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## HEARD & SCENE

### Salt, Sea and Sculpture Right Next Door



By MARSHALL HEYMAN



**MONTAUK, N.Y.**—If you own the plot adjacent to your house in the Hamptons, you have a few choices. You can leave it as it is so nobody views you already have. You can build a second home for your children, your parents, your in-laws and your houseguests to use so they don't mess up your bathroom. You can sell it to a friend who can then build a house there, move in and hopefully not do things that make you eventually hate him and his family.

This summer, Fabiola Beracasa, the philanthropist and creative director of the downtown gallery the Hole, chose to do something else with the property that she and Jason Beckman own next to their beautiful home on Old Montauk Highway here, across from Ralph Lauren's estate. Perhaps taking a cue from Robert Wilson's Watermill Center and Jack Larsen's Long House Reserve, Ms. Beracasa opened a sculpture garden.

"Pop Up 1: Montauk," Ms. Beracasa's first experiment with the space, opened on Thursday under slightly rainy conditions, with a host of Ms. Beracasa's and Mr. Beckman's friends coming to celebrate, including the gallery owner Bill Powers, the photographer Rachel Chandler, the artist Aaron Young and the proprietor of the Miami Webster, Laure Heriard Dubreuil.

"We had local builders out here installing the sculptures this week," said Ms. Beracasa. "And they said, 'We've never done this before. This is fun.'" Ms. Beracasa created the project with the Art Production Fund and Gary Carrion-Murayari and Joyce Sitterly of the New Museum.

"She has this space, this beautiful pocket of Montauk," said Ms. Sitterly. "Why not give an opportunity to some artists to work outside of their comfort zone?"

"The whole idea was to bring the community into the space," said Mr. Carrion-Murayari. "She wants people to hang out." "People can read a book here; they can have a picnic," said Ms. Beracasa of the pop up, which is open between noon and 6 p.m. from Thursday to Sunday until Sept. 8. "The idea was to create a shared community asset. It's

not weird to have it next door to my house, as long as people aren't knocking on my door." The idea came as what Ms. Beracasa called "a brain baby." (Her own child with Mr. Beckman just turned 1 year old this week.)

"I was working in the gallery, and I saw how people came in and enjoyed the work, but they were intimidated," she went on. "Art galleries can be haughty. But outdoors, people feel less intimidated. When you enter a secret garden, you feel awe and discovery."

Eventually, Ms. Beracasa hopes to bring the concept elsewhere. "Anywhere from Zimbabwe to Belgrade," she said. "I don't want to confine myself or the project to the space. It's globally expandable."

The pieces in "Pop Up 1: Montauk" include a series of fabric paintings made of gauze, tulle and ripped canvas by Brooklyn artist Anya Kielar that hang from clothes lines; a pickup truck sculpture by the Brooklyn artist Virginia Overton, and "Licks," a group of stacked rock-salt sculptures by Olympia Scarry.

"It's attractive for deer and foxes and they'll come up and lick the cubes," said Ms. Sitterly. "But humans are licking it, too." "Oh really? How does it taste?" "Very salty," responded Ms. Sitterly. "If you love salt, it's good."

"I was the first one to taste the salt," said Ms. Beracasa. "It's really salty, but I like that it's a solid form of the sea."

"I really want to have the wildlife sculpt the artwork. We'll see how it evolves," said Ms. Scarry, who said the Himalayan salt was from Pakistan, but she purchased it from a fellow in Brooklyn. "It has a lot of nutrients."

As the rain came down harder, dinner was moved from Ms. Beracasa's and Mr. Beckman's lawn to their covered patio deck. The food wasn't particularly salty as we recall; just lots of fresh vegetables and well-barbecued fish, pork and chicken, along with fresh blackberry cobbler for dessert. Ms. Beracasa's guests helped light a series of tea lights to create a particularly romantic setting. To start off the meal, a waiter brought out a pitcher of corn chowder and began serving the seated guests from it. Ms. Beracasa took the pitcher from him, served herself and handed the pitcher to the diner at her right. "We can just pass this around," she said. "Come on, this is Montauk."



Clockwise from above: artist Virginia Overton; Rachel Chandler licks the salt sculpture; artist Olympia Scarry; Jason Beckman, Laure Heriard Dubreuil and Aaron Young; Chris and Ingrid Astley; and people talk in front of some of the art at 'Pop Up 1: Montauk.'



Clockwise from above left: Anya Kielar in front of her batik pieces; Fabiola Beracasa and Doreen and Jessica Remer; the scene at the sculpture garden's opening; and Emma Karlin and Anouk Colantoni.

