



## ALLIANCE OF ARTISTS COMMUNITIES

### MEMBER ACTIVITIES

#### Djerassi Sculpture Collection Adds Stark, Topical Work

The past year saw the installation of five new sculptures on the Djerassi Program property. Artists-in-residence completed work ranging from a giant driftwood mobile—a musical instrument created by composer Cheryl Leonard that involved stringing hundreds of pieces of driftwood along the branches of a twisted oak—to a small icon of a Benedictine monk carved by German artist Alfred Böschl and called, simply, "The Work." The newest, and easily most political, piece springs from the fervent imagination of sculptor Marguerite Kahrl. In residence at Djerassi during the fall of 2004, Kahrl conceived and installed her sculpture during a period of intense productivity.

Of the work, she writes: "Recently I came across a newspaper image of U.S. troops exploding one of their own tanks in Iraq. It was a Bradley tank immobilized in combat, and to ensure that 'rebel forces' did not steal its sophisticated navigation and

communication equipment, the tank was bombed. I was struck by this image and by the idea that we transport our tanks half-way around the globe and then blow them up. . . . The sculpture I have installed at Djerassi includes five military tanks mounted vertically within the shell of a live redwood with a burned core. The tanks have been carved from redwood and then scorched. As the viewer looks up into the tree, tanks emerge from the charred landscape. I have attached the tanks to the tree with blackened wooden dowels, so that they can be removed with minimal damage to tree or tanks. The title of my installation, *Frontier*, is a reference to the American west and the notion of an unsettled region just beyond the edge of a settled one. Frontier also speaks of how territories are claimed and what remains after this transfer of stewardship takes place."

Like many of the artists who attend a Djerassi residency, Kahrl was heavily influenced by the landscape itself—a broad stretch of mountain forest descending into rolling meadows overlooking the Pacific. Kahrl walked the landscape extensively at the start of her residency. "I took an interest in the logging history, redwood trees; their scars, patterns of growth and fire-resistant bark sparing some whose core had been burned out. Standing alongside these ancient shells, looking up past the scorched wood, I felt transported to a ravaged landscape living, despite its history."

Kahrl's work was exhibited recently in a series of four one-person drawing exhibitions entitled, 'Dsegni' at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino, Italy. Her drawings appeared at the Derek Eller Gallery in New York, and her sculpture, prints, drawings and video at the Institute for Contemporary Art at the Maine College of Art.

Kahrl was one of more than 60 artists-in-residence during 2004. The Djerassi Program celebrates the talent, energy and creative spirit each of them brought to their residency experience. •



Marguerite Kahrl burning a tank at Djerassi.