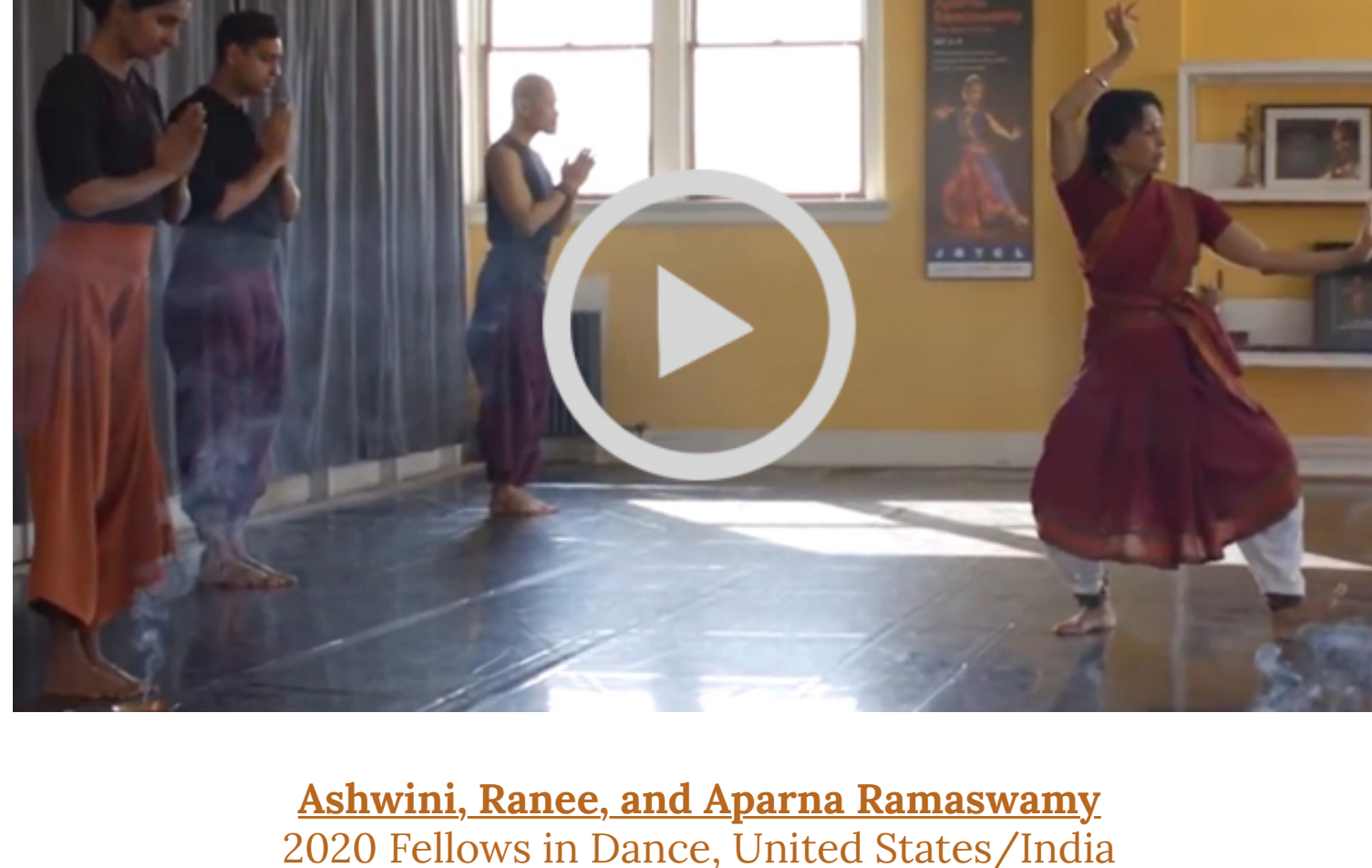




Photos by Tom Peprson (BP '19)

Bogliasco: Stay Home Edition

Welcome to our weekly newsletter: bringing you a healthy dose of creativity and inspiration from Bogliasco Fellows around the globe. Enjoy this virtual residency!



Ashwini, Rane, and Aparna Ramaswamy
2020 Fellows in Dance, United States/India

"**Fires of Varanasi** (above) is an immersive ritual on the stage where time is suspended and humans merge with the divine. We imagine a metaphorical crossing place that enters into the world of immortality, expanding upon the birth-death-rebirth continuum in Hindu thought to honor immigrant experiences of life and death in the diaspora. For us, the transformation of the soul after cremation becomes a powerful symbol for human resilience and the tenacity of people and cultures across time." – Ashwini Ramaswamy

Ashwini had to cancel all spring tours of her most recent project, *Let the Crows Come*, due to COVID-19. [Click here](#) to see a short film on this project.

