

# LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS

## Behind the Art: An interview with local artist Patti Kennedy

By Yzabella Chavez  
JOE SERNA JR. CHARTER SCHOOL

When I think of talent and creativity, the first person who comes to mind is Patti Kennedy, from her incredible landscapes to amazing illustrations of animals, such as a heron.

**Q:** What is a challenge you've faced in your career, and how have you overcome it?

**A:** "I actually had to overcome thinking that the art that I do is vanity, I had to respect it's something that is part of the core of my soul."

Patti also brought up a personal experience from when she was in a terrible car accident and had to recover for more than 18 months. She couldn't even sit for long periods of time, making her unable to create art.

"Everybody outside doesn't really understand what's part of your heart and your soul, and if it's important to you, you have to believe in yourself."

**Q:** Did you go to school for art, and if you did, which one/ones?

**A:** "I do not have a degree in art. What I do have is I took every art class I could and I mentored under people."



COURTESY PHOTOGRAPH

Yzabella Chavez interviewed local artist Patti Kennedy about her nature-focused work.

Patti stated that her first job in art production was "an incredible education."

**Q:** Why do you do what you do?

**A:** Patti said that she's the youngest of two sisters and a brother, and the

sister closest to her in age was a bully.

She brought up a childhood memory from when she was working on a drawing at home and was tense because her sister was going to come home and start to be rude towards her. Her mother told her to stay calm and

focus on her drawing.

Once her sister arrived home, she began to "needle" her and Patti continued on her drawing and ignored her sister. Her sister became very upset with her, but Patti said that "I really liked that feeling of being able to put my focus and my ener-

gy into creating something rather than dealing with nasty noise going on around me."

**Q:** Have you created any artwork inspired by the animals from the Mokelumne River? If you have, which one/ones?

**A:** "Most of my artwork is nature-based in some way."

Patti also stated that she has lived in the Lodi area the longest out of any other place in her life.

"One of my favorite things to draw lately is the yellow billed magpie."

She also likes to go to Lodi Lake to photograph many different things and, obviously, create artwork based on the things she photographs as well.

**Q:** Have you had any jobs before becoming an artist, and if you have, what was your favorite one/ones?

**A:** When Patti was 15, her mother was working at the local bakery and they needed new signs for the windows.

Her favorite job that isn't art related was a women's sportswear company in New York.

"I coordinated samples to our salesman, and I was also the purchasing agent."

## STEWARD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

**Q:** What is the rarest fish you've caught?

**A:** Personally, I've never caught a delta smelt, but I have caught a longfin smelt, which are also species of concern that we need to learn more about.

**Q:** Do different kinds of fish live longer than other kinds of fish?

**A:** Yes. There are some fish that only live for a few years, and there are others that can live to be over 100 years old!

**Q:** How do you know if the fish is poisonous?

**A:** The most reliable way to tell is simply to identify the fish based on its size, shape, fins, color, etc. If you live in an area where there are poisonous fish, memorizing how to identify them is the best way to know. Fortunately, we live in an area where there are no poisonous fish.

**Q:** Do you guide people on field trips?

**A:** While I don't currently guide people on field trips, I think it's something I'd like to do in the future. It certainly sounds like a lot of fun to me!

## Litterati employee Derrick Chew shares why he works with the cleanup app

By Max Hernandez-Velasquez  
JOE SERNA JR. CHARTER SCHOOL

**Q:** How long have you worked for Litterati?

**A:** I started last August, so that's about eight months.

**Q:** What department do you work in?

**A:** I am a customer success manager, I guess it's kind of like a newer position. Other roles that are similar would be an account manager or account executive. I facilitate, making sure that our clients are satisfied and are accomplishing what they need to with our product.

**Q:** What college did you go to?

**A:** I went to San José State University and my major was advertising.

**Q:** Did you ever think you would work in a job that helps the environment?

**A:** No, actually, I did not. It wasn't really on my radar until my last few roles in a couple of companies.

Because of the advertising background that I have, essentially you work for an agency and then the agency has clients.

