he added. "It is this powerful connection that drives me to use strong color for I have found that this is the best way to convey my affection for the land I see and experience daily."

Karen Olsen-Dunn lives in San Francisco, and has had her work showcased in a number of exhibits there. The alumna of San Francisco State University and California College of the Arts has a background in psychology as well as art, and uses a wide range of materials in her work.



"Treasured Beyond Blue" by Karen Olsen-Dunn.  
(Image courtesy Village Theatre Art Gallery)

"My process is multi-layered. It is a hybrid between analog and digital, painting, monotype printmaking, and everyday iPhone snaps," Olsen-Dunn said in her artist's statement. "My work is not precious. With colors bold and plastic by intent, the final composition is an intricate symphony of contemporary clutter, celebrating the vaguely grim effects of a frayed society."

Bryan Rutenberg, based in New York City will be among the more far flung artists featured in the exhibit, with works inspired by his hometown in South Carolina.

"Brian Rutenberg has spent 40 years honing a distinctive method of compressing the rich color and form of his native coastal South Carolina into



"Break" by James Shay. (Image courtesy Village Theatre Art Gallery)

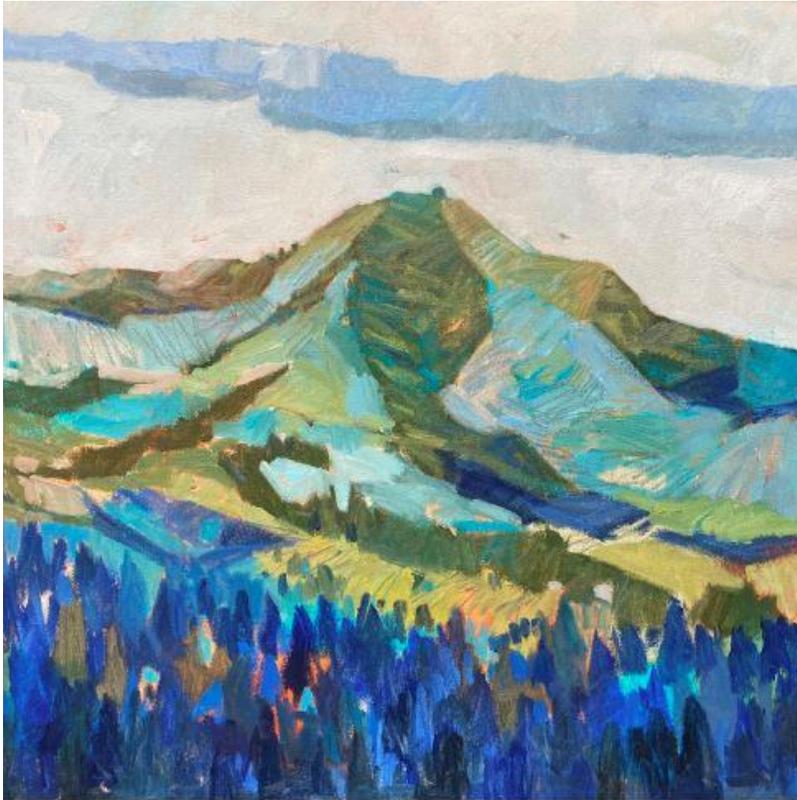
complex landscape paintings that imbue material reality with a deep sense of place," his artist's biography said.

Sonoma-based artist and architect James Shay will be among the more local artists featured in the exhibit, having switched from his passion for architecture to painting after a decades-long career in the latter field.

"In the mid-'90s Jim's focus shifted from architecture to painting, and he has never looked back," Shay's artist's bio said. "He has had numerous one-person shows and is represented by many galleries nationwide. Jim likes to ski, play tennis, and study the construction and painting techniques of ancient Egypt. He does occasional architectural projects, including homes, studios and interiors."

Shay uses casein and tempera in his paintings, described as "two of the oldest painting media in existence," which dry to a matte finish similar to fresco paintings, and reinforced with a matte varnish. He uses scraping and abrasion techniques "to achieve a sense of time's passage."

Liana Steinmetz grew up just south of Shay in Marin County, and specializes in landscapes like those sought for the upcoming exhibit, as well as botanical and abstract subjects.



"Mt. Tam Blues" by Liana Steinmetz. (Image courtesy Village Theatre Art Gallery)

"Painting is a spiritual experience for me," Steinmetz said in her artist's statement. "I am not sure who listens to me when I pray, or who sees me when I look up at the stars at night. But I do have profound gratitude for Mother Earth, and her natural beauty I get to be a part of every day. I cannot imagine a more fulfilling way to spend my time on earth, than making paintings in her honor. Every one is a

tribute to this wonderful planet of wild things we call home."

