



PHOTO BY LYNNE HARROLD

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

We live in unsettled times. In recent months, news and events have buffeted us and divided us and rocked our sense of stability to its core. Many of us feel betrayed, angry, helpless. We don't know what to do, or whom to trust. Some of us look to activism as a means to take control. Others look to nature for solace. I found great food for thought, and comfort, in the pages of this year's *Provincetown Arts*.

Alison Murphy's novel *Balagan*, excerpted in these pages, has several scenes set in Tel Aviv in 2003, a time and place filled with a constant threat of violence. Here, the author discusses the title: "The word *balagan* is hard to understand unless you've lived in Israel. It means 'chaos,' but it's often used with a kind of

'what can you do?' shrug that typified living in Israel to me—a state of chaos, yes, but one that we've all accepted as the norm."

Is it possible for us to effect change? Or are we doomed to watch in silence and shrug our shoulders?

The idea of taking creative action, and bearing witness, through art is compelling. Our featured writer, Alec Wilkinson, in his books and articles, serves as witness to people's lives—honorable people, people who've committed terrible crimes, ordinary people, whose lives all shine as remarkable journeys through his eyes and words. He blends facts and stories and the music of people's own voices into a kind of poetry.

Sharon Horvath, our featured artist, creates extraordinary new worlds in her paintings, whole planets and universes, often using everyday images such as baseball fields and bedframes and rearview mirrors. I am especially struck by a photo of Horvath washing her canvases in the ocean. Artist Paul Bowen describes the process: "The imagery and skeins of paint were washed away and the water soaked into the fiber of the paper, leaving its own residue to be melded with another layer of images." It's akin to a cleansing process, a sort of baptism.

Karin Stephan, in her article on Horvath, focuses on one of the artist's paintings, *The Pose*, describing it from her perspective as a teacher of yoga: "And yet, despite the sense of instability, there is also this central axis, this central core that feels strong, firm, and stable, and so what seems to be potentially unstable is rather movement toward stability—and symmetry—that will occur when the final pose is achieved."

This sense of instability is also echoed in our theater article by director David Kaplan, who writes about the uncertain political and personal times of Shakespeare and Tennessee Williams, and how their lives and work are reflected in our own unpredictable world: "This year, our audience shares with Tennessee Williams and William Shakespeare the experience of instability. . . . Art that is itself willfully unstable . . . has, these days, a power to inspire."

Times of change and challenge spur initiative, innovation, resiliency, courage, activism, and hope. In our profile of performance artist Karen Finley, she is asked, "How do you channel your rage?" Her response: "You turn your pain into compassion." The very things that distress us also wake us up, and, ultimately, can bring us together.

Change and transition are, after all, a part of life.

Poet Stanley Kunitz is quoted in an article this year: "'Periodicity.' This is what we learn from our immersion in the natural world: its cyclical pattern. The day itself is periodic, from morning through noon to night; so, too, the stars in their passage, the tides, the seasons, the beat of the heart. . . . This awareness of periodicity is what gives us the sense of a universal pulse. And any art that does not convey that sense is a lesser art."

I often see the words "All is well" in spiritual texts, and I want to believe they have validity today. Perhaps, if we want to experience this peace in a better world, we must look for it, picture it, think about it, work for it. Choose compassion. Create our Eden. Make it so.

From Mary Oliver's new book of essays, *Upstream*: "I don't know if I am heading toward heaven or that other, dark place, but I know I have already lived in heaven for fifty years. Thank you, Provincetown."

Susanna Ralli  
Senior Editor



# PROVINCETOWN ARTS 2017

## ON THE COVER

Sharon Horvath, *photograph by Kristine Potter*  
Alec Wilkinson, *photograph by Sara Barrett*  
Sharon Horvath, *Some Breathe Iron (detail), 2016*



**LETTER FROM THE EDITOR** \_\_\_\_\_ 32

**BUZZ** \_\_\_\_\_ 33

**COVER FEATURE: SHARON HORVATH** \_\_\_\_\_ 36

*Barry Schwabsky, Jennifer Samet, Hayden Herrera,  
Stephanie Buhmann, Paul Bowen, Karin Stephan,  
Helen Miranda Wilson*