### JOIN THE LITTERATI CHALLENGE

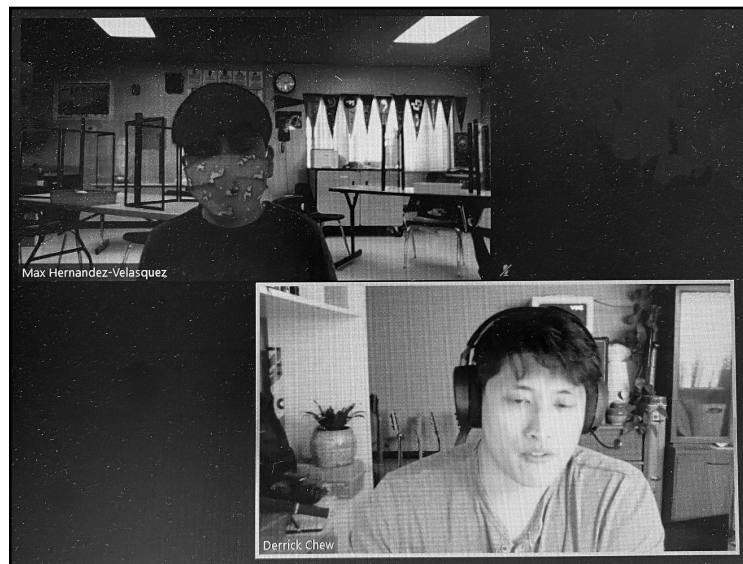
All Lodi residents are invited to join the Litterati challenge! Download the free app to your smartphone, and enter the code NEWLODI. Find out more at [www.litterati.org/how-it-works](http://www.litterati.org/how-it-works).

So the way that that works is that you'll be working for a company or brand that you're not really interested in, or they're not really something you would be a part of, or would even be the person who buys that product, but you still need to do your best to market their stuff.

So, after a couple of companies and a couple of agencies, I wanted to put my time and effort into something I believed in. So that's why I joined Litterati.

**Q:** What do you do in your free time?

**A:** In my free time I work out. One of my side jobs is not really happening right now because of the pandemic. But I was also a trainer. I've been doing CrossFit for fun for eight years. I also play guitar. Also, I'm really into video games. I have a couple of friends I like to play with online but I only play like one or two games. I'm not an across the board spectrum gamer. I just play very very specific games. And then also hang-



ing out with my wife and puppy.

**Q:** What made you work for Litterati?

**A:** Well, kinda going to the whole advertising thing, my last client was Clorox and we were doing all their digital marketing for the United States, which was great. And then, when the pandemic happened, literally they sold out of stuff overnight! Literally everything that had Clorox on it was gone from the shelf.

And then, because of that, they didn't need to advertise more because their stuff sold by itself. So, we lost the contract and I was like, "You know, as

much as I like doing digital marketing, I'm not benefitting myself making cleaning ads. I want to make something that will benefit the world and also make me feel better about myself, my work, and my efforts." And that's why I joined Litterati.

**Q:** How has COVID affected your job?

**A:** (Laughing) Well, it led me to this job so that's kind of one way of affecting my job. But the other thing is that Litterati takes the way that we work, for example.

We take something that is usually something in person — for example, a lot of clean ups

happen in big organized groups (such as) how you've done Coastal Cleanup at Lodi Lake with Mrs. Grant. She organizes the cleanup for the city of Lodi and 50 or 100 people come out and they'll do a hard day's worth of work and clean up an area.

But because of COVID, those people can't interact anymore in the same way. So people have flocked to Litterati as an alternative because everyone can do the same amount of effort, but on an individual scale.

So that really kind of boosted what my company does, because it gives the ability to people to still do that but in a safer way.

**Q:** Who started Litterati and when?

**A:** Jeff Kirschner, our CEO, started Litterati several years ago.

**Q:** Lastly, what advice would you give to future environmental helpers?

**A:** My advice would be that everybody and everything counts. So one person — even though you're one person — one person can still do a lot. Even if you feel like the problems are overwhelming, or the issue is too big, one person can still make a pretty big dent. So, one person can do a lot!

## Alina Bekkerman's interest in the environment drew her to Litterati

By Giselle Santos  
JOE SERNA JR. CHARTER SCