



bel canto

Contemporary Artists Explore Opera

BEL CANTO AUDIO GUIDE

GREETING

Welcome to SITE Santa Fe's audio tour of *Bel Canto*.

We are grateful to *Bel Canto's* Lead Sponsor, the Thoma Foundation, for supporting the exhibition and this audio experience.

As you walk through the exhibition, you will find icons and numbers that indicate a new stop on our tour.

You can take this tour in any order you wish. Just enter the number corresponding to your chosen stops on the keypad of your phone. Follow each number with the pound key.

As you walk through the show, you will meet our SITE Guides. They can assist you with this audio tour as you go and answer any questions you have about the exhibition.

We hope you enjoy your tour!

WELCOME TO BEL CANTO

1# Welcome by Irene Hofmann, Phillips Director and Chief Curator, SITE Santa Fe

Hello, this is Irene Hofmann. I am the Phillips Director and Chief Curator of SITE Santa Fe and the curator of *Bel Canto: Contemporary Artists Explore Opera*.

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this exhibition and our audio guide.

As you explore *Bel Canto* you will encounter the work of eight artists whose works have been inspired by opera. Their works explore the music, history, politics, and aesthetics of this iconic art form. The works in *Bel Canto* frame the opera as a mirror of society, a creative expression that embodies essential emotions and cultural values.

Bel Canto celebrates the glorious audacity of opera while revealing its subversions and the complexity of its relationship to such issues as race, class, and gender.

All of this and more make opera a potent source of inspiration for contemporary artists. It is my pleasure to introduce you to them.

Before I go, a note about this audio tour. I'll return throughout the tour to share thoughts on the artists and artworks you'll be seeing. Joining me in this audio guide are a number of *other* voices, including several of the artists themselves. From the Santa Fe Opera you'll hear from General Director Robert Meya and Randy Lutz who oversees the amazing prop shop. You'll also hear from some members of our team here at SITE including our installation crew who will share some behind-the-scenes details of this show.

Enjoy your visit and please share your feedback as you leave today. We'd love to hear what *you* think!

2# Welcome by Robert Meya, General Director, Santa Fe Opera

Hello, I am Robert Meya, General Director of the Santa Fe Opera. Founded in 1957, the Santa Fe Opera is one of the leading summer opera festivals in the world today. Each season we perform five operas from well-known classics to lesser known operas, to American and world premieres of new works.

Once described by Richard Wagner as the "Gesamtkunstwerk," opera truly represents the combination of all the arts into one -- from composition and poetry, to singing, acting and dancing, to lighting, stage direction, scenic and costume design. The list goes on.

The Santa Fe Opera is a proud collaborator with SITE Santa Fe for the *Bel Canto* exhibition in exploring common linkages between the visual and performing arts. The artists featured here today all draw on opera as their inspiration and their subject -- from the architecture of opera houses, to staged opera scenes captured on print and film, to actual props that have been featured on the stage of the Santa Fe Opera. *Bel Canto* seeks to illuminate and inspire and to celebrate the spirit of human achievement through all of the arts.

BILL VIOLA

3# Introduction to the work of Bill Viola with Irene Hofmann

Bill Viola is recognized as one of today's most influential video artists. A pioneer of this medium, Viola has spent over 40 years developing works of extraordinary technical skill and has been instrumental in the establishment of video as a vital form of contemporary art. He was one of the first artists to explore the potential of the video camera, which in its most basic form in the 1970s, only *vaguely* resembles the sophisticated devices of today.

"Time makes my art possible," Bill Viola says of his work. He defines his art as "sculpting time." In his hands, time may be stretched, condensed, repeated, layered, reversed, sped up or slowed down. His signature technique is his use of slow motion — a strategy that obliges us to look attentively at his images to fully grasp their evolution.

Viola's video works often focus on bodies in a particular, extreme state – swimming, drowning, searching, dreaming, floating. Viola is interested in the relationship between the physical body and the soul, and how expressive bodies can convey inner spiritual states.

4# On Bill Viola's *Becoming Light* with Irene Hofmann

Bill Viola is one of a number of prominent contemporary artists who have been engaged by leading opera companies over the years to collaborate on their stagings of historic operas. In 2005, Viola was engaged by the Paris Opera to collaborate with famed director Peter Sellars to stage Richard Wagner's 19th century opera *Tristan und Isolde*. In what was a highly innovative production, Viola's sweeping slow-motion videos of water, fire, and people became as integral to the opera as the singers and the music.

