

FALL 2014
IRREVERENT &
SLIGHTLY UNHINGED
ISSUE #2

focus

big mountains. big life.

6

THIS IS THE NUMBER "THEY" SAY TO USE ON THE COVER TO DRAW PEOPLE IN. THEY SAY PEOPLE RELATE IT TO SEX, AND HELL, SEX SELLS. BUT IN REALITY, THIS NUMBER RELATES TO NOTHING IN OUR MAGAZINE.

we can't stop thinking about...

SO MANY THINGS. WELCOME TO OUR INNER DIALOGUE. **WATER, WATER, WATER.** IS THERE ENOUGH WATER? WHERE DOES OUR WATER COME FROM? WHERE DOES IT GO? **WHAT'S IN OUR WATER?** AND YOU KNOW WHAT? IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR A VACATION. **WE WANT TO HEAD TO THE MOUNTAINS.** OR FISHING. WE **ALSO THINK FISHING SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT IDEA.** BUT WE ALSO WANT TO COOK. **THE RECIPES IN HERE** WILL MAKE YOU THE **MOST POPULAR** PERSON AT A PARTY. OH, GET THIS. WE'VE DECIDED GARTH BROOKS INSPIRES US TO BUY HOUSES. **DUDE. THIS IS NOT A GIRL-MAGAZINE,** NOR IS IT A GIRLY-MAGAZINE. IT'S EQUAL PARTS FOR THE **DUDES, CHICKS, MOMS, DADS, GRANDDADS, & YOU MY-DOG-IS-MY-KID TYPES OUT THERE.** THIS WILD RIDE STARTS ON PAGE 4

INSIDE

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ADVENTURE • HEALTH & BEAUTY

CALLING ALL

arts & culture

ADDICTS

The Sun Valley arts and culture scene is a vibrant mix of established and up-and-coming galleries representing a wide range of artists. But it is also pop-ups, installations, and other out-of-the-box art experiences dreamed up by creative types in our midst. It's also artists offering behind-the-scenes studio tours and engaging in real and authentic conversations with participants about their work, their inspirations, and their process.

The cultural life in Sun

Valley extends far beyond the gallery and the studio. Sculptures are multiplying all over the town and gondolas are being wrapped in an art-inspired frenzy. Music from concerts with big-name draws and bar-band gigs makes up the soundtrack to our Sun Valley experience. Never-heard-of bands play and all of a sudden, we're humming a common tune. Thank you, Josh Ritter and The Center for the Arts,

But none of this is possible without the

audience—the engaged, the informed, the curious, and yes, the sometimes rowdy. We do a little dance in your honor. Thank you for living and visiting here and expecting great things.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that slack gives you an excuse to put on those sweatpants and stay home to catch up on *Justified*. We love Raylan Givens as much as the next guy (actually, probably more, way more), but there are too many concerts, lectures, exhibits, and openings to sit on the couch and daydream about Raylan.

at the root of the matter

words by SABINA DANA PLASSE & RYAN WATERFIELD

JILL LEAR'S TREES ARE A TESTAMENT TO LIFE

"Trees are survivors through the ages." And with that, Jill Lear had us hooked. Leave it to an artist to shake up the way we see things. Trees as protagonists, witnesses, and survivors. OK, we'll bite.

Sun Valley-based artist Jill Lear doesn't just shake up the way we perceive and encounter trees, she draws attention to the stories within the trees. She imagines and investigates the tree; she collects lore about trees to better understand the role a particular tree has played in the life of a particular community. Her work is grounded in place, and fittingly, the titles to many of her paintings and drawings are the longitude and latitude degrees where her subjects are rooted. Why trees? "Because," she says, "trees are a vehicle to explore structure and order in the face of chaos. There's always a balance with trees

no matter how off-kilter they may look—that balance is because they are in and of nature."

While Lear has traveled the world documenting and painting trees, her most recent project took her to Texas. On a 1,300-mile trip from Dallas through the heart of Texas, Lear visited 27 trees, photographed them, and is now working on a collection of paintings based on those trees.

