

Shadowcliff

inspiring the journey



2024
SHADOWCLIFF
ARTIST RESIDENCY



Mission, Vision, & Values

Shadowcliff is a non-profit organization founded as a place of retreat and renewal in a busy world. Our mission is, “A mountain sanctuary that holds space for individual and collective transformation.” We deeply believe in the power of human connection and the ability of that connection to heal. At Shadowcliff, we encourage reconnection to the natural world, to a sense of peace, and with the Divine, whatever that may be to you.

It is also important to our mission that we provide an affordable and meaningful experience to all of our guests. We learn much from our guests and from the natural world around us. We also provide educational opportunities, both large and small. Shadowcliff is a non-religious organization with a deep spiritual core.

Harnessing the power of connection, we inspire a more kind and loving world.

Healing – We create space for contemplation and healing.

Growth – We encourage spiritual, intellectual, and experiential journeys.

Community - We nurture deep and meaningful relationships, honoring our interdependence, respecting our differences.

Hospitality - We provide a range of programming, a commitment to pluralism/inclusivity and affordable accommodations.

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Reflections from Board Chair

Kelly Yarbrough

When I first brought the idea of an artist residency program at Shadowcliff to the Board of Directors in November 2023, the concept felt both new and familiar. Throughout its 70-year history, Shadowcliff has consistently played host to artists, creatives, and visionaries. Creating an environment for connection and creative problem-solving is something this place has always done well. In many ways, introducing an artist residency program simply feels like formalizing an aspect of what has always happened at this cherished mountain retreat.

Except that actually starting an artist residency program is not simple—at least, not if you want to do it well! As an artist myself, and the founder of a residency program in Kansas, I knew we would need support in cultivating a quality program that would be valuable to artist residents, the Shadowcliff community, and our neighbors in Grand County. Miraculously—it felt miraculous to me!—Alexander Thompson entered the scene. With an extensive background in dance, performance, and arts administration, and personal family ties to the founders of Shadowcliff, Alexander was the ideal person to help bring this idea to life.

What started as a virtual conversation in January 2024 quickly became a full-on research and development initiative to launch a pilot residency program at Shadowcliff in just eight short months. We interviewed more than a dozen artists across the United States about their experiences and preferences when it comes to residency programs. We reached out to local organizations to share what we were building and explore opportunities for collaboration. We gathered data on the economic impact of the arts in Grand County and the value that visiting artist programs can bring to rural communities. It was an enormous effort that required simultaneous learning and action on our part. But the result was more than worth it.

There are really no words to describe the magic of witnessing Sam Kim's "glacial" movements activating the Point in a completely new way, the intentional force of her body in collaboration with the alpine wind. The power of Li Harris' vocal conjurings, whether offered as performance or invitation to an audience to participate, left rooms full of people ringing with joy from the inside out. Kyle Dacuyan's poetry defied expectations of what a poem can be and how tenderly it can be shared. Helen Otterson's exceptional craftsmanship, interwoven with her family's medical journey, unlocked new relationships between form and function. And, the participatory theater work of Ash Hanson had 30+ people on their feet, engaging their hearts, minds, and bodies in an impromptu dance about Grand Lake! After the artist showcase at Shadowcliff in September, a local resident I hadn't met before came up to me, stunned, and said, "Wow... I'm so glad I came out tonight. I've never experienced anything like this before!"



As part of our due diligence, we sought feedback from our pilot residents after their experience. "Do you think there's potential for a residency program at Shadowcliff?" we wanted to know. The response: "YES!"

The pilot program was an encouraging success, thanks to the efforts of many people. Our on-site staff who welcomed

residents with warmth and care: Kimberly, Dave, Brandon, Dylan, Mac, and Diana. Our local friends at the Rocky Mountain Folk School and Grand Lake Creative District: Gillian Butler, Patty Alander, DiAnn Butler, and Alan Walker. The Upper Colorado Watershed Environment Team, Mayor Steve Kudron, all the artists who gave their time and input to help us shape the program, the Shadowcliff Board of Directors, and, of course, Alexander Thompson for being the producer and facilitator who made this dream a reality.

