

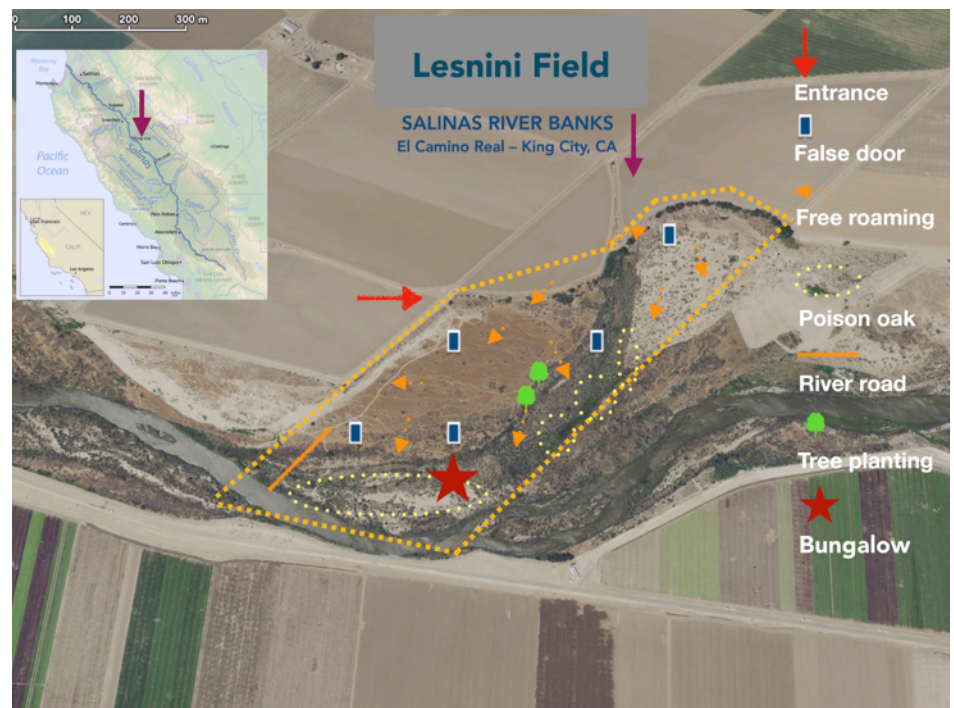


LESNINI FIELD

A 55 ACRE WILDERNESS AND ART RETREAT

LESNINI FIELD IS A SECRET GARDEN on the banks of the Salinas River in Central California—it is 55 acres of wild land recovering from industrial farming in which one can roam freely through sand washes and bushes to discover tree plantings, burnt murals, false doors and a cabin for contemplation. The public has access to the garden by invitation.

STANDING BETWEEN THE RIVER AND CULTIVATED FIELDS, the garden is part of a narrow band of overgrown banks and wildlife filled habitat, surrounded by wineries and vegetable farms. It offers the visitor routes of observation into a 21st Century kaleidoscope of monoculture, water shortages, labor, and the contested land of the past and the future. It is a project of Andre Dekker, founder of Observatorium, and Erik Bakke, a California-based artist.



ANDRE DEKKER IS A FOUNDING PARTNER of Observatorium, an artists group started in 1997, active worldwide, and known for its large scale artworks in areas of transition. A visit to *Zandwacht* (images left), completed in 2015, was the start of a discussion between Dekker and Bakke about artworks protecting and visualizing natural processes.

Zandwacht is a destination artwork, a temple-like concrete architecture, prefiguring a dune landscape, slowly being covered by sand on the North Sea coast in Holland. It is the icon of the newly reclaimed land of the Port of Rotterdam symbolizing the building-with-nature methods in reclaiming land.

Zollverein Park (image left) designed in collaboration with landscape architects is the spatial balance between wilderness and public park as part of the UNESCO world heritage site in the Ruhr Valley, Germany. It was awarded a special mention by the European Prize for Urban Public Space.



Waiting for the River (image above) is a zigzag bridge with three pavilions which was installed in five different sites of a large scale river improvement plan as part of the triennale Emscherkunst. It was voted artwork of the year by the German art magazine *Monopol*.



ERIK BAKKE IS A CALIFORNIA-BASED ARTIST and writer whose recent work has focused on large paintings and installations as depicted in the images here of his 2019 San Francisco installation *Black Flag in the Desert of a Future Ocean*. Bakke describes the Salinas Valley location of Lesnini Field, "This parcel of land is regularly flooded; part of the project of the garden will involve restoration of habitat as a means to protect the ecology of the river and its banks." At Lesnini Field, Bakke will create murals using sand and fire in the process. The installation of large-scale artworks will guide the visitor through the territory at threat and tell about the powers of nature and development that shaped it.

"We are creating a garden boundary around a field of wildness, digging for water, and reintroducing native trees. Through our artworks and architecture we are looking to create a site with a spell, an eye in the storm of the large-scale industrial agriculture serving the globe."

Lesnini Field Team:

Andre Dekker
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Erik Bakke
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Juan Fernandez, production

Karl Bakke, construction

For more information:
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LESNINI FIELD IS A SPECIAL TYPE OF GARDEN: a fenced off private property given back to the meandering river, recovering from mass agriculture, structured by lines of trees and a family of artworks, telling the story of the place and ethics and aesthetics in our relationship with the natural environment. This picture shows the planting of fremont cottonwood trees in November of 2019.



LESNINI FIELD IS A PROJECT IN PROGRESS. The team welcomes nature and art lovers to spend time in a private wilderness and get in touch with darkness, silence, wildlife habitat, and the expanse of the skies and mountains. Your involvement helps establish the resilience of a precious Salinas River environment and the development of arts in Monterey County. If you would like spend time at Lesnini Field while Andre Dekker and Erik Bakke are on site from December 23rd until January 4th, 2020, please email to schedule a visit: erik@erikbakke.com. Also to learn more about the project and/or support it, please inquire about the full concept and latest developments.