In this technically ambitious production, Viola's imagery was projected on a 72 foot high screen that was suspended above and behind the singers who performed on a minimalist square stage. The video imagery Viola created for this production, and that was synched with the singers in real time, provided literal, metaphorical, and spiritual complements to the tragic love story unfolding on the stage.

Viola produced the single-channel video work *Becoming Light* as a companion artwork to his bold visuals for *Tristan und Isolde*. Evoking the narrative of Wagner's tale, Viola's video distills the concepts and emotions of the opera by using water to express the all-consuming love between the protagonists.

5# On working with Bill Viola on *Tristan und Isolde* with Peter Sellars

Opera director Peter Sellars and Bill Viola -- who are long time close friends—collaborated on a groundbreaking production of *Tristan und Isolde*. Peter Sellars said of Viola's work:

"What he does, like Wagner, is slow down time. Much of Bill's work is a video image meticulously photographed. He then manipulates the time flow. You are able to see the seconds inside the seconds. Time inside of time. That's, of course, is what Wagner's music is giving you, and Bill uses video technology to open up time."

6# On Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde* with Robert Meya

Tristan und Isolde by Richard Wagner is set in Cornwall, England, and is based on a medieval legend. Tristan is the best friend and nephew of King Marke, and the Irish princess Isolde is promised in marriage to the king. While Tristan brings Isolde by ship to her wedding day, a handmaiden accidentally gives the two travelers a love potion, and they fall madly in love. In a series of tragic events, Isolde's wedding to the king continues as planned, and Tristan and Isolde commit adultery. They eventually die in each other's arms. *Tristan und Isolde* intertwines the concepts of love, death, and fate. Wagner masterfully uses musical motifs to place the orchestra in the role as an omniscient narrator.

MATTHIAS SCHALLER

7# Introduction to the work of Matthias Schaller with Irene Hofmann

Matthias Schaller is a photographer whose work focuses on the creation of unexpected and non-traditional portraiture. He calls these images "indirect portraits." These photographs do not include images of his intended subjects but rather they feature objects or spaces that represent them.

Some of these portrait works over the past twenty years, for example, have included images of the studios and homes of prominent German photographers who influenced Schaller's work including Andreas Gursky and Bernd and Hilla Becher. Other examples of these indirect portraits include empty astronaut suits, Cardinals' desks of the Roman Curia in the Vatican, and the paint pallets of some of the most renowned painters of the past two centuries.

With the photographic series seen here in *Bel Canto*, we see Matthias Schaller's indirect portrait of Italy through a vast collection of photographs of the country's many opera houses.

8# On *Fratelli d'Italia* with Irene Hofman

From 2005 to 2017, German artist Matthias Schaller traveled throughout Italy to photograph 150 of the country's opera houses, from the modest to the grand. The title of his project, *Fratelli d'Italia (Brothers of Italy)*, is taken from the Italian national anthem. Schaller explains: "My initial intention was to create a portrait of Italy, not in an empirical way but rather metaphorical."

He has further explained that he considers Italy's opera houses to be reflective of the country's political, anthropological, and historic dimensions.

Schaller's photographs form a cohesive collection, in part because his subjects were all constructed and inaugurated as opera houses during the 1800s, but also because of Schaller's aesthetic choices that include shooting each empty opera house interior from the vantage point of the stage and balancing the color of each image so that they each appear as if the color has been drained from the picture.

9# The artist Matthias Schaller speaks about his work

I choose to go on the stage in all of the 150 opera houses because I wanted to perform. I wanted to be the one who is now here to tell you about my Italy, my experience, or how I want to see it, how I want to describe it, so, therefore, from the stage looking into the public and talking to them. The other reason why I choose to go on the stage is more simply that I wanted to show this place. We are talking about Italian opera house so I wanted to make you understand the style and the significance of the Italian opera house style. It is in the form of a horseshoe so you can get much better in an image photographing from the stage. The second important part of the opera houses is with so many to see the differences by pointing out the ceiling. From the ceiling you see a notable difference from one opera house to the other. The third thing that is important to my whole idea is the platea, the area down where the people are mostly sitting which is always the same in all 150 opera houses. The similarity is in the reality because the subject I choose of the opera house is by itself created with similarity, the Italian opera house style. I already start from something given but then later it is my artistic job to bring it more in the direction of how I want to have it from where I am photographing. Later on, I go in the colors. I go into saturation. I manipulate the platea to create even more stronger the similarities because with all this 150 I want to come to one image, which is the portrait that I want to give of Italy.

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

10# Introduction to the work of William Kentridge with Irene Hofmann

South African artist William Kentridge creates works in a range of forms that fuse the political with the poetic. While dealing with subjects as sobering as apartheid, colonialism, and totalitarianism, his work is often marked by lyrical undertones and humor.

Kentridge is best known for animated films he creates by filming his drawings, making erasures and changes to those drawings, and then filming them again. His preferred medium for these drawings is charcoal. The essence of charcoal, a burnt tree, is a symbol Kentridge finds fitting for South Africa.

Theater has been central to Kentridge from the beginning of his career. He trained in acting as well as drawing and while both equally inform his work, he has said that he learned more from theater school than art school.

11# On *Learning the Flute* with Irene Hofmann

In 2003, William Kentridge was commissioned to stage Mozart's *The Magic Flute* for the Royal Opera House in Belgium. This was a remarkable stage production based on the metaphor of the early camera, using the palette of a film negative -- white on black -- to reflect the opera's shifting presentation of good and evil.

Kentridge's production featured projected moving images that were reworked, erased, and redrawn, much as his signature stop-animation artworks are.

As with all of Kentridge's engagements with opera productions, he created artworks beforehand as studies and preparation. His 2003 work *Learning the Flute* was one such visual preparation for the staging of *The Magic Flute* that would premiere two years later.

Learning the Flute is a short film that features a series of chalk drawings created on a blackboard, followed by erasures, and new drawings, with stop-motion animation to capture each new image and tell a story.

As you watch this short video, consider that it takes Kentridge three weeks to create one minute of this form of animation.

12# On Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute* with Robert Meya

The Magic Flute, written in 1791, is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's final opera and includes some of his most famous arias and duets. *The Magic Flute* is a fairy tale of good against evil, and in the end, true love conquers all.

Prince Tamino has fallen in love with Princess Pamina, daughter of the Queen of the Night, when he sees her picture after a near fatal encounter with a deadly serpent in the woods. Prince Tamino and his friend, the bird-catcher Papageno, attempt to free Princess Pamina who was kidnapped in a temple by a wise and kind high priest who is helping her escape her evil mother. Tamino and Papageno are given magical musical instruments—a flute and a set of silver bells - on their challenging quest to liberate Pamina. In the end, love is victorious, and Prince Tamino and Princess Pamina successfully conquer the trials of water and fire together with the help of the magic flute. Papageno—with the help of his magic bells—falls in love with his future wife Papagena. At the end of the opera, the sun rises, and the Queen of the Night is banished from the land.

CANDIDA HÖFER

13# Introduction to the work of Candida Höfer with Irene Hofman

Candida Hofer photographs public spaces such as libraries, lecture halls, museums, and meeting rooms. While her subjects are often large spaces of public gathering, these images are always devoid of people. These photographs have something timeless about them and evoke the presence of those absent.

In the early 2000's she began creating a series of opera house photographs. These large-scale photographs of the interiors of opera house theaters capture not only the beauty of these palaces of performing arts but also the energy of their function. She has said of such works:

"I wanted to capture the way in which people behave in public spaces so I began to photograph theaters, palaces, opera houses, libraries and similar spaces. After some time I realized that what people do in these places and what the spaces do to them is more obvious when nobody is present, just as an absent guest can become the topic of conversation."

14# On *Teatro di Villa Mazzacurati* with Irene Hofmann

Nearly 20 years ago Candida Höfer began creating monumental photographs of opera house interiors. Her camera takes us into empty foyers, orchestra pits, stages, wings, and boxes. While the spaces are still and empty, we can imagine the performers and the audience.

Although many of world's most famous opera houses have been photographed from every angle imaginable, in Höfer's hands these beloved spaces are revealed with intimate and evocative grace.

The *Teatro di Vèlla Mazzacorati* is a gem of a theater in Bologna, Italy. It was inaugurated in 1763. Famed for its acoustics, the house seats only eighty. The theater's decoration features pastel frescoes on the walls and twenty atlases and caryatids seeming to physically shoulder the two balconies. Höfer's photograph is illustrative of her meticulous approach to architectural interiors and makes visible opera's promise of high drama, escapism, and an intense shared experience. While at first glance, this opera house asserts its beauty, a closer look reveals that Höfer's camera has captured many details in the room that expose the effects of time on this tiny theater.

VASCO ARAUJO

15# Introduction to the work of Vasco Araujo with Irene Hofmann

Vasco Araujo creates works in a range of media that explore identity and cultural stereotypes. Before becoming a visual artist, Araujo trained as an opera singer -- the influence of music, language, and storytelling can be seen throughout his work.

Araújo's works are firmly grounded in European classical culture with early Italian operas serving as a particular point of inspiration. Araújo reinterprets and reinvents these historical works to comment on current social norms and values and to frame issues of race, class, and gender. Here in *Bel Canto*, we see a number of Araujo's works that explore opera's relationship to gender, language, and artifice. The video work, *far de donna*, (which translates to playing as a woman) for example tells of a young man discovering his remarkable soprano voice, just as his mother loses her ability to speak. This work alludes to classical Oedipal mythology while referencing the operatic tradition of the castrati, soprano young men who were castrated before their voices changed. While this practice was barred in the 19th century, castrati performed in opera since its emergence and set the stage for centuries of gender fluidity in opera's roles and characters.

16# On *Diva, a Portrait* with Irene Hofmann

The rich history of gender flexibility in opera is crucial for many of Vasco Araujo's works, notably *Diva, A Portrait* (2000). This work features a staging of a prima donna's dressing room with a nod to the history of men playing women's roles in opera. At first glance we see a dressing table, flowers, clothes, and bottles of perfume, yet among these objects we begin to notice elements of masculine attire such as razors, aftershave, and a pair of men's shoes. In this work we see suggested a double identity of a diva and the historic elasticity of many masculine and feminine roles in opera. We are reminded that the audiences of early opera were attuned to, and appreciative of, the performance of gender confusion.

GUILLERMO KUITCA

17# Introduction to the work of Guillermo Kuitca with Irene Hofmann

Born in Buenos Aires, Guillermo Kuitca is one of Latin America's most celebrated living contemporary artists. His works are inspired by the worlds of architecture, theater, and cartography.

Kuitca has been working with theatre imagery since the 1980s. In 2003, he designed a production of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* for the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. In recent years, he has focused on making increasingly complex paper and collage works all based on the seating plans of opera houses.

Drawn from the seating charts of famous opera houses and theatres around the world, Kuitca's theatre collages are mysterious abstractions and explosions of space and color that capture the vivid and dramatic experience of being in a theatre.

18# On *The Ring* with Irene Hofmann

For nearly two decades, opera has been an ongoing interest of Guillermo Kuitca's. Inspired by Richard Wagner's epic masterpiece, *The Ring Cycle*, Kuitca produced *The Ring*, a five-panel painting that spans over twenty feet wide.

For this piece Kuitca invented five original album covers for each of his favorite recordings of this opera, complete with the names of the performers, conductor, and orchestra. His interpretation forms a visual narrative moving chronologically from left to right through a series of five panels beginning with a version of *Das Rheingold* executed in cubist style, and ending with his version of *Götterdämmerung* expressed as a digital distortion.

SUZANNE BOCANEGRA

19# Introduction to the work of Suzanne Bocanegra with Irene Hofmann

Suzanne Bocanegra works at the intersection of contemporary art and the performing arts. She works fluidly between installation, sculpture, costume design, performance, and video and finds inspiration in sources that have included ballet, film, theater, and most recently, opera. If you are a long-time SITE visitor perhaps you might remember her 2011 solo exhibition that featured a number of work that deconstructed or translated art historical works into performance or other time based forms.

20# The artist Suzanne Bocanegra speaks about her work

This piece began because I wanted to stage my own version, or maybe reinterpret is more accurate, of Poulenc's *Dialogue of the Carmelites*. I started with this book I found published in the 50s, *A Guide to the Catholic Sisterhood in the United States*. It's a really strange document because it reveals how women were valued in the church in the 50s, in the mid-century, when Poulenc—who by the way was a devout Catholic—wrote his opera.

I decided to use the nuns in that book as my cast, and I costumed them, sewing directly on the pages like nuns have done for centuries, embellishing the pages of their prayer books with embroidery and stitching.

Then I needed music so I asked David Lang to compose the music, and we decided not to reinterpret Poulenc, but think about the life that a nun chooses. A nun chooses to be in community for the rest of her life, never alone. We decided to think about that. We asked Caroline Shaw to sing it, and she sings it almost like a prayer.

21# On Poulenc's *Dialogue of the Carmelites* with Robert Meya

Dialogue of the Carmelites, written by Francis Poulenc in 1956 and sung in French, is an opera set during the French Revolution.