While we're thrilled with the success of the pilot, we also recognize that there's a long road of learning and growing ahead if the Shadowcliff Artist Residency is to become what we believe it can be. The program is nurtured by three key pillars: Community, Ecology, and Artistic Practice. Developing these pillars will take deepening local partnerships, a continued commitment to hospitality, and responsiveness to evolving needs. It will also require financial support. The Shadowcliff Board of Directors believes in this vision of infusing creative research into the model of Shadowcliff. We have embarked on a five-year Artist Residency Funding Campaign that will allow us to hire an Executive Director with the skills and passion to develop this model and deepen the ways that Shadowcliff can serve as a cultural destination in Grand County. If you would like to be part of this exciting vision for the future of Shadowcliff and Grand Lake, we'd love to hear from you!

For all the challenges and brokenness in the world today, we need creative solutions and fierce resiliency. Shadowcliff was never founded to be a vacation spot. It was built as a gathering place to heal, restore, and build strength to face our most pressing problems. We look forward to continuing that legacy with our neighbors, friends, and visitors through the Shadowcliff Artist Residency.

Onward,

Kelly Yarbrough
Chair, Shadowcliff Board of Directors



2024 Artist Residency

The artist residency program at Shadowcliff builds on our long-standing tradition of fostering meaningful exchanges and connections. The residency brings together a diverse group of artists, creatives, researchers, and cultural caretakers from around the country, providing them with time, space, and access to the rich natural and cultural resources of Grand County. For two weeks, artists were immersed in the beauty and history of Grand Lake, embarking on ecological experiences and engaging in new creative projects.

Residents participated in a free public event at the Grand Lake Community House, offering residents and visitors a unique opportunity to engage with the artists and learn about their work. Each artist shared insights into their creative process, presented their work to the public, and engaged in dialogue with attendees.

Shadowcliff's artist residency program will extend the Lodge's legacy of contributing to the cultural vibrancy of Grand Lake. From its early involvement in the founding of Rocky Mountain Repertory Theater—whose actors were housed on Shadowcliff's campus in the theater's early days—to its support during the founding of the Rocky Mountain Folk School, Shadowcliff has played a vital role in shaping the region's creative landscape. The Shadowcliff Artist Residency Program joins these efforts, further establishing Grand Lake as a destination not only for its majestic natural environs but also for its thriving arts and culture offerings.



TOP LEFT: Kyle Dacuyan performs a poem at the Grand Lake Community House. Photo by Ash Hanson.

TOP RIGHT: Participants in Shadowcliff's pilot artist residency program answer questions from audience members after a public event at the Grand Lake Community House. Photo by Alexander Thompson.

BOTTOM: Participants in Shadowcliff's pilot artist residency program learn about the role beavers play in the ecology of the Colorado River watershed from members of the Upper Colorado Watershed Environment Team. Photo by Alexander Thompson.

**LOCATION**

Brooklyn, NY

DISCIPLINE

Poet & Performer

"Of course, there is remarkable, restorative natural beauty... But I think what most distinguished Shadowcliff, for me, was the sense that this is a place made and sustained by community across many generations. I loved and felt the story of the place."

Kyle Dacuyan

Kyle Dacuyan is a poet and performer writing about work, the ways that work bears upon writing, where writing begins (in voice), where voice begins (in body), and how the body can be something more than a working body. His poems draw from a breadth of working word circumstances and matter: the sedimentary effects of labor and value on idiom, syntax, etymology, advertisement, law, embodiment, and ecology.

Dacuyan is the author of *Incitements* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2023). The book draws unruly attention to pleasure and embodiment as modes of counter-possibility, testing what speech can do and be when we leave function behind. *Incitements* asks: How do forces of profit limit our sense of the civic and the self? How do borders maintain hierarchies of leisure and production? In what way do the channels of information we receive and circulate uphold fictions of value?

Dacuyan's poems have appeared in The Brooklyn Rail, The Academy of American Poets Poem-a-Day series, Lambda Literary, The Offing, Social Text, and elsewhere. His performance works include *Legal Tender*, devised and presented with Andalyn Young and Antigravity Performance Project at Ars Nova, New York, NY (2019) and FringeArts, Philadelphia, PA (2020). As a 2023–2024 Open Call artist, he presented *Dad Rock* at The Shed, New York, NY (2024).

Dacuyan has received a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Cy Twombly Award for Poetry (2023), a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Creative Writing (2021), a Jerome Foundation Artist Fellowship Finalist Award (2021), and a Poets House Emerging Poets Fellowship (2017). He holds a B.A. from Brown University and an M.F.A. from Emerson College.

Journal Entries from Shadowcliff

August 30, 2024

First day at Shadowcliff. Woke 6:30 or so – soft pink lavender sunrise over austere mountain. Rocks and pines. The largest natural lake in Colorado. Next to the fridge, the wilderness guide says if you encounter a mountain lion, you will need to fight. I did a breathwork exercise – maybe that's not the safest thing to do at this altitude. It was both invigorating and tiring. I am getting in my body in a new place.

September 1, 2024

Shashankasana is the moon hare pose. Inhale as I stretch my arms up while kneeling, exhale as I draw them forward into a bow. Relaxes the eyes, relieves tension in the lower back. There's something fluid in the non-perceivable movement of my body. The internal movements triggered by the external ones. "Just dance," A said swinging his arms at dinner. Thinking about image, description, lyric – what do all of these modes do, and fail to do, and do differently from one another, and what do they do together. How does the textual account of the visual differ from the visual. What does it touch, stimulate (or not) in us.

Asking for the haptic. See with your skin. No, not see. Burn, hurt, anguish, rejoice, surprise, laugh, despair, exalt, focus, discover. And how do all of these compare to physical sensations. How do words and sensations compare to memory, or spirit.

The Yute [sic] legend about Grand Lake is that during a battle with the Arapaho, the Yute women and children were sent on a raft to the middle of the lake, when a storm blew in suddenly and capsized all of them. The low fog rolling over the smooth lake in the morning is lamentation. The spirits are crying. Of course the dead linger. The soul fearful at the body's point of dying rises from its form and wanders. Stays. I could just keep walking.

September 3, 2024

I think part of the issue, at least part of it previous to this point, is that I have not been spending enough time breathing. At least two hours of what I'm doing daily at Shadowcliff is breathing. It is so basic that I think we forget we actually do need to pay attention to it. You need to breathe to see. To dream. To move. You need all of these things to do the other things you're doing. Of course it's tempting to focus on what else feels productive, material, consequential, etc. But one other thing breathing helps me do is love, and nothing is more important than that. Your heart needs your lungs. Physically obviously, and also spiritually, energetically. And most of what I am trying to do as an artist is love. If I'm focused so narrowly on the part that's communication – what's coming across, or how I'm coming across, or what the work is doing – I find everything really clenches and turns into an object. But love is something else – accidental, surprising, uncontrolled, orienting. So. That's what I've been doing here. Breathing and loving. I walk to The Point and feel people in my heart. Listen to elk bugling in the valley, breathe. And everything else is just a trace or consequence of that.

Love frequency

All creatures have a tone that turns the heart to place and one another. Many maybe – tones and turning. Something wakes me. A cry and its shadow. Idea of language I was inside of inside of sleep. I report to the window. The storm sounds like talking. Then knowledge or recognition; just weather happening. Always even dreaming I am trying to hear speech and what is

underneath it. But not everything is people. Not everything I am waiting for. So much moving ceaselessly never meaning to communicate. Can't come down. Here or from its hovering. No storms alike though the mountains in their persistent corridors form again and again from wind certain lamentation. Or this is wind careening period,

the pitch of the resolve to pry anything it can higher and away – draws us, yes, into our human lowest parts. Oldest feeling, grief. You come from it. The healer tells my partner pressing into their navel. My partner tells me pressing into mine. You think your pain is entirely your own. But this place that first nourished you, made you,

connected you. Precedes you. Rain through the stone in the night. Legible over time with legend. A raft of women and children drowned in a storm in the lake meant to protect them. From war on land. The story of the place – told, believed, told again. Hearing and belief hold their spirits here. Wishing to be known. From inside too. What was fragile that I

capsized. Who. And sometimes it is the future foreclosed that haunts you, dead dreams in the water. Something I read turns into something I will never hear. Though it loops relentlessly in the listening part of me. A mother who has never heard her son speak, her son, nonverbal and autistic, a man she bathes and clothes, she has never heard him speak until the moment

of his murder, when soldiers come into the room with a dog who tears her son apart. She is not there. She is a room removed from him. Listening. To her son who has never spoken. Speaking for the first time. Enough, please, he says. Enough. Imagine. I cannot. Gathering the limbs of him. How can you bury someone you cannot put back together. Something is missing

between knowledge and feeling, between hearing and reading. Two elk in a field, then more, a herd of them. Whistling, darkening, crying. Sometimes you cannot know how deeply you hurt or desire until you hear it another language. Another story. Another mystery or report. It does not have to be mine or in my words at all or soul. To be with you.

© Kyle Dacuyan 2025



LOCATION

Moab, UT

DISCIPLINE

Social Practice & Theater

“The staff support! The beauty and natural surroundings! The enthusiasm of the local community! I think this is an excellent spot to host residencies and I think that it could be mutually beneficial to the future of Shadowcliff and the community.”

Ash Hanson

Ash Hanson (she/her) is a social practice and theater artist with over two decades of experience working with rural communities to activate stories, connect neighbors, and exercise collective imagination. She is the Creative Executive Officer (CEO) of Department of Public Transformation (DoPT) — a nonprofit organization that works at the intersection of creativity and civic life in rural communities. In addition to her work with DoPT, she is the founder of PlaceBase Productions, a theater company that creates original, site-specific musicals celebrating small-town life.

She is a member of the Center for Performance and Civic Practice Leadership Circle, and she was an Artist-in-Residence in both the Planning Department at the City of Minneapolis and with the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership, where she employed creative community engagement strategies for equitable participation in urban and rural planning and development processes. She holds an MA in Applied Theater with a focus on Rural Community Development, and she was named an Obama Foundation Fellow and a Bush Fellow for her work with rural communities. She believes deeply in the power of play and exclamation points!

Leaving a Trace: The Moab Theater Project

Rural communities, especially those shaped by centuries of extractive economies and tourism in the wake of settler colonialism, are now grappling with the impacts of extreme climate and deepening political polarization. These urgent challenges demand creative solutions and platforms for dialogue. *Leaving a Trace: The Moab Theater Project* embodies my dedication to amplifying the stories, celebrating the resilience, co-creating possible solutions, and embodying the civic imagination of rural communities through the transformative power of site-specific, community-driven theater.

Since 2011, I have worked as a rural theater and social practice artist under the banner of PlaceBase Productions, creating original performances that connect rural audiences to the landscapes that shape them. By blending research, oral histories, and creative collaboration, I craft theatrical experiences that honor the complexities, beauty, and challenges of rural life. I am passionate about creating work that sparks civic dialogue and action while deepening a sense of community identity and stewardship. Over the years, I’ve had the privilege of working in partnership with diverse rural communities across the country to uncover their stories and illuminate the intersections between place, history, and collective imagination.

Leaving A Trace builds on over two decades of rural theater practice and emerges at a pivotal moment. As communities like Moab confront increasing environmental pressures—from drought to over-tourism to the long shadows of colonization—this project invites audiences to consider their place in the complex ecology of the desert and their role in shaping its future. Performed outdoors, in the red rock desert, this production draws inspiration from the resilience of the land itself, while addressing the often-overlooked narratives of those who have been part of it for generations.

The goal of *Leaving a Trace* is not only to deepen audiences’ understanding of the desert’s resilience but also to prompt reflection on the footprints—literal and metaphorical—we leave behind. By combining humor, lyricism, and immersive storytelling, this project calls on us to act in “right relation” with the land, each other, and the futures we are collectively imagining. This is a critical time for rural communities and landscapes, and I believe the arts have a unique role to play in sparking the awareness, action, and reverence needed to navigate these challenges together, neighbor to neighbor.

During her time at Shadowcliff, Ash worked to complete the script for Leaving a Trace: The Moab Theater Project. Her fellow artist residents joined her to present a reading of the following excerpt from the play for an audience at Grand Lake Community House, which has been further abridged and formatted for this publication.

Leaving a Trace: OPENING SCENE: MOVE ALONG (excerpt)

Park Ranger Rio

Move along, move along now! The program is about to begin.

Find your seat everyone. Make sure you can see. Now that we are all gathered, we can get started! Hi! I'm Ranger Rio with the National Park Service. And, I am joined by my colleagues, who will introduce themselves, momentarily. Before we begin this evening's program, we are going to provide you with a quick overview of what to be mindful of in the realms of Weather, Wellness, Wildlife, and Walking. Yes, walking. We are in a delicate ecosystem. And, one of the most important rules of the desert is to watch where you walk. Stay on the trail, follow the cairns (cairns, for those of you that don't know, are little stacks of rocks that we wilderness folk use as wayfinding, especially on the slick rock), and MOST importantly, dear god, whatever you do... do not, I repeat, do NOT "bust the crust," or what we rangers affectionately refer to as "Crusty." This living layer, cryptobiotic soil, takes hundreds of years to grow and provides essential protection for the desert by preventing erosion and helping the land retain moisture. One wrong step can destroy decades, even centuries, of growth—so, folks, please, watch your footing! NEEEXT!