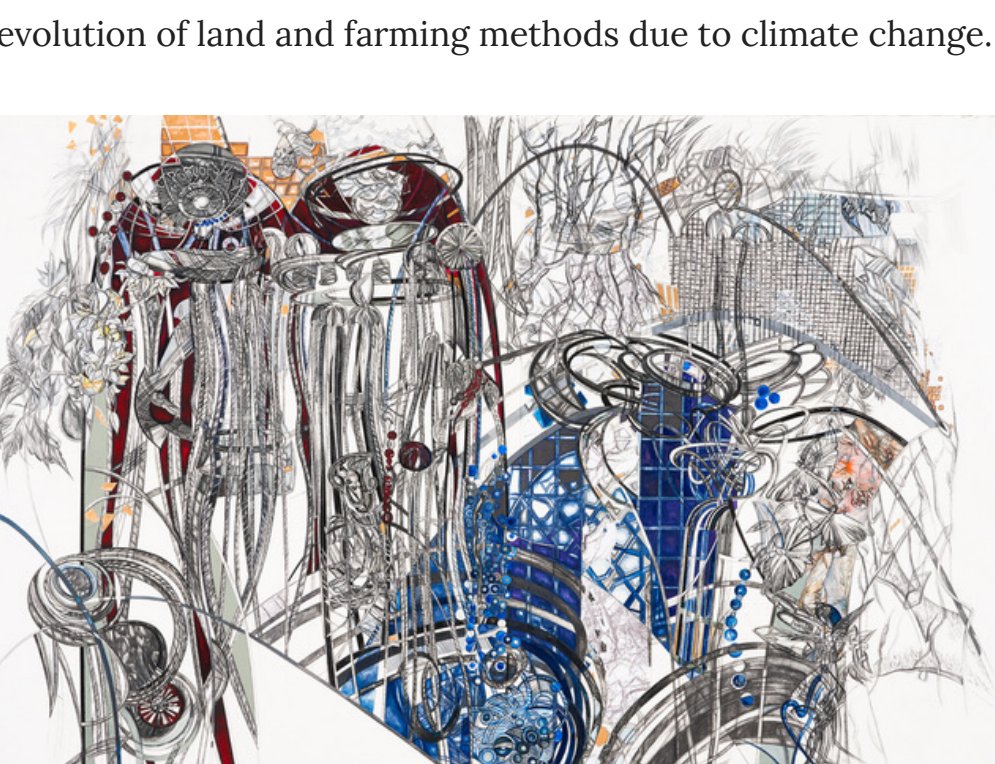


Ann Diener

2016 Fellow in Visual Arts, United States



Ann is currently working on a group of drawings based on the evolution of land and farming methods due to climate change.



Evolving Terrain, 2019
50 x 70 inches
graphite, colored pencil, gouache,
lithographs and cut paper on paper



Jeremy Gill

2017 Edward T. Cone Bogliasco
Fellow in Music, United States

"My time at Bogliasco was magical, and I will remember it, fondly, forever."

Below is a brief and very optimistic song from Jeremy's cycle *Whitman Portrait* (text by Walt Whitman).



Amanda Michalopoulos

2013 Fellow in Literature, Greece

In Amanda's latest novel *God's Wife*, God and his wife come to earth for a visit and stay in Bogliasco. "Such was the tremendous influence of the place," she says. Below is a small extract from the novel describing the Riviera. Visit the [Paris Review](#) to learn more and read her interview with Christopher Merrill.



The time of departure was approaching. I could feel it. When my casts came off, we would return to eternity, as we had silently agreed. I wanted to believe that eternity was just like the Riviera. But I sensed that for my husband it meant something completely different: an amorphous no-thing, a protean no-where.

During our walks, I liked to lean my head on His shoulder. A delightful miscellany of sights and sounds: the soft hiss of my husband's breath, the whoosh of waves, the patter of children's feet across a church courtyard, the clang of Sunday bells. The village came alive on Sundays: boys on bicycles gaggled at the wharf. Men and women strolled with their tiny dogs. And we sauntered, lingered, lost ourselves among the crowds. We frequented the open-air flea market and loved browsing through the messy heaps of heteroclit objects, like artefacts of lost civilizations: fur hats, medals, crystal decanter stoppers, umbrella stands, footstools. We did not touch the old hats, the Polaroid cameras. Once, I said in jest: "How about I buy you a wristwatch and You buy me this fountain pen and inkwell?" "Not a chance," He replied flatly. That same day He bought me a large raffia beach bag and a small wallet. I got Him a pair of amber cufflinks. He ended up using the wallet and raffia bag. He locked and unlocked the door to the house. He gave me painkillers, fed me, and helped me on with my nightgown at night. All I could do was walk and talk. My arms cradled under my chest, in the grey waterproof sling they'd given us at the hospital.