It all started with a seed of an idea—trees in Texas—and then that idea took root, nourished by the fact that certain trees in Texas are nearly state treasures. There is extensive research and documentation on

many significant trees and there is a wealth of lore to explore. And what is lore but a way for us to better understand who we are and where we came from? Take the Matrimonial Tree outside of San Saba, Texas, for instance. "Long before the Spanish invaded this rich San Saba River bottomland," reads a website dedicated to the historic trees of Texas, "Indian braves and shy maidens met and were united in wedlock," beneath the Texas oak. And on the day Lear visited the tree? "We arrived to find several people waiting for a young couple who had arranged to be married there that afternoon. The tradition



ABOVE: 34° 04' 18.50" N 118° 24' 11.7" W MSF 6H VSI (20120928) mixed media on paper, 36" x 48" (burned) 2012. BELOW: Artist, Jill Lear.

continues." And so you see, for Lear, trees are not only witnesses to events, but also an integral part of the stories of many and therefore the collective history of a place.

Fittingly, it wasn't just research that led Lear to many of the trees, it was social media—Twitter, in fact—today's version of an interactive bulletin board, or, dare we say it, message trees. Lear discovered Twitter on this trip and says she couldn't believe the response including one from a head gardener of an old estate in England who was interested in her projects,

which will, of course now, include historic trees of England. "When I put up the word 'historic,' it resonated for a lot of people out there," she said. "I was just so surprised by how many people responded."

Connecting to people who have an interest in historic trees has given Lear a whole new perspective. So many people met her description of her journey in Texas with, "They have trees in Texas?" Let's ignore for now the absolute absence of understanding of the vastness and variety of the Texas landscape and just consider the fact that

most people take trees for granted. The connections that Lear made through social media and on her trip reaffirms her drive to find and document as many historic trees as possible. But she cautions, "It's not just documenting," she says. "It's also capturing a complete life span of these trees. I'm concerned with the history, the stories, the mapping, the longitude and latitude, and anchoring those trees that have been watching all this happen."

With her paintings, Lear says, "I want to evoke the history of that place. These old trees in Texas have





TOP TO BOTTOM: Hanging Tree: 35° 38' 46.40" N 120° 50' 56.29" W
 Paso Robles Oak #1 (2014015), mixed media on paper on panels
 60" x 40" (each panel 22" x 30") 2014

jill says... about her journey

Lear is a woman of many talents—not only is she an extraordinary painter, but she obviously has a gift for meeting people. Here is Jill on just a few of the people she met along the way.

Edwina Weiser, Lampasas, TX Art collector and tree lover. Let us come into her home and showed us all her special trees and plants as well as the lot behind hers which she purchased in order to save the live oak grove growing there. Told us stories about the deer that come to feed there every evening.

A.R. Rogers, Austin, TX Poet. Ms. Rogers was seated at a small table outside a store on South Congress. On the table was a typewriter, paper, and a cup. She was offering to write poems. At first we just walked by and said no thank you, and then we thought: we are on this voyage of discovery and this would be a great addition to our adventure. So we went back. She asked my name and what I did and where we were headed.

David England, Goose Island, TX Park Superintendent. Arranged for us to be able to come right up to the incredible Goose Island Oak. Over 1,500 years old. Belonging to many cultures and traditions.

Kerry Bexler, Lexington, TX Owner of Snow's BBQ and former rodeo clown. The BBQ place is open only on Saturday's from 8am until they run out and you better be in line by 8am if you want to get anything. They gave us free Shiner beer with our BBQ (Not recommended at 8am!).

stood witness to so much history. Over the ages they have grown as big and as complex as that history they have witnessed." But her paintings are not complex and they aren't heavy like trees (and like much of the history). Instead, often there is more white space in the body of the tree and splashes of color outside the frame of the tree. Often, the colors in the trees reflect the colors in the world outside the tree. Or is it the

other way around? It seems to us an interesting move that asks the viewer to wonder: does history influence the tree or does the tree influence the events happening around it? Think back to that Matrimonial Tree, something about that space, the shade that tree provides, the natural harbor that it is, inspires people to merge their own histories and futures with someone else. And the tree is there to witness it.



PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF JILL LEAR