

Fall 2021

# ARTS/99

The publication of Arts and Culture El Dorado

TERRIE BENNETT SCULPTURE

LARA GULARTE, POET LAUREATE

2021 CARPENTER AWARD HONOREE

LEXI BOEGER, ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT

*A ROOM OF THEIR OWN:  
WOMEN ARTISTS OF THE SIERRA*





# THIS ISSUE

# Women at Work

Dear Reader,

At the time of this writing, we are all looking forward to certain things coming to an end. We eagerly anticipate the closing of the Covid-19 chapter; we breathe a sigh of relief at the extinguishing of the Caldor Fire. These (happy) endings, like the setting of an unwelcome sun, make space for new beginnings. A new and better sun may rise tomorrow. It is in that spirit of forward-looking optimism that we present the latest edition of *Arts 99* and the new horizons it chronicles.

If there is a common theme in these stories, it might be labeled “coming attractions”. We introduce our county’s newest Poet Laureate and preview the work she will be doing in our community; we speak with Marya Osucha, curator of the Confidence Firehouse Gallery, about her upcoming exhibition, which will feature new and exciting work from women artists, some of whom will be displaying their work for the first time; we profile our newest Carpenter Award recipient, Lexi Boeger, who will soon be honored for her contributions to our community; and we interview Terrie Bennett, whose recently opened studio space in Camino represents a significant expansion of the arts scene in El Dorado County. Notably, these coming attractions feature an all-woman ensemble, drawing back the curtains to reveal yet another new horizon.

This issue invites us to look beyond what is ending and asks us to celebrate everything that is just beginning. Thank you for your support.



Terrie Bennett  
*Full Circle*, 2019

## ARTS/99

**EDITOR** Jordan Hyatt-Miller

**DESIGNER** Caitlin Thompson

**COVER IMAGE** Terrie Bennett, *Earth Dance*, 2019



*Hwy 49 + Hwy 50 = Arts 99*



# A GATHERING OF ARTISTS IN A ROOM OF THEIR OWN



Katie Morris, *Heart of Gold*, 2010

Virginia Woolf, in her celebrated 1929 long-form essay, “A Room of One’s Own,” invites us to imagine a world in which female artists are afforded the same rights, privileges, and opportunities as male artists. When Virginia Woolf penned “A Room of One’s Own” in her native England, America was only nine years removed from the hard-won passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, and still some 35 years away from the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which protected the voting rights of many women of color. Today, although there are major strides left to be made in the pursuit of equity, it is easier to imagine a world in which Shakespeare’s Sister—the heroine of Woolf’s hypothetical equitable



Irene Yesley, *My Journey*, 2021

world—would be just as successful as her famous brother. On this 101st Anniversary of Women’s Suffrage, it is only fitting that Woolf should inspire the name of Arts and Culture El Dorado’s latest exhibition: *A Room of Their Own: Women Artists of the Sierra*. The exhibition will showcase and celebrate the artwork of women in our community and place a spotlight on the broader, ongoing struggle for equity in America.

Marya Osucha, the curator of *A Room of Their Own*, selected work from a number of different mediums, ranging from ceramics to botanical art. “The goal was to have as a wide a variety as possible,” she says, reflecting her commitment to showcasing a diverse, inclusive array of women artists. “I really wanted artists I hadn’t known before.” One of those artists, 15-year-old Nia Henderson, is exhibiting her work in a gallery for the first time.

Marya intends for the exhibition to be a place of celebration, a space in which artists and visitors “can foster a sense of community and shared identity.” Art, she says, “is about the beauty of self-expression, but also a tool for dialogue.” She sees the exhibition as an opportunity for healing and for the remaking of social ties after two difficult years of isolation and stress caused by a global pandemic and the tragic toll of the Caldor Fire. “So much has broken down in the fabric of our community... People have become more siloed.” Towards this end, she took special care to select works that

“can be in conversation with each other”, creating a close-knit feeling of community for artists and visitors.

Marya sees several common threads connecting the pieces in the exhibition, many of which were created during quarantine. “A lot of people wanted to speak to the moment,” she says. “A lot of this work was born of their experience in the pandemic.” The natural world, and especially the local flora of the Sierra Nevada foothills, is also a common subject for many of the artists. “People respond to our natural surroundings—other than looking pretty, the smell of star thistle in August just gets in your veins and you never shake it growing up.” Viewed as an eclectic whole, the diverse artwork contributes to the celebratory feeling Marya is trying to create. “It’s all just super colorful and dynamic.”



Cherie Hacker, *Universal Dreamer*, 2020

## A ROOM OF THEIR OWN: WOMEN ARTISTS OF THE SIERRA

Thursday, September 30 - Sunday, November 28, 2021  
Confidence Firehouse Gallery, 487 Main Street, Placerville



# A Passion For Poetry -

## Lara Gularte, Poet Laureate

**A**rts and Culture El Dorado established the position of El Dorado County Poet Laureate in 2016 in order to recognize the exceptional achievements of poets in our county and to spread the joy of poetry to those in our community. Over the course of a two-year term, the Poet Laureate assumes the role of an ambassador for the literary arts, composing poems for special occasions, cultivating connections with local students, artists, and community members, and even touring the county libraries for the Laureate Trail, a series of poetry readings. Taylor Graham occupied the post from 2016-2018; Suzanne Roberts succeeded her, occupying the post from 2018-2020. After a brief hiatus as a result of the pandemic, we are overjoyed to introduce our new Poet Laureate: Lara Gularte.

Lara first developed an interest in poetry when she was in high school, after becoming enamored with the Beat Poets. "I was looking for adventure, and there wasn't adventure at home. These Beat Poets were all men, but they were having adventures," she explains. When she was 16 she took a bus to City Lights Bookstore in San Francisco and saw Lawrence Ferlinghetti behind the counter. Star-struck and speechless, she didn't even ask for an autograph. "I can't believe it," she laughs.

Although she was constantly writing poetry in high school, "life took over" after she graduated. She embarked on a career in civil service, working in the county government in a variety of capacities. At one point she worked with institutionalized women with mental health issues. "They thought that I could talk well to people who are mentally ill. I didn't understand that, because I talk to everyone the same way." When a friend at a high school reunion asked her why she hadn't seen any of Lara's poetry in magazines, Lara

decided to begin pursuing poetry once again. "I went back to my writing, and it just grew and grew from there." Soon she was hosting poetry workshops in her home and attending creative writing classes at a community college. When she was close to retiring, she went for an M.F.A. at San Jose State.

Lara's passion for poetry has always been rooted in a deep sense of community. Poetry, for Lara, is a means of connection. As a Portuguese-Azorean-Californian writer, she is gratified to find other poets who share her heritage. "When I was young and writing I didn't know any other people in my heritage who were doing the same. As I've grown older I've been meeting everyone... I know poets and writers all over the world." She frequently participates in panels, poetry readings, and other events centering around Portuguese and Azorean art and poetry.



*Picture courtesy of Lara Gularte*

She uses poetry to build community in other ways as well: she works with Arts in Corrections and the William James Association to teach poetry and creative writing at Mule Creek State Prison. Her students learn to connect to each other through the experience of literary composition. She often uses their shared humanity as a focal point for the workshops, asking them to write about "conditions while being human," because "most of the time, everyone can relate to that". The prison workshops run parallel to her broader commitment to community programming and arts ambassadorship: "I'm a creative person. Not just poetry—I like to create programs that work. I like to find ways to do things rather than the regular, standard way."

Lara's writing process as a poet often takes her in unexpected directions. "I write from my unconscious," she says. "I don't know what I'm going to find. That's why I love writing: I discover things within myself."



She relies on imagery to guide her through a poem, fastening abstract language to “concrete things”. After becoming El Dorado County’s Poet Laureate, she has felt a heightened interest in the history of the county and Gold Country more generally, and she has recently written several poems on the topic.