Dialogue is set in the contemplative Carmelite convent, home to women of faith and an aristocratic girl who has fled there for safety. The libretto is based on the true story of the execution of sixteen nuns in 1794 who were charged with illegal religious activity by a French Revolutionary Tribunal. After an angry mob approaches the convent demanding its disbandment, the nuns are sent to prison. Behind bars they decide to take a vow of martyrdom, and they are sentenced to death by guillotine. The nuns are stripped of their

habit, their clothes torn, and their hair cut short. At the last minute, the aristocratic girl who abandoned them when they were imprisoned joins them in their march to death. As they approach death, they sing hymns of praise to God and are guillotined.

YINKA SHONIBARE

22# Introduction to the work of Yinka Shonibare with Irene Hofmann

For nearly three decades, British-born Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare has become well-known for his explorations of race and colonialism. Working in painting, sculpture, photography, film and installation, Shonibare's works often focus on the interrelationship between Africa and Europe, and their respective economic and political histories.

Shonibare is perhaps most known for his use of richly patterned textiles which he uses to create costumes that explore the legacies of colonialism, and that challenge our notions of cultural identity, racial stereotypes, and authenticity.

Although Shonibare's signature fabrics have become a signifier of "Africanness," these are in fact a textile produced by the Dutch with patterns influenced by Indonesian batiks. Despite the misunderstanding surrounding the fabric's cultural origins, it has come to represent a true African identity and a hybridized symbol of African heritage and the continent's complex political and socio-economic histories.

This complex origin of this fabric has provided a powerful conceptual underpinning in Shonibare's practice throughout his career. These fabrics often are used in works that recast Victorian era figures, iconic paintings, or historic events all with an underlying critique of class, privilege, and power.

23# On *Addio del Passato* with Irene Hofmann

In Yinka Shonibare's film *Addio del Passato*, he reimagines and recasts the French high-society protagonists of Verdi's *La Traviata* as the British historical figure Admiral Lord Nelson and his estranged wife Fanny.

For Shonibare, Lord Nelson is a potent symbol of Britain's imperial history—his successful naval battles were essential in British colonialism and its expansion in trade and empire.

In this film, Fanny, played by the British opera singer Nadine Benjamine, performs the haunting death lament from the last act of Verdi's opera. Our heroine sings of her loneliness and says farewell to the world. Adorned in a Victorian-era style dress with Sonibare's signature fabrics that link the histories of Europe and Africa, Nadine as Fanny inserts the African body, voice, and dress into the very heart of Bel Canto opera.

24# On Verdi's *La Traviata* with Robert Meya

La Traviata, loosely translated as the "one who goes astray," is a popular opera by Giuseppe Verdi.

Written in 1853 and sung in Italian, *La Traviata* is based on Alexandre Dumas's semi-autobiographical French play entitled "The Lady of the Camillas." It tells the story of a beautiful courtesan, Violetta Valery, who is dying from tuberculosis. She loves her free life full of parties, but a man named Alfredo Germont feels true love for her and she for him. He asks Violetta to leave her flirtatious city life and retreat to a quiet life of love in the country.

After many difficulties, miscommunications, separations, and prejudiced preconceptions from Alfredo's family, Alfredo and Violetta declare their true love for each other as she dies of tuberculosis in his arms. *La Traviata* is an unusual opera for its small cast of characters and the moral issues addressed in the opera. Verdi called the opera "a subject of the times."

BEHIND THE SCENES OF BEL CANTO

25# Meet Randall Lutz, Properties Director, Santa Fe Opera

Hello, this is Randy Lutz, and I am the Properties Director at the Santa Fe Opera. This is my fortieth season with the company. I love props, and I think it's the best shop to work in. We do linens. We do furniture. We do food. We do flowers. We do all the things that are not the walls and the ground cloth and the costumes.

26# On building opera furniture with Randall Lutz

Why do we build a lot of our furniture? Well, we have to restructure it. We try to build the furniture so that the crown of the seat is right around 18 inches because that is the best height for a singer's position so that their diaphragm will not collapse, or they won't sink down into the furniture. We start by redoing the actual frame of the chair and then we put plywood in the seat where would be webbing so that it won't collapse. Then we use a very high density foam that

is carved into the shape of the cushion to get the height of the crown of the seat, right around 18 inches. That varies in the different styles of the furniture. The reason why we often buy reproductions is that we won't be tearing apart an antique, and we won't be kept in the color scheme of the antique furniture. That's the other thing is often times the set designer is the one that chooses what the furniture is to look like, how they wanted to rebuild to the period—the color and the fabrics all go into this. It is the set designer usually who does all of that research and often draws out the furniture for us to build. We're lucky we have an incredible shop. We have a furniture shop with a lathe, and we turn and do most of our furniture that is designed by the designer. We also have more control over the size of the chair or the bench of the chair or whatever it is. We have a little more control of it if we build it. Even when we buy a series of ballroom chairs or Bentwood chairs, we usually have to restructure them so that they will support the singer's physique and positioning for them to sing well.