When we came across other couples our age, we greeted them with slight nods. Eventually, we became friendly with a couple who were also regulars on the Riviera. He wore a vest over his starched shirt, she a double string of pearls and red lipstick. They walked arm in arm, and whenever they saw us, they stopped to chat. They recommended restaurants, walks, a good hospital for the removal of my casts. God spoke their language; He translated every word.

One day, they told us they were retired schoolteachers. When they asked what we did, God replied vaguely, "Writers." Another time, they asked where we came from. He replied, "Savotia." Embarrassed, the teachers glanced at each other. They had not heard of the country. "Hardly surprising," He remarked. "Savotia has only just gained its independence." I asked Him how He had come up with that name. From savory, He said. "It thrives in sun-drenched, rocky terrain. Like you."

The closer to humanity He grew, the more urgent became our love. His elusiveness—the fact that His nature was always somehow beyond me—rendered our walks on the Riviera a deeper form of reconciliation.

As soon as the casts came off, we rented a motorbike. We'd point to a spot on the map and take to the road. The tourist season had not yet begun, and it was all ours: ports, museums, castles, churches, lanes. On the coastal roads, I clung to Him. Wind whistling, His hair lashing my face. Heart full.

In the afternoons, we played chess on a board we'd found at the market, its pieces carved from bone. He usually won. When He let me win, I'd pompously proclaim, "My knight takes Your queen." At night, I'd sink into the hollow of His shoulder and sleep serenely until morning. Despite His body's new substance and heft, I did not desire Him. At least not like that. He had made sacrifices for me, and I for Him. He was my world, the axis around which I revolved, my immaculate self-causation—causa sui. To embark on this journey with me, to suffer me clinging to Him, to walk at my side without asking for anything: it all meant that He, too, loved me.

We slept like that, without desire. Nestled one within the other, amorously sexless. Like the line in one of Neruda's sonnets, His hand upon my chest was mine.



Marta Renzi

2013 Fellow in Film/Video, United States

"Thanks to the tranquility provided by the residency, and the gracious hospitality and efficiency of the staff, I was able to be unusually productive."

During her Fellowship in Bogliasco, Marta edited *Her Children Mourn* (below).

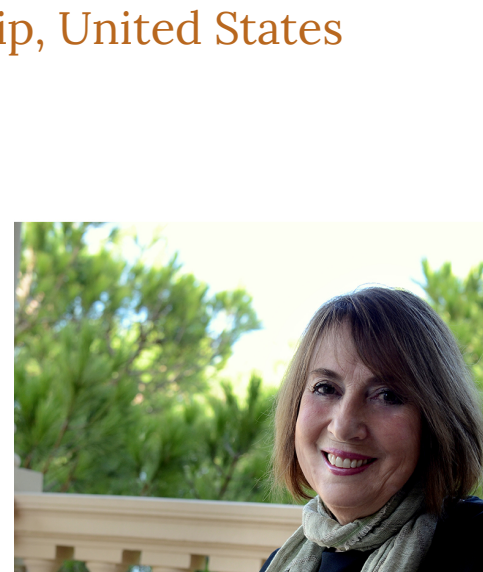


Cathy Davidson

2015 Fellow in Literature-Scholarship, United States

As classes around the world turn to online learning, Cathy writes about "[Transforming Your Online Teaching From Crisis to Community](#)."

"I've been writing op-eds for *Inside Higher Ed*. This is a follow-up book I'm co-authoring with a doctoral student for Harvard U Press. The entire first draft of the original book, *The New Education: How To Revolutionize the University to Prepare Students for a World in Flux* (Basic Books 2017), was written during my amazing month at Bogliasco. I'm still on a book tour with it—in person and now, with COVID, even more demand seemingly everywhere, helping people come up with engaged, meaningful ways of teaching and learning in a health crisis."