Park Ranger Tara

Howdy folks! I'm Ranger Tara! Reporting for duty with the weather report! Today is 61 degrees F / 16 degrees C, with a 0% chance of precipitation and a barometric pressure of 30.07 inches. While monsoons are not common this time of year, we want to be extra mindful of the dangers that they bring—lightning storms and flash floods. Fun Fact: Flash floods can bring walls of water up to 10 feet high, barreling through narrow canyons at 30 miles per hour—and it's not just water. It's rocks, mud, trees, and all kinds of desert sludge, so... on the off chance that it does start raining heavily or there is lightning nearby, look to your friendly Park Ranger to give you guidance on how to proceed—with caution, of course. And, if we happen to be in a slot canyon—one of those really narrow canyons with steep, steep walls—when this occurs (*turning dreadfully serious*) dear god, run! Run, I tell you! And, never look back. NEEEXT!

Park Ranger Gale

Oh, hi, there! I'm Ranger Gale! Here with the wellness report. We will be walking on uneven ground. Tread carefully. Ask your neighbor for a hand, if you need it. We will be walking about. And, the desert heat might start to get to you. Be sure you have water and remember to drink it. Rangers will take periodic water breaks to encourage us all to stay hydrated. In addition to your physical health, your mental health is also important. If you are feeling unwell or uneasy, check in with your friendly Park Ranger and they will be there to support you, to the best of their ability, of course. I have a degree in philosophy, which I know isn't exactly psychology, but I may be able to help you position your suffering in the grand scheme of existence, like Nietzsche said, "To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering." And, we are all trained Wilderness First Responders so, you are in good hands! NEEEXT!

Park Ranger Ray

Hey. Ranger Ray. Don't feed the bears. (*all other Park Rangers look at Ray, encouraging*

him to go on, say more, etc. But, he doesn't.)

Ranger Rio

Okay... (*taking back the energy*) We've got quite an exciting program for you here today. OooOOO, I am just thrilled to see so many intrepid adventurers! This is one of my favorite programs to offer. Truly! Do you know why? Because it puts everything, I mean EVERYTHING in perspective... (*takes a breath, clears throat, steps into character, dons a strange accent, and begins*) Welcome visitors to this strange and distant land! Before we embark into the wild unknown, we must understand where we came from, in order to know where we are going. So, let's have a quick orienteering lesson, shall we. We are here. Here we are. But, how did we get here?

(*fans the surroundings*)... Eh? (*pauses for dramatic effect*) Yes, yes, yes, you all think you know what shaped this land: the wind, the heat, the salt, the water... blahblahblah I'm the expert not you, settle down. HOWEVER, there is an element that rises above all the rest—one that we humans love to live by, and love to forget... TIME. Chronos. The lapping layers of ancient tides imprinting ripples on red rock.

Ranger Gale

The changing lengths and shapes of shadows playing upon the land.

Ranger Tara

The vast array of matter that once filled the carved out cavities of the Colorado Plateau.

Ranger Ray

(*all look at Ranger Ray waiting for his contribution*) Uhh... Dinosaur... bones. (*he shrugs, looks at his Garmin watch*)

Ranger Rio

(*again, taking back the energy*) Yes, it is time that has shaped this land, time has brought us here, and time makes ghosts of us all. That's right. And, right now, in this moment, we share this space with all the other ghosts that have roamed here; the only thing separating us is time.

(*Enter The Tardigrade - a player in a giant stuffed animal like puppet costume*)

I know what you're thinking: What the Honnaker is that!? The Tardigrade. Or water bear. This tiny, resilient microorganism is over 500 million years old and can survive extreme conditions, from the depths of the ocean to the vacuum of space. Magnificent! She's your oldest living relative.

(*Tardigrade throws Ranger Rio a bright, yellow-green rock*)

Or is this your oldest living relative?

© Ash Hanson 2025



LOCATION

Houston, TX

DISCIPLINE

Interdisciplinary Artist & Composer

"Best. Residency. Ever. I feel renewed and ready for the rest of the year. Thank you for the invitation to share such a rich legacy and incredible location with an amazing cohort. I am transformed by Spirit Lake."

