

# TRAILS & VISTAS: TAHOE DREAMS MANIFESTED

by Nicole Cheslock

Photo: Jeff Engerbreitson

**T**rails and Vistas is an annual art hike that offers a two- to three-mile experience like none other in the region, perhaps the world.

Immersed in nature, dance and music, hikers experience the Sierra Nevada in such a unique style with a group of no more than 30 people, countless opportunities to see their surroundings in a new way and continually connect to the surrounding landscape.

"The grandeur of the mountains, streams, lakes and woodland settings presents a perfect stage for art of all kinds," explains performance director Elizabeth Archer. "Trails and Vistas provokes a powerful sense of wonder and lifts your spirits. It offers a time of reflection and serenity."

Artists will tantalize, delight and capture the imagination of adults and youth during the three-hour hike, which is inspired by this year's theme "If Dreams Were Clouds" and the venue, Shirley Canyon. Hikers will travel over granite boulders, take steps along dirt trails and experience eight distinct performances during their guided journey in Olympic Valley, just steps from the Village at Squaw Valley on Sept. 11 and 12. Trails and Vistas is not a simple walk in the woods, but rather a creative, strenuous hike that covers nearly 1,500 feet in elevation in approximately 2 miles.

This year's theme was inspired by Executive Director Nancy Lopez's twin children in a story she shared: "Each year I sit and wait for the theme to present itself through a place, an action or a person. While sitting and pondering the theme, my 5-year-old daughter came to me and asked, 'What if spirits were clouds?' That was it. A child brought the theme to Trails and Vistas. A few weeks later, her twin brother noticed the big snowy clouds of the Sierra and said, 'The dark clouds are playing tag with the earth.' Oh, how we notice things when we slow down and view life as a child."

Lopez encourages everyone to explore this year's theme.

"Wherever you are, take some time to look up and welcome our dreaming of song, dance and rhythmic striking of a drum to welcome

a higher experience of exploration of nature and its creatures," she says. "While you are taking time to see, take time to sit in calmness and explore your dreams like exploring a trail in the woods. Until we meet in September, explore the sky from your backyard, from your cityscape or on a mountain peak and play with your own dream songs."

## CAPACITOR

As a previous Trails and Vistas hiker, I am especially looking forward to being whisked away into a dream world without stepping beyond the majestic scenery provided by this year's host, Squaw Valley USA.

The performance by **Capacitor**, an extraordinary dance ensemble based in San Francisco, will be especially noteworthy.

"Obsessed with the mechanics of the human body, as well as machines that propel the body through space, Capacitor artists have become masters of rigging systems, coutures of wearable sculpture and engineers of large-scale props designed to stretch the limits of physical poetry," is how Capacitor describes its artistry.

Capacitor headlines Trails and Vistas with movements that have not been seen in the region. The interdisciplinary dance company employs science and scientific principles to create unique and gripping live performances. For example, one of the group's recent projects, a dance in the Costa Rican jungle was described as "an exploration of desire and yearning in the natural world." The New York Times praised the performance as "Ingenious ... within Outer Spaces compared heavenly bodies to human bodies and found them equally amazing."

"Capacitor dancers don't create dance about nature, we practice being a force of nature," says Jodi Lomask, Capacitor's artistic director. "It is our way of exploring the way the world works from the inside. We do our best to understand what is currently known about the natural world through the lens of science, and then we put our bodies into the biome, into the

process and let the mystery unfold."

Lomask said that she is looking forward to locating a site in Shirley Canyon and creating scores for the dancers to enter that site.

As a prelude to the art hike, InnerRhythms will host a dance class with visiting aerialist Lomask on July 31. No experience is necessary. The class is open to ages 10 and older and a \$5 donation is requested. To register for the free class, call (530) 550-8464.

## PERFORMERS

Trails and Vistas is collaborating with more than 20 artists to create a memorable journey. Poets, painters, musicians, storytellers, sculptors and dancers play with the concepts of dreams, clouds and space to create a magical experience.

Sold out for the last three years, Trails and Vistas attracts internationally known artists such as returning musician **Angelika**.

Angelika sings ancient Sanskrit chants, mantras, prayers in and her own songs accompanied by a handmade tamboura and 12-string guitar.

"Performing at Trails and Vistas was one of those unique experiences that sticks out from all the rest," she says. "Singing for a whole weekend in a magical ancient Aspen grove to all of nature and the people coming by under the blue and dreamy Sierra sky."

Additional returning performers include dancers from **InnerRhythms Dance Theatre**, musicians and **Cathee van Rossem St. Clair**, well known for her incredibly beautiful painted eggs and much-loved hands-on art classes through her work as an Artist in Residence with Arts For the Schools, one of Trails and Vistas' collaborating partners in addition to Truckee Donner Land Trust, InnerRhythms and KidZone Museum.

InnerRhythms Dance Theatre will be working with a white parachute this year set to music by Bjork.

"The piece is meant to give an ethereal feeling," says Archer, noting that the piece is inspired by this year's theme. Archer also

serves as executive director of InnerRhythms Dance Theatre.

Illustrator and sculptor **Angelique Benicio** brings an element of mystery and magic to Trails and Vistas. **Jean Louise Fournier**, a poet and dancer with a strong connection to place, also returns. Fournier has performed her poetry at Trails and Vistas for the past four years.

Singer, songwriter and composer **Chris Waltz**, hailed as the Josh Groban of Celtic Music, celebrates the romantic side of Irish music. Waltz integrates the exotic sounds of middle eastern and gypsy music into his compositions and he will be collaborating with a harpist at Trails and Vistas.

Tahoe-based **Kira Yannetta** is a writer and Renaissance woman deeply committed to meditation, creative arts and the wonders of nature. She will be performing for two Walking Meditation hikes on Sept. 11 at 4:30 p.m. and Sept. 12 at noon.

**Jayatu**, a new artist to Trails and Vistas 2010, is an environmental storyteller. He has performed across the country since 1985. Through storytelling, Jayatu captures the spirit of the land and shares compelling words when he shares insights from John Muir and other wilderness seers.

Trails and Vistas grew out of Lopez' thesis project for her masters in Fine Arts degree from San Jose State University. After moving to Truckee, Lopez approached Archer and the two joined forces with the support of community organizations to launch the first North Tahoe art hike in 2004. Today Trails and Vistas is a nonprofit headed by Lopez.

*Tickets to Trails and Vistas are now available. Tickets usually sell out, so purchase tickets early. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for students through July 31. Beginning Aug. 1, tickets will be \$30 for adults and \$15 for students. Guided hikes are offered every 15 minutes on Sept. 11 and 12. Dogs and photography are not permitted. For more information, visit [www.trailsandvistas.org](http://www.trailsandvistas.org).*