27# On designing opera chandeliers with Randall Lutz

We also do a lot of chandeliers, and in this installation there are quite a few chandelier pieces. There's lots of reasons why we have to build them. One is price. We can't afford to buy a chandelier that is six feet wide by eight feet tall and has crystal on it. We go, and we take the research the designer gives to us which is the design of the set and then we start from building the frame, the understructure of the chandelier. The ones that are in the exhibit are all clear, except for the smaller ones. We started with an aluminum tube, and we bent that into the shape of the arms of the chandelier and that is where we ran all the wiring. We built that structure so that it was light, that it was silver, and then we wrapped that with bio-tube so it looks like it was a glass arm. Then we purchase all the plastic salad bowls and dessert bowls that we could find in thrift stores. We put them all together, and they make the center structure of the chandelier. They're all plastic and from every different period that you can think of, probably from the late fifties up into the eighties. We collected all those and made those all part of the structure of the arm that would hold then the candles or the bulbs for the chandelier.

28# On the making of the blue upholstered chair with Randall Lutz

Hi, this is Randy Lutz again. I'm the Prop Director at the Santa Fe Opera. I'd like to talk to you about a piece that you'll see in the Diva's room. That piece, the duchesse, which is an ottoman and a chair together, was actually created completely from scratch in our shop. It was designed by Alison Chitty for *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and that one chair was to set the entire aristocracy before the Revolution and so it had to have a complete look of opulence and elegance to it because it was the one piece out on the stage that represented everything the revolt was about. It was very special piece. We built it from scratch including making the legs,

building the frame, and upholstering it. We had a lot of period research for the actual chair itself, but then we also were trying to find a period looking fabric. We found a great fabric, a silk fabric, in New York, but the designer wanted to add gold threads to it so that it would have a glitter. Well, we ended up going back into all the embroidered parts of that fabric with puff glitter paint, and it worked really well out on stage. It did look opulent. It took the lights incredibly well, but it also had the structure for the singer to sit down into it, collapse into it, without collapsing her diaphragm. We built that all into the box of the cushion.

29# Meet Sabrina Griffith, designer of the curtains of Bel Canto and SITE installation crew member

Hello, my name is Sabrina Griffith, and I've been on the crew at SITE for many years. I have a background in art, theatre, music, and theatre and museum lighting. I've done a lot of curtain design for many kinds of venues from parties to exhibitions to stage productions.

The Bel Canto exhibition brought together my experiences in all these different areas. Irene, the director of SITE, came to me and proposed that I bring into SITE's minimal contemporary art space a nod to the opulent look of opera curtains, without the traditional opera curtain palette of reds and golds.

While we often use curtains in these exhibitions, to dampen or isolate light or sound, I bet you rarely notice them since we make them to blend in. Here the curtains take the stage.

When you look through the show at the various curtains, you will see nearly a hundred tassels, nearly 500 custom-ordered fireproof yards of fabric, and a month of design and a month of sitting in the front of the sewing machine and the help of a great crew. There is no way that I could have done this without the skilled help Damon and Seth and Andy.

30# Meet Andrea Fellows Walters, Director, Community Engagement, Santa Fe Opera, and Joanne Lefrak, Ring Director of Education and Curator of Public Practice, SITE Santa Fe

Hello I'm Andrea Walters, Director of Community Engagement for the Santa Fe Opera, and I'm Joanne Lefrak, the Ring Director of Education and Curator of Public Practice at SITE Santa Fe.

Joanne: As educators we try and make contemporary art and opera accessible, and we've worked together on a number of public and education programs. I've grateful to Andrea for connecting me with the scholars at the Santa Fe Opera and for her incredible scholarship as well.

Andrea: We approach our work in community engagement at the Santa Fe Opera as opportunities to connect the story. Opera is arguably the most spectacular manifestation of storytelling. We seek to link these opportunities in exploring story to bring our audiences closer to their own personal narrative. With *Bel Canto* there are now even more opportunities for audiences to find themselves in this ever-evolving artform

Joanne: Check out SITE's program guide and website to learn about all of the public programs.

Andrea: Let's learn about opera and contemporary art together.