Every Poet Laureate creates and implements a Poetry Project during their term. Lara Gularte has already launched her own project: The Firehouse Sessions, a series of poetry workshops and readings. Lara has a particular passion for a form of poetry known as ekphrasis, which is the process of describing visual art through poetry. “I love ekphrastic poetry because you can come at it from so many different perspectives,” she says. Lara has long conducted ekphrastic poetry workshops at Mule Creek State Prison. With The Firehouse Sessions, she brings this unique form of poetry to a larger audience. Over the course of Lara’s term, each exhibition at the Confidence Firehouse Gallery will serve both as inspiration and as backdrop for an ekphrastic poetry workshop and subsequent poetry reading. At the end of her term, Lara will select

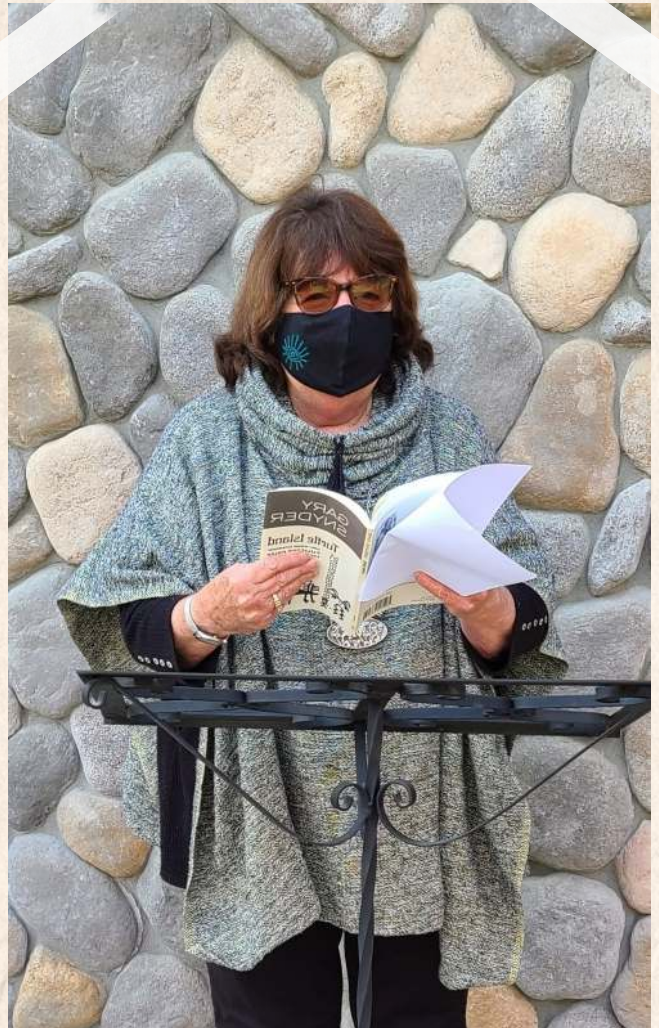
her favorite poems—both from herself and from the members of the workshop—and compile them into a chapbook.

The Firehouse Sessions is just one of the many aspects of the Poet Laureate program that Lara is excited to bring to life in El Dorado County. “I love it. I love the process of being Poet Laureate, because I can be creative. That’s what I thrive on in my life... The title gives me the opportunity to be creative and do these programs.”

## **PSYCHE**

She crosses borders within herself,  
cocoons in dream, sleeps a metamorphosis,  
emerges from the silken robe.  
Streak of wing in an air draft,  
she sways erratic,  
in a moving sky--  
rises above the thick dust of earth,  
the sound of the world screaming.  
Her arms reach out from wings,  
to gather Cosmos and Verbena,  
drink the nectar of the upper world.