Li Harris

Li(sa E.) Harris is an interdisciplinary artist, musician, and researcher who uses voice, theremin, electronics, movement, improvisation, meditation, and new media to explore healing in performance and living. She is the founder/creative director of the multidisciplinary creative arts studio Studio Enertia. Her awards include a 2022 Guggenheim Fellowship in Fine Arts and the 2021 Dorothea Tanning Award in Music/Sound from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. Her recent solo exhibitions include *Unlit: Sof Landin* (Ballroom Marfa, 2023), *D.R.E.A.M. = A Way to Afram* (Diverse Works, 2023), and *This is the Day* (Lawndale Art Center, 2024).



"While at Shadowcliff, I was practicing in my studio, the historic piano studio belonging to Residency Director Alexander Thompson's late great-grandfather [John Thompson]. With the door open and music pouring outdoors, Alexander's father, [Robert Thompson], stopped by to say he hadn't heard the piano played in years, as it belonged to his own grandfather. It was an honor to activate this beautiful instrument, legacy, and space.

Thank you Thompson family and Shadowcliff. I look forward to returning one day."



From Robert Thompson, posted to social media:

"My grandfather was a concert pianist. I returned home yesterday to see the door to his practice studio, a one room cabin, ajar. Through that portal emerged newly imagined music. It evoked recollections of my childhood, listening to him play in isolation in his mountain retreat. An artist was drawn from Shadowcliff to his piano, and it was resurrected.

A magical day."

TOP: Video still from *Spirit Lake Dance* by Li Harris.

MIDDLE: Li Harris watercoloring under the pergola outside of Shadowcliff's Cliffside Lodge.

BOTTOM: Li Harris at the piano in historic John Thompson studio.



LOCATION

Brooklyn, NY

DISCIPLINE

Choreographer & Dancer

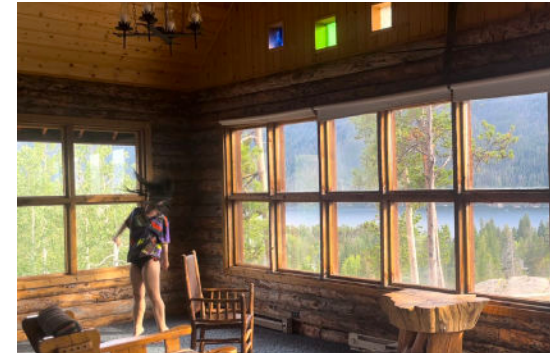
"I was so madly delighted that we were all really good people. Not only was everyone talented, but we're all just great, kind-hearted, lovely people."

Sam Kim

Sam Kim is an experimental choreographer, dancer, and teacher who has been making and performing in dances for over two decades. She was born to Korean immigrants and currently lives and works in Brooklyn. Sam's felt and direct experience of being an immigrant has uniquely honed her artistic lens and approach; it's manifested in her work as an elegantly subversive form of agitation against traditional dance forms. Her body of work resolutely pushes into the margins of dance, celebrating the edges while courting the danger inherent in rejecting dance's legacies—in other words, she approaches her choreographic practice as an artistic game of brinkmanship.

Sam has received commissions from Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church, Zenon Dance Company (Minneapolis), The Chocolate Factory Theater, The Kitchen, Performance Space 122, New York Live Arts, Dance Theater Workshop, and Highways Performance Space (LA), among many others, to make and present her body of work. Sam has been awarded fellowships and residencies at Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, Ucross Foundation, Yaddo, Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts, Mount Tremper Arts, Bogliasco Foundation (Italy), New York Live Arts, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Djerassi Resident Artists Program, and MacDowell, among others, in support of her work, and was a 2022 GPS Artist (Global Practice Sharing program of Movement Research) in Belgrade, Serbia.

"My residency experience at Shadowcliff was utterly fulfilling and pleasurable, artistically and personally. Point blank: this is because of the people behind it—the incredible kindness and warm-heartedness of all of the staff. This energy permeated and colored everything I did there, created there, experienced there. I also felt it directly and strongly in the selection of the cohort itself; I had never been in the company of such kind, sensitive and mindful fellow resident artists. Yes, I found them all exceptionally talented and inspiring to be around, but I was just as blown away by their generosity of spirit and goodwill.