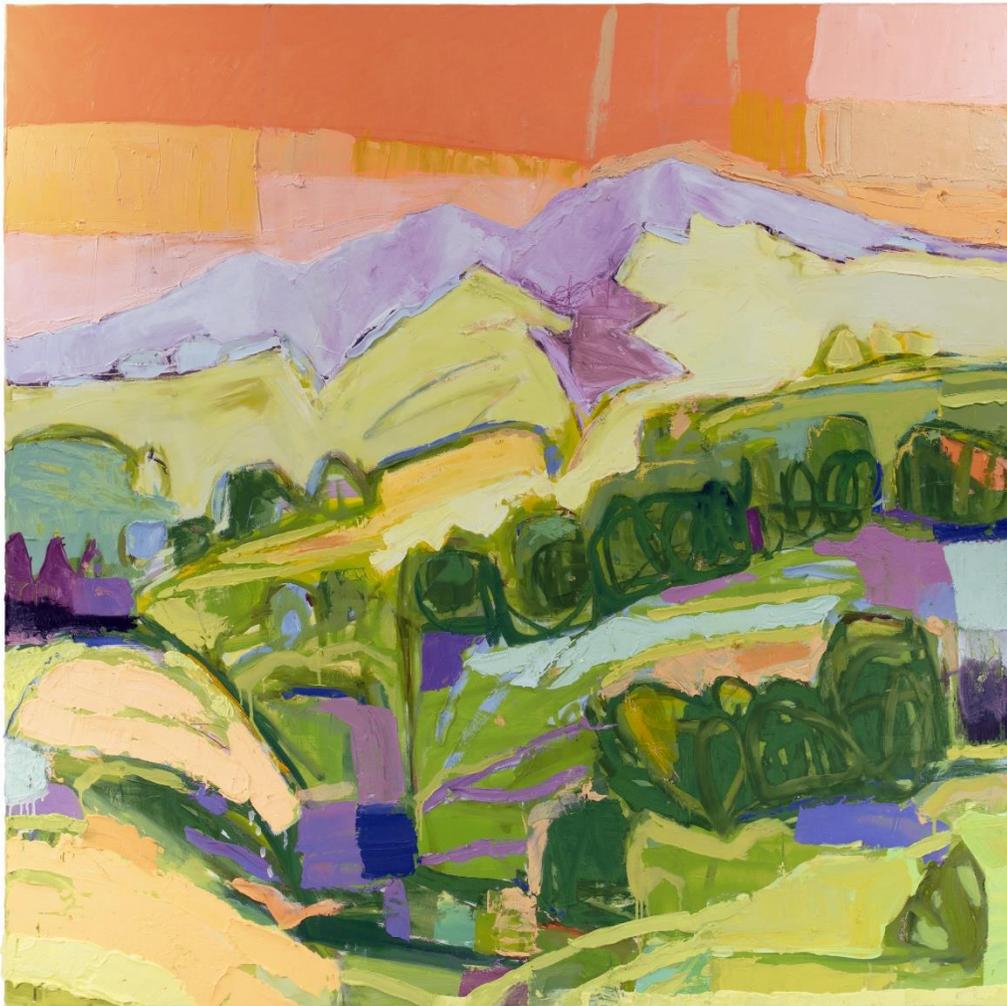
Dodd, another North Bay artist, will be featured in both a curatorial and artistic role, with "Modern Landscape" being the third exhibit she's curated at the Village Theatre -- in the wake of "Color Play 1" and "Color Play 2."

"I started drawing and painting as a small child and have never stopped," Dodd said on her website. "I studied painting, photography and paper making

at Clark University, and Massachusetts College of Art, and graduated from Sonoma State University in California. Currently I work full-time as an artist in my studio in downtown Novato painting, printing, and teaching workshops."

Dodd is also the founder of the Bradford Gallery in San Anselmo, which specializes in landscape art.

"Modern Landscape" runs from this Saturday (Aug. 27) to Oct. 8, with an opening reception set for the first day. The free event from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. will feature complimentary brunch refreshments, as well as additional insight about the artists. More information is available [here](#).



"Until Tomorrow Becomes Today" by Ellen Levine Dodd. (Image courtesy Village Theatre Art Gallery)