*First published in “The Bitter Oleander”*



*Picture courtesy of Lara Gularte*



# 2021 Carpenter Award Honoree

## LEXI BOEGER, ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT

**A**mong many others things, Lexi Boeger is a winemaker, a fly-fisher, an advocate for the houseless, a teacher, a multimedia artist, a businessperson, and a beloved member of the Placerville community. She is also this year's recipient of Arts and Culture El Dorado's Carpenter Award, which recognizes extraordinary commitment to culture and creativity. But before she was any of these things, she was a local teenager sitting on the sidewalk outside of the Thomas Kinkadee Gallery during Placerville's Saturday Art Walks. Before her was a bowl of Cheetos, thoughtfully provided as hors d'oeuvres for passersby. In her hands were Kinkadee prints. If you looked closely at these prints from the Painter of Light, however, certain minor alterations became apparent: the glow in the cottage windows was actually a blazing house fire; a woman was attempting to escape from the hungry flames, baby in hands.

Depending on which way you looked at those subversively altered prints, you might have seen the reflection of a gadfly, a maverick, an innovator, or a playful, adventurous spirit. Lexi may not be the

Cheeto-proffering, Kinkadee-defacing sidewalk-sitter of yesteryear, but her life and work continue today in the same delightfully unique vein. Whether she is writing a novel about fly-fishing and ghosts—"it's fiction," she clarifies—or teaching classes on unorthodox yarn-spinning techniques, she always offers the world something as invigorating as it is surprising. Lexi's artistic pursuits include pottery, weaving, painting, writing, and graphic design. She is also working on a line of dessert wines, to be sold under the Lucky Boy brand, an offshoot of the larger Boeger brand.

Recently, Lexi has been focused on plants—as medicine, as art, and as philosophy. In the unpredictable yet predictably beautiful growth of a plant, she sees a fruitful metaphor for the artistic process: "What gets expressed is what needs to be there." She allows this principle to shape her approach to Boeger and Lucky Boy as well: "Our businesses and our art are just an expression of the landscape we come from. I want my winery to be like it grew out of the earth here." This philosophy fits hand in glove with her conviction that accidents, mistakes, and surprises are the lifeblood of creativity and innovation.



*Photograph courtesy Lexi Boeger*





*Photograph courtesy Lexi Boeger*

"There are no mistakes. Mistakes are only something that you weren't expecting, and they are a doorway to learning something or developing something new," she says. Take weaving as an example: "If you replicate a mistake every three yards it becomes a design element, and you can charge ten times as much."

In some ways, Lexi's life, just like her work, has the character of a plant—perhaps, even, the character of a grape vine—winding and coiling in unexpected directions. Lexi can be of two (or more) minds, balancing conflicting impulses: "I want to be in nature. Well, I say that, but that community call is always really strong." Her involvement in the El Dorado County

community is passionate and profound, motivated by "a strong sense of wanting to have a voice that reminds the community of what's right." As a teacher, as an artist, and as a community member, she likes to challenge preconceived notions and orthodox practices—"I always like a fight," she laughs—but in her personal life she values independence, personal growth, and the peace and quiet of the natural beauty in El Dorado County.

"I'd like every little entity I create to mature to be something meaningful and appreciated by people, something that brings them some enjoyment. Or that challenges them. But I'd like to do it at a cabin, from a distance." Lexi's vision for the future of Placerville includes a thriving art scene that retains its homegrown talent. "I want to make a place where those kids will want to come back. We need them to come back... We can make it a perfect little world up here." Lexi may want to be in a cabin in the woods, but her love for the community, her optimism for the future, and her desire to make Placerville a haven for the arts could draw her back to town: "I think that's why I always come back and kind of insist on it."

For her pottery, Lexi likes to harvest natural clay from a stream near her house. Sometimes she finds gold in that clay. She separates the gold into types: "clinkers" and "pickers". Her family came to the area—and started making wine—during the Gold Rush, and as she pulls gold from her stream, she joins them in the greater stream of local and familial history. As Arts and Culture El Dorado celebrates Lexi Boeger on November 4th, we can be sure that she will continue to pull gold—artistic, agricultural, and actual—from her native soil.