This leads me to the profoundly memorable and powerful experience of the public work share at the community center in Grand Lake. It was the first contact I had made with my fellow residents' work, and I was thrilled and awed by all of it. It was a powerful reminder of the sheer power and beauty of art—how you never really know when or how you might encounter it, and whom it might profoundly impact. I think I didn't know up until that moment how much I needed to be reminded of this in a visceral way. In sum, residency at Shadowcliff was a truly timely gift—a reminder that it is a privilege to get to make art, and to experience the art of others.

I often say this... artist residencies seem to be the last bastion of real artistic resource, especially in this country, at this time. To be given the freedom of space and time, and license to play, is imperative to art practice—it definitely is to mine. I am deeply grateful for the gift of my experience at Shadowcliff, and wish this residency program to continue and thrive for a long time to come."



TOP: Rehearsal still of Sam Kim in the Shadowcliff Chapel.

BOTTOM: Performance still of Sam Kim on the Shadowcliff Point overlooking Grand Lake.



LOCATION

Excelsior, MN

DISCIPLINE

Sculptor & Ceramicist

"The Shadowcliff residency was a transformative experience that seamlessly blended art, nature, and personal rejuvenation."

Helen Otterson

Helen Otterson received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Kansas City Art Institute and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Miami. Exhibited throughout the United States and internationally, her work has been published in American Craft Magazine and Ceramic Monthly. Her work can also be found in books such as *Cast: Art and Objects Made Using Humanity's Most Transformational Process*, *500 Sculptures*, and *500 Figures in Clay*. Helen's ceramic and glass sculptures are part of the permanent collections at the Mulvane Art Museum, Nicolaysen Art Museum, and the Plains Art Museum. Helen has been a McKnight Visiting Artist Residency at Northern Clay Center in Minneapolis. She has completed artist residencies at the A.I.R. Vallauris, France, Anderson Ranch Arts Center, and the International Ceramic Studio in Kecskemét, Hungary.

"Immersed in the breathtaking Colorado landscape, I had the unique opportunity to step out of my cabin each morning and embark on invigorating hikes into the mountains. These early excursions into nature not only energized me physically but also served as a wellspring of inspiration for my studio practice.

During my time there, I focused on refining my glaze technique, testing eight glazes with varying surface qualities (satin and glossy) and glaze fit.

From these trials, I selected three foundational glazes and proceeded to conduct a color line test with fourteen different hues, resulting in an exciting new glaze palette.

Additionally, I handbuilt three vases, which I decorated with intricate floral drawings and further enhanced by adding sculptural floral elements, combining both two-dimensional and three-dimensional approaches to my work."



TOP: Glaze tests by Helen Otterson in the Rocky Mountain Folk School Ceramic Studio.

BOTTOM: In-progress, hand-built vases by Helen Otterson in the Rocky Mountain Folk School Ceramic Studio.



Shadowcliff Artist Residency Contributors

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(as of April 2025)

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Ellen Stein Wallace
Terry Woodbury

We are deeply thankful to the generous supporters recognized here. Your contributions make it possible for Shadowcliff to provide the gift of uninterrupted time in an inspiring and nurturing environment.

\$10,000 or more

Anonymous

\$5,000 or more

Jay Culver
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Terry Woodbury
Robert Thompson

\$2,500 or more

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Dave Claggett, Facilities Consultant
Dylan Lehrbaum, Special Projects Coordinator/Hospitality
Kate Trice, Airbnb Manager

Nick Zulpo, Compassionate Kitchen Lead
Maria Folsom, Compassionate Kitchen Assistant

Mac Bailey, Guest Services
Diane McCutcheon, Guest Services
Margot McCutcheon, Guest Services

Brandon Bartel, Housekeeping
Jules Bartel, Housekeeping



A Gift to Shadowcliff

Your gift to Shadowcliff will help to guarantee that artists can continue to make, inspire, heal, and transform in the majesty of the Rocky Mountains.

As a nonprofit organization, Shadowcliff relies on donations to sustain and grow its residency program. Please consider supporting Shadowcliff through an annual contribution, endowed gift, or planned gift.

By making a donation today, you will play a vital role in nurturing the arts, fostering collaboration, and establishing Grand Lake as a thriving cultural destination. Every contribution helps us build this program, host artists, and organize public events that engage our community.



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