

Elf Trapping with Susan Oppelt

By Amanda Kuehn



Storyteller and artist Susan Oppelt with one of her wool felt elves.

“Have you ever wondered, how to trap an elf? Or what might happen if you did?” With these magical questions, Lafayette storyteller and artist Susan Oppelt introduces her iBook “Trap

the Elf – Anytime of Year,” which invites readers on a multi-dimensional interactive adventure. Based on a childhood memory, “Trap the Elf” engages the imaginations of parents and children alike, organi-

cally creating an environment for family interaction.

“I was interested in art from a really young age,” said Oppelt, who grew up in New Jersey and began attending weekend art classes as a teenager. She majored in fashion design and received her BFA from Moore, launching her into a multi-faceted creative career. “Fashion design was well-rounded for artistic direction,” she explained. “It incorporated graphic design, photography, illustration and branding.”

Oppelt started in branding and design in New Jersey, then moved on to illustration, print advertising and interactive in San Francisco. “I liked technology,” she recalled. “It was fun. [Lot 21 Interactive] was an exciting test bed of people excited about technology and taking it further.”

Oppelt has switched coasts and companies several times. “I did things I thought were dreams of mine,” she said, recalling her work with Polo, Ralph Lauren, Yahoo and Comcast. She and her husband currently live in Lafayette with their 5-year-old son.

“It’s been a really interesting path,” Oppelt reflected. “I couldn’t say when I was 15 or 18 ‘I’m going to do this thing,’ because it didn’t exist.” Oppelt is currently the chief

creative officer of LUMIN Studios, LLC, the company that formed “Trap the Elf.”

“This project was something I was initially working on for my son and my nieces and nephews,” said Oppelt. “We were in our backyard in the spring and I started telling my son the story of this elf.” It is a story that Oppelt’s Irish father used to tell to her and her sister. After explaining the tale, Oppelt’s 3-and-a-half-year-old, was full of questions, “Did you ever get him? Do you think we could get him in Tahoe? In Hawaii? Could we build a trap?”

That was enough to spark Oppelt’s innovative hopes. She recorded the story in rhyme and set to work dreaming of images, which took shape in the form of wool felt creatures photographed against real life backgrounds. Using iBooks Author, Oppelt incorporated photographs, sounds and descriptions, making the story accessible to a wide audience.

“I’d like parents to read it to their child or have conversations afterward, creating activity time together,” said Oppelt. Her ultimate hope is that the story will move off the page and into the lives of readers, encouraging them to activate and imagine, building their own fa-

vorite memories together.

Plans for the future include a translation into Spanish, a print format, and a DIY elf trap. “Trap the Elf” is available for download on your iPad with iBooks or on your computer with iTunes. Check out a preview at:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/trap-the-elf/id701133117?ls=1>

<https://www.facebook.com/traptheelf>.

For more information on “Trap the Elf” and other Susan Oppelt creations, check out: traptheelf.com, <https://www.facebook.com/hello.luminstudio> and luminstudio.com.

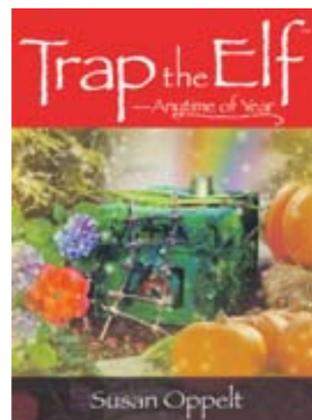


Image provided

“Parkland”

By Derek Zemrak



Austin Nichols as Emory Roberts stars in “Parkland.” Photo: Claire Folger ©2013 Exclusive Media Entertainment, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Photo provided

The California Independent Film Festival is four weeks away and Independent Films are generating excitement! We are very fortunate to have two beautiful independent movie theaters to showcase the best films from festivals around the world. This week the Orinda Theatre is showing the newest four-star film, “Parkland,” the hospital in Dallas, Texas, where President John F. Kennedy was taken after his assassination.

Although millions have seen footage of the shooting, few are familiar with the individuals whose lives were so tragically changed on Nov. 22, 1963. There was the “Zapruder” video, but who was Abraham Zapruder (portrayed in “Parkland” by Oscar nominee Paul Giamatti (“Cinderella Man,” “Sideways”)? Giamatti always delivers an amazing performance and he makes one feel for this man who carries the burden of shooting a home video that haunts him for the rest of his life. “Parkland” portrays the people (hospital personnel, first responders, FBI, reporters, etc.) who were affected by the assassination.

How about the young resident, Dr. Charles ‘Jim’ Carrico (Zac Efron), who finds himself thrown into saving the President of the United States, and less than 36 hours later finds himself in the same situation with Lee Harvey Oswald, Kennedy’s assassin. It was Nurse Doris Nelson, played by Oscar winner Marcia Gay Harden (“Pollock,” “The Mist”), who had to deal with the hospital staff, CIA agents, FBI agents, as she was trying to keep it all together.