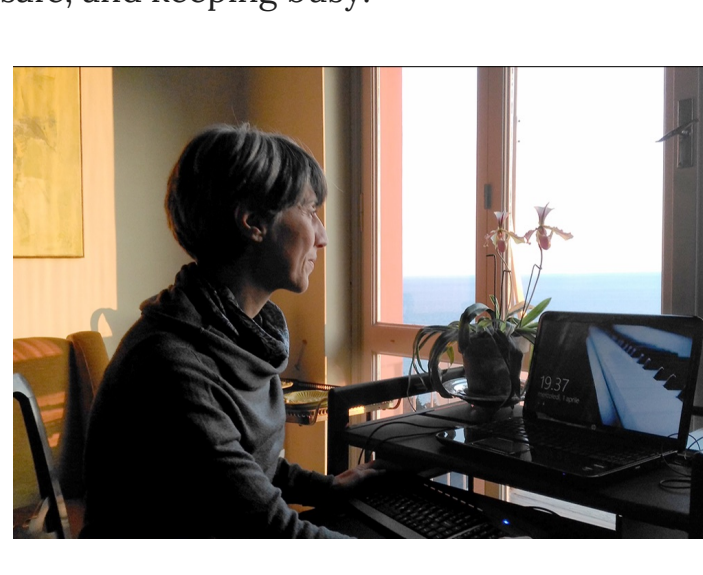
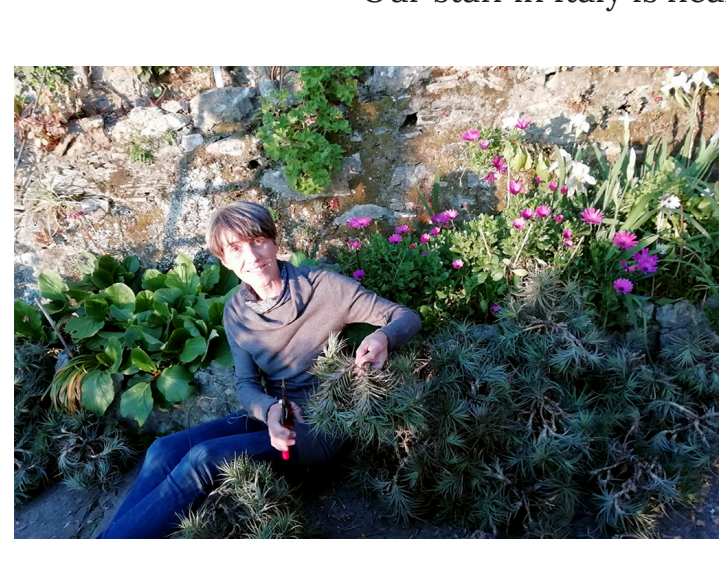
Currently in Bloom at the Villa dei Pini



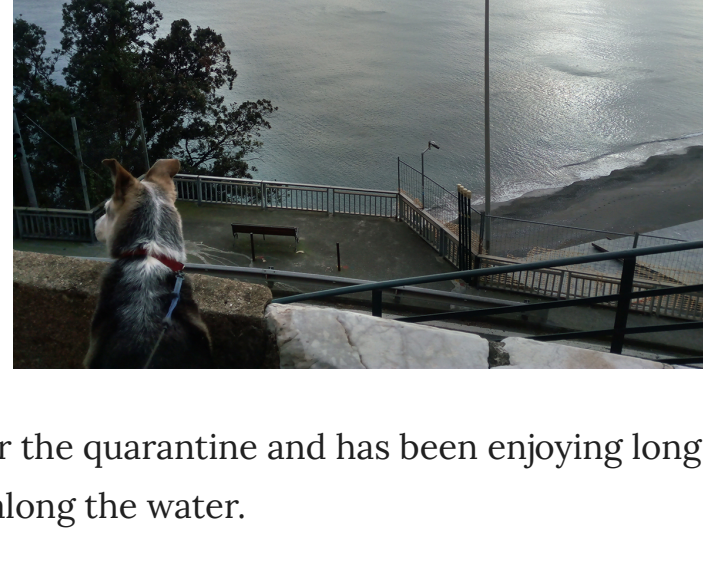
Japanese Cheesewood, also known as **Pittosforo** in Italian, is native to the eastern Mediterranean, Japan, China, and Korea. It is now grown throughout the world and does particularly well in Bogliasco due to its mild climate. The flowers are known for their sweet, orange-like fragrance. The scientific name for Japanese Cheesewood is *Pittosporum*. Its name originates from the Greek words *pitte*, to tar or pitch, and *sporos*, seed, referring to its unique production of seeds that are coated with a resinous pulp.

Ciao from Italy! #iostoacasa

Thank you all for sending your love to everyone in Bogliasco. Our staff in Italy is healthy, safe, and keeping busy!



Ivana Folle has been working in her garden and has a beautiful view from her desk at home.



Valeria Soave has created a cozy workstation for the quarantine and has been enjoying long walks with her dog along the water.

Calling all Bogliasco Fellows: Do you have something you would like to contribute to our weekly newsletter? Always feel free to [reach out](#), we would love to hear from you!