## **2021 Carpenter Award HONORING LEXI BOEGER**

**Thursday, November 4, 2021 • 6:00 – 8:00 pm**  
**Boeger Winery, 1709 Carson Road, Placerville**

**Supporting the programs and services of Arts and Culture El Dorado**

**More information, ticket purchase and donations:**  
**[ArtsAndCultureElDorado.org/benefit-2021](https://ArtsAndCultureElDorado.org/benefit-2021)**



# Terrie Bennett

Second generation sculptor returns to El Dorado County

6



*"My inspiration comes from my connection to nature, and the subtle ways life dances in the space between form and spirit."*



Photograph:  
Nicki Bennett

Terrie Bennett is a second generation sculptor and has been sculpting professionally for over three decades. She was one of the first sculptors to focus on marine mammals in the early 1980's, and quickly established herself as one of the top marine artists in Hawaii and the western United States. She has always loved nature, so it was only natural for her to create work which led to her involvement in many environmental organizations. Terrie's work has been exhibited in galleries, public spaces and private collections around the world, and she has recently opened her own gallery in Camino, California.

Recently Arts and Culture El Dorado sat down with Terrie and discussed her artistic process, growth, and memories which lead to her return to El Dorado County.

## Did you always want to sculpt?

No. When I was young I loved writing, and often romanticized about going away to a writing school abroad. I would write songs, poetry, and stories out in nature. My life took a turn when I was 19 and pregnant with my daughter. I was living here in Camino at the time, and I started having vivid dreams with dolphins and whales. I felt like they were communicating with me - they wanted me to bring more awareness to their environment. So I started sculpting them - not for anyone else, or with any specific goals in mind. After creating two sculptures I received a lot of great feedback.

## How did you learn to sculpt?

I did not have any formal art training outside of my family. I feel very blessed to have been able to learn the Bennett process by working with my father and uncle from an early age; the sculpting techniques that have been handed down to me are a gift. I

would love to share these gifts with other artists as well, to ensure that creating by hand in this way does not become a lost art in the future.

## When did you realize you would succeed at being a sculptor?

After I was asked to show my first two dolphin sculptures in our Bennett Sculpture gallery in Carmel, California, the owner of Dolphin Galleries bought one for his wife. He asked me to show my work in his galleries in Hawaii - it was the early 80's and the marine art was just taking off in Hawaii. It all felt so divinely guided. What a huge blessing too, as it launched my sculpting career and supported me in being able to care for my daughter as a single mother.

## Can you describe the process you go through to create one of your sculptures?

In this modern era I think a lot of what I do would be called old school, especially now with the use of AI and 3D printing. I feel it is really important to carry on the art of creating things by hand out of raw materials. My father and uncle taught me to do three dimensional sketching in wire, which is my favorite part of the process. I sometimes start welding with an idea, but often I use this free form process to intuitively allow me to play with what energy wants to



Terrie Bennett, *Spirit*, 2005  
Photograph: Nicki Bennett



come through into form. There is so much freedom in creating in this way. I think it is very unique to the foundation of my family history as well. From there I will use the wire as a form and fill it in with either clay or bondo for the detail work.

**How long does a sculpture take?**

It really depends on the size of the sculpture. I would say an average of a few months to create the original design then we make a mold for reproduction. The lost wax casting process takes approximately eight weeks to complete.

My sculptures are cast in bronze - I love the medium of bronze with the ability to use contemporary patinas to create rich contrast between color and high-polish bronze.

**Who is your favorite artist, and do they influence your work?**

I would have to say that my father and uncle are my favorite artists. They have quite an amazing story. They were self taught artists that created such a diverse body of work - selling thousands of sculptures, opening multiple galleries, and creating such a lasting legacy. They are both artistic geniuses.