## ARTISTS

**Lost on the Infinite Sea:** Ellen Gallagher and Philip Hoare \_\_\_\_\_ 52  
*Philip Hoare*

**Karen Gunderson:** Expanding the Dimension of Darkness \_\_\_\_\_ 55  
*Christopher Busa*

**Rose Basile:** Something to Say \_\_\_\_\_ 57  
*Mary V. Dearborn*

**Head and Hand:** The Art of James Lechay \_\_\_\_\_ 59  
*Megan Hinton*

**Downtown on the Beach:**  
The Path from Greenwich Village to Herring Cove \_\_\_\_\_ 61  
*Brett Sokol*

**Karen Finley:** The Art of Activism and Ceremony \_\_\_\_\_ 64  
*Christopher Busa*

**Joanne Mattera and the Ancient Art of Encaustic** \_\_\_\_\_ 66  
*Jan Lhormer*

**Del Filardi:** Swan Song of the Great Blue Heron \_\_\_\_\_ 69  
*Christopher Busa*

**Fred Garbers:** The Transformative Light of Cape Cod and Venice \_\_\_\_\_ 71  
*Mary Ellen Abell*

**A Conversation with Sam Tager** \_\_\_\_\_ 74  
*Sara London*

**Word and Image:** Leslie Gillette Jackson's "Earthly, Unearthly Art" \_\_\_\_\_ 77  
*Rosalind Pace*

**But Will I Buy One?** The Whitney Biennial 2017 \_\_\_\_\_ 79  
*Marc J. Straus*

**Edward and Josephine Hopper from the Permanent Collection** \_\_\_\_\_ 82  
*Christine McCarthy*

**Dorothy Miller and Loren MacIver:** A Passion for Friendship \_\_\_\_\_ 84  
*Wendy Jeffers*

**Looking at the World with the Cuban Eye** \_\_\_\_\_ 86  
*Sue Harrison*

**Places to Sit** \_\_\_\_\_ 88  
*Text by Joanne Barkan, Art by Vicky Tomayko*

**Zorilda** \_\_\_\_\_ 89  
*Peter Hutchinson*

**COVER FEATURE: ALEC WILKINSON** \_\_\_\_\_ 90

*Christopher Busa, John Irving, Edward Hirsch,  
Ian Frazier, Cynthia Zarin, Susanna Moore,  
Annabel Davis-Goff*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## POETRY

- Foreword** by Philip Brady and Christopher Busa \_\_\_\_\_ 104  
*Charles Bernstein, H. L. Hix, Diane Raptosh, Bruce Bond, Sara London, William Heyen, Philip Brady, Myrna Stone, Susan Mitchell, Tim Seibles, Andrea Cohen, Barry Schwabsky*

## WRITERS

- Reading Viet Thanh Nguyen:**  
Ghostly Others and the Pursuit of Just Memory \_\_\_\_\_ 119  
*Anne Sanow*
- Kelle Groom:** On Seeing What Hadn't Been Seen Before \_\_\_\_\_ 121  
*Susan Rand Brown*
- "Notes in a Time of War" from *Wreckage*** \_\_\_\_\_ 124  
*Sascha Feinstein*
- Jennifer Liese:** The Ambient Sound Around Art \_\_\_\_\_ 126  
*Christopher Busa*
- "Provincetown" from *Upstream*** \_\_\_\_\_ 128  
*Mary Oliver*
- Ann Patchett** \_\_\_\_\_ 129  
*Elizabeth McCracken*

## FICTION

- James Jones First Novel Fellowship: **Balagan** \_\_\_\_\_ 130  
*Alison Murphy*

## BOOK REVIEWS

- Before Everything** \_\_\_\_\_ 133  
By VICTORIA REDEL, REVIEWED BY PAUL LISICKY
- Cold Storage** \_\_\_\_\_ 136  
By KEITH ALTHAUS, REVIEWED BY JOSHUA WEINER
- An Exquisite Corpse: Death in Surrealist New York** \_\_\_\_\_ 138  
By HELEN A. HARRISON, REVIEWED BY ANNE-MARIE LEVINE
- Eye of the Sixties: Richard Bellamy and the Transformation of Modern Art** \_\_\_\_\_ 139  
By JUDITH E. STEIN, REVIEWED BY DENISE DOHERTY PAPPAS

## ARCHITECTURE

- Living Where Land Meets Sea: The Houses of Polhemus Savery DaSilva** \_\_\_\_\_ 142  
By JOHN R. DASILVA, REVIEWED BY LAUREL KORNIHER

## THEATER

- Why Now Tennessee Williams and Shakespeare** \_\_\_\_\_ 146  
*David Kaplan*
- Braunwyn Jackett:** Portrait of an Actor \_\_\_\_\_ 148  
*Lynda Sturmer*

## FILM

- The "Witness" Stand:**  
A New Documentary Tests the Virtues of Objective Truth \_\_\_\_\_ 150  
*Howard Karren*

## MUSIC

- Steve Morgan's St. Louis Blues** \_\_\_\_\_ 154  
*Joe Burns*

- MEMORIALS** \_\_\_\_\_ 156  
*Josephine Couch Del Deo, Gail Rogers Fields, Tom Conklin, Michael Duplessis*

# PROVINCETOWN ARTS

A publication of Provincetown Arts Press, Inc.,  
a nonprofit press for artists and poets

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER CHRISTOPHER BUSA

SENIOR EDITOR SUSANNA RALLI

ART DIRECTOR IRENE LIPTON

MARKETING DIRECTOR INGRID AUE

ADVERTISING SALES HEATHER BRUCE

PRODUCTION EDITOR ANNIE SLONIKER

PUBLISHERS EMERITUS

MARGARET CARROLL-BERGMAN 1998–2004

RAYMOND ELMAN 1985–89



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SUSAN RAND BROWN	CHRISTOPHER BUSA, CLERK
JOHN CILUZZI	DAVID COWAN
ALEXANDRA CROMWELL	RAYMOND ELMAN
PAUL ENDICH	E. J. (TERRY) KAHN III, PRESIDENT
ED MOORE, TREASURER	MARGARET MURPHY, VICE PRESIDENT
DEAN PAPPAS	DENISE PAPPAS
PETER SAUNDERS	BRETT SOKOL

## BOARD OF ADVISORS

MARY ABELL	CHARLES BERGMAN
MARGARET CARROLL-BERGMAN	STEPHEN BORKOWSKI
ANTHONY DONIGER	BILL EVAUL
BILL JENSEN	FRED LEEBRON
ANNE-MARIE LEVINE	JENNIFER LIESE
MARY MAXWELL	GAIL MAZUR
RICHARD MCCANN	SUSAN MITCHELL
TAYLOR M. POLITES	MIRA SCHOR
PHILLIP H. WILKIE	

Published annually in midsummer since 1985, *Provincetown Arts* focuses broadly on artists, performers, and writers who inhabit or visit the tip of Cape Cod, and seeks to stimulate creative activity and enhance public awareness of the cultural life of the nation's oldest continuous artists' colony. Drawing upon a century-long tradition rich in art, theater, and writing, *Provincetown Arts* publishes essays, fiction, interviews, journals, performance pieces, poetry, profiles, reporting, reviews, and visual features, with a view toward demonstrating that a community of artists, functioning outside the urban centers, is a utopian dream with an ongoing vitality.

© 2017 by Provincetown Arts, Inc.  
All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part expressly forbidden without permission from the publisher.

Most of *Provincetown Arts* is freelance written. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome and will be considered between September and December. Our writers' guidelines are available online at [www.provincetownarts.org](http://www.provincetownarts.org). The best guide for content and length is a study of past issues.

Member: Council of Literary Magazines and Presses

Address all correspondence to:  
*Provincetown Arts*  
650 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA 02657  
Tel: (508) 487-3167 • Fax: (508) 487-3559  
E-mail: [cbusa@comcast.net](mailto:cbusa@comcast.net)  
[www.provincetownarts.org](http://www.provincetownarts.org)

Subscriptions are \$15 per annual issue  
Back issues available • Order form on page 160  
New advertisers: please request media kit

*Provincetown Arts* is indexed in the *Humanities International Complete*.

PRINTED IN USA

NATIONAL AND CANADA DISTRIBUTION:  
Ingram Periodicals, Nashville, TN

ISSN: 1053-5012

Printed by RPI Printing in Fall River, MA.