First time director Peter Landsman (a former journalist) does an excellent job having the audience believe they are with Zapruder filming the motorcade or in the total chaos of the emergency room or on Air Force One. The use of intertwining original footage creates elements of realism and tension as one is drawn into the chaotic environment.

The other cast members are: Oscar winner Billy Bob Thornton (“Sling Blade”) as secret service agent Forrest Sorrels, Oscar nominee Jacki Weaver (“Silver Linings Playbook”) as Marguerite Oswald, mother of Lee Harvey Oswald. While watching the film, I said to myself “she is overacting” but after researching footage of Marguerite Oswald on YouTube, Weaver nailed it! Her performance of Marguerite was dead on. Equally as good was James Badge Dale (“World War Z,” “The Lone Ranger”) as Robert Oswald, Lee Harvey’s brother.

“Parkland” is a movie that makes one realize how one event can change lives forever. “Parkland” can only be seen on this side of the Caldecott Tunnel at the Orinda Theatre. Do not miss this movie. Lamorinda Theatres is grateful to have it here.

Parkland is rated PG-13 with a total running time of 93 minutes.

Derek Zemrak is a film critic, film producer and founder of the California Independent Film Festival. You can follow Derek on Twitter @zemrak for the latest Hollywood news. Derek can be heard every Friday on KAHJ 950AM on the Poppoff Show.



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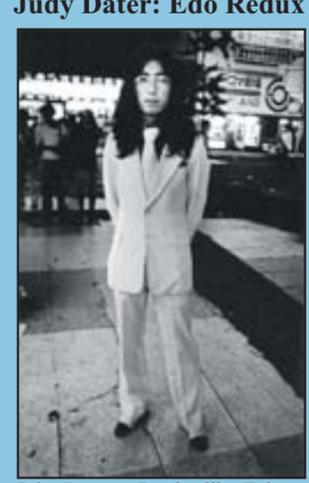


Saint Mary's College Museum of Art

New Exhibitions

Sunday, Oct. 20 - Sunday, Dec. 15

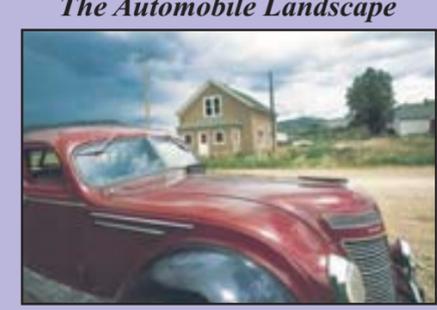
Judy Dater: Edo Redux



John Lennon Look-alike Tokyo
Courtesy of the Artist

Slide Talk by Influential American Photographer
Judy Dater Sunday, Oct 20, 2 pm, Soda Center, free

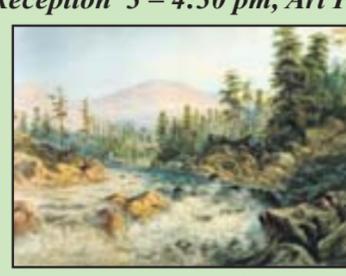
The Automobile Landscape



Malcolm Lubliner
1937 Airflow, Steamboat Springs
1969, gift of the Artist, SMC Museum Collection

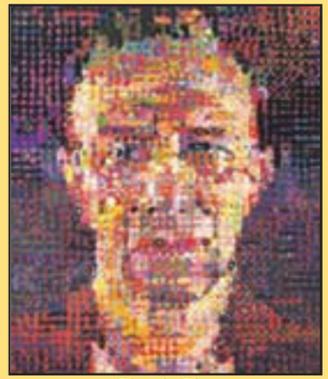
Malcolm Lubliner will give an exhibition walk-through at 3:15 pm., Sunday, Oct. 20.

Nature's Tranquil Splendor
Opens Sunday, Oct 20:
Reception 3 – 4:30 pm, Art Patio



William Keith
Cisco, Near Donner Summit
SMC Art Collection

The Artist Revealed: Artist Portraits and Self-Portraits



Chuck Close
Portrait of Alex Katz
On loan from the Syracuse University Art Collection

Opening Day Events Sunday, Oct 20 –

- Slide-Talk by Judy Dater, 2 pm, Soda Center, free admission
- Exhibition Walk-Through by Malcolm Lubliner 3:15 – 3:45 pm.
- Reception 3 – 4:30 pm, Art Patio

Public Hours: Wed – Sun, 11 am-4:30 pm. Museum Admission: Adults \$5; Members and K-12 graders Free; Parking Free; Group Tours Free Phone: 925-631-4379 Website: stmarys-ca.edu/museum

Submit stories and story ideas to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com