

HDTS Archive 2002–2022

KATIE BACHLER

# LEGEND-TRIPPING IN J-TOPIA

July 2012



Video games that can teach us about our ancestors?  
Learning to identify and produce mystical plant

concoctions while wearing virtual reality goggles rambling through boulders? Joseph Matheny came out to Joshua Tree to change the way people experience the land and each other. He is a science-fiction writer from LA who became interested in building an intentional community out in Joshua Tree after the failure of the OCCUPY movement to actually create a new society in LA. An Occupation needs to be permanent, a way of being, a slow process, he said. And a way to glean this knowledge about living is through technology! We already relate to our iphones and laptops, and they way information is conveyed throug these tools, so why not make the knowledge about making arrowheads out of rocks and collecting mesquite pods? The medium is the message? He is working with Garth Bowles, who lives up north of Pioneertown on 600 acres in a teepee, and hosts long-term visitors who come to build and experiment with living off the grid, in exchange for helping out on the land (more about Garth in an upcoming post!). Garth lives amongst giant boulders (with amazing dogs and chickens!), a perfect wandering ground for a techo-futurist game about the return of plant knowledge and supernatural forces associated with the land and folk-lore. I may be the map-maker of this virtual/natural space! This endeavor was already discussed in the Chronicle of Higher Education, Joseph told me.

Joseph is already 1/4 done with J-Topia, a proposed intentional community that will include an art center and community garden in an abandoned assisted living space in downtown Joshua Tree. There are already people living there, in the rooms formerly inhabited by the elderly of the desert. One resident was cooking hamburger

in the kitchen when I was there. This is J-Topia, a place where people live and work on their shared space together, where there is food in the garden and lectures by locals about changing the world.

I am intrigued by the visions people have when they come to the desert. The concept of the blank slate, of a land untouched by the alienated modern mans ideologies, a space for projections of possible futures. There are many I have met who share this spirit, at different levels. I feel like being able to see 360 degrees around me has changed my sense of myself, the context is not one of cultural references, or a structured art-world, but of land and past visions still present and preserved in the sand.

## KATIE BACHLER

**Katie Bachler** was our first HDTS Scout, and was in residence from 2012-2013.

The HDTS Scout Residency is dedicated to learning more about the people and places that make up our diverse and ever evolving community.

During Katie's residency, visitors were invited to drop into the HDTS HQ, the Scout's home base, to meet Katie, who could be found making maps, hosting conversations, and baking

bread – in between her off-site adventures around town and out in the field.

Katie had a lot in store during her time here, including:

- a series of talks featuring local experts
- joining together to create a web of knowledge
- a research library and archive documenting the many spaces, places, plants, and people that make up this special region
- casual conversations with drop in visitors over tea
- site visits and field trips around town

Katie engaged the community by instigating map-making and rag-rug braiding workshops, the Scout's Book Club, Art in the Environment classes for desert kids, casual conversations, site visits and field trips—all shared in her Scout's blog, which serves as the foundation for her book.

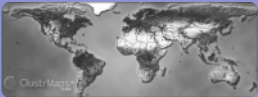
Purchase a copy of Katie's Scout book.



BBQ and Potluck  
Wednesday June  
27 at HDTs HQ,  
Featuring Local  
Plant Palo  
Verde



Live in the  
Desert; Live  
Longer



People/Words/Drums



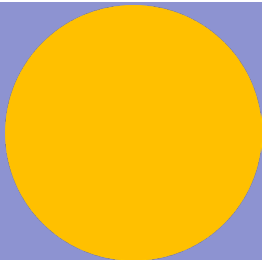
Still From a  
Wind Film



Untrammeled by  
Man



A Scout in  
Vermont in the  
Rain



A Slice



At the  
Dinosaurs on  
the 10



Desert Library



Desert Rain  
Desert Sky



Desert  
Sourdough



Legend-Tripping  
in J-Topia



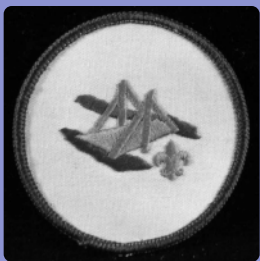
The Naming



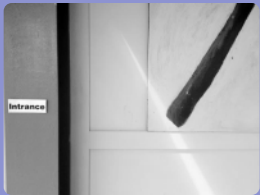
Wonder



You Have to  
Build a  
Fortress



Boy Scout  
Pioneering  
Patch from the  
Past



Cashews in the Bowl of Life



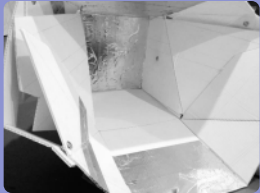
Forms



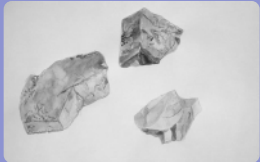
High and Tight



I Love Space



Light



Start With the Rocks



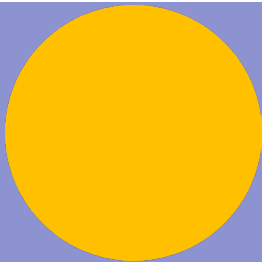
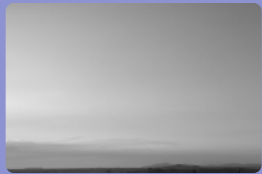


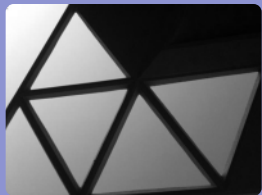
Table Salt



The Void?



Wilderness in  
the Mail



Crystals and  
Mentalphysics



Dream Houses



Mirage



Sat. Mo. Copper  
Mountain Mesa  
Breakfast



This Place is  
Real



Walking is a  
Matter of  
Upwards



A Gift



A Walk Through  
Space



Kenyan Cowgirl



We Walked All  
the Way Across  
the Dry Lake  
Bed



Cactus Ed



Wall Street  
Revisited



In The Kitchen



A Gift is a  
Letting Go



Reality is Like  
a Horserace



The Character  
of a Town



The Lot That is  
the Desert  
Behind the DMV  
in 29 Palms or  
Everything



The Colors and  
Stillness in  
This Place  
After the Rain



A Women's  
Dinner in the  
Desert



A Copy of a  
Copy



Inside to  
Outside to a  
Whole New One



Now, a  
Farewell, an  
Always  
Beginning