**Stand out artistic memory?**

In 2010, I was invited to submit a sculpture design to the Space Foundation commemorating NASA's 30 year Space Shuttle program. It was a great, great honor to receive this statement from Space Foundation Chief Executive Officer Elliot Pulham: "We were looking for a sculpture that captured a sense of soaring and flight, as well as the human dynamic of accomplishment. We were also looking for something unique and non traditional. But what Bennett created was far from an abstraction. The sculpture depicts the shuttle heading skyward, in full launch supported by five thrust blades, each symbolizing one of the five space shuttles. This is space. This is the space shuttle. This is the coolest stuff in the universe."

**What are you most proud of?**

In 2016, I was commissioned to replicate one of my father's wire sculptures from the early 70's. The sculpture, *Reflections*, is a woman kneeling with her long hair flowing down. I started working on this just one month after my father passed. There were many times in the process where I questioned

my ability, even thinking I might not be able to pull it off. It took me nine months of full time welding to complete it. It very much felt like a birthing process, with the hard labor and not knowing how it would come out. But, I did it! I know I was not alone - he was right there with me every step of the way as I studied every single weld of his on the smaller sculpture. It was a labor of love, truly one of my life's greatest artistic accomplishments.

**Do you do other forms of art?**

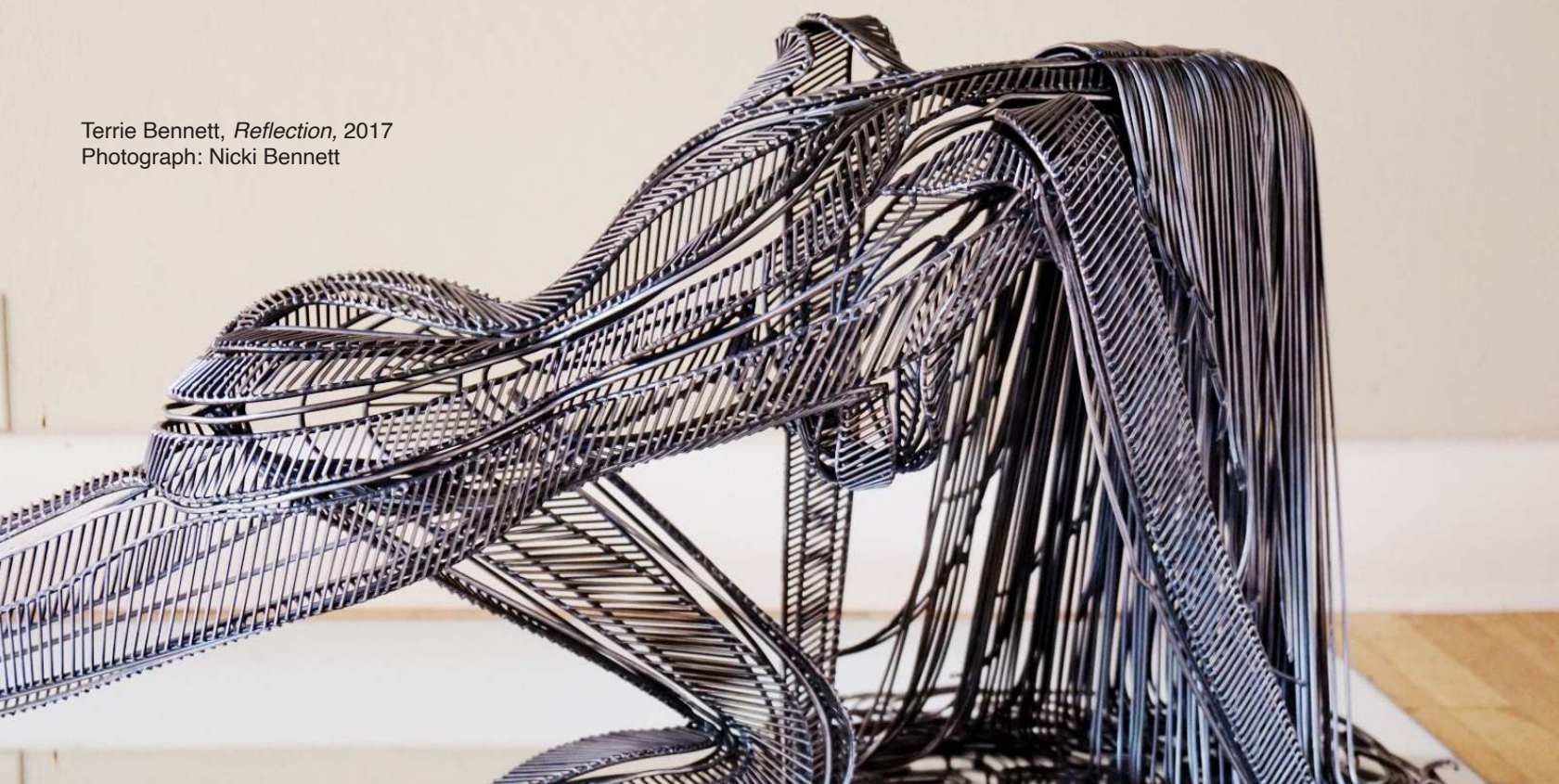
Writing. It is my first love and I hope to start putting all of my writing over the years into some sort of format to share with others. I also design jewelry, and have recently started painting.

**What made you decide to return to El Dorado County?**

El Dorado County feels like it is truly my home. After my father died in 2016, it felt important to go back to my roots and carry on the family legacy in the place where we have so much history.

Learn more:  
[www.TerrieBennett.com](http://www.TerrieBennett.com)

Terrie Bennett, *Reflection*, 2017  
Photograph: Nicki Bennett





# News and Announcements

## New Board Member

Robert J. Ferriman III is a Certified Private Wealth Advisor with Baird Private Wealth Management in Roseville.

An El Dorado Hills resident, Rob is active in the community, serving on several boards, and we welcome Rob, his wife Connie, daughter Reese and son Dane to the Arts and Culture family.

## New Arts Incubator Partner: Placerville Friends of Tibet

This group's mission is to support the Tibetan culture. Each year the group hosts Tibetan Buddhist monks who graciously share their arts and culture, Tibetan perspectives, mandalas, empowerments, and blessings to individuals, families, the environment, and the community.

[ArtsAndCultureElDorado.org/placerville-friends-of-tibet](https://ArtsAndCultureElDorado.org/placerville-friends-of-tibet)

## New Staffers at Arts and Culture El Dorado

Jordan Hyatt-Miller joined Arts and Culture El Dorado in July as our new Development and Program Associate.

Austin Hamlin joined Arts and Culture El Dorado in June as our new intern.

Jordan and Austin have already proven themselves to be valuable and indispensable members of our team.

## New Award Program: Young Artist Awards

The Young Artist Awards will honor the memory of four bright lights in our community who were great supporters of the arts.

These awards will be presented to outstanding high school juniors and seniors in music, visual art, theater, and nature-inspired art of any discipline.

[ArtsAndCultureElDorado.org/young-artist-awards](https://ArtsAndCultureElDorado.org/young-artist-awards)

## New Arts Incubator Partner: Placerville History Project

The Placerville History Project will bring the stories of Placerville's past into everyday life by establishing interpretive signs and works around the city. This project seeks to honor and share Placerville's history in a meaningful manner that is accessible to residents and visitors alike.

[ArtsAndCultureElDorado.org/placerville-history-project](https://ArtsAndCultureElDorado.org/placerville-history-project)

## New Guitars for Underprivileged Youth

The Family Resource Center and After School Enrichment Program at Placerville Union School District reached out to Arts and Culture El Dorado for help in obtaining guitars for their low income and homeless students.

After we spread the word, the group was gifted 24 new guitars, ensuring their students will be able to participate in lessons.



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Arts and Culture El Dorado's mission to promote, connect, and empower arts and culture throughout the county is achieved by targeted programs and services, a vibrant gallery exhibition series, and a focus on initiatives which support and sustain the cultural life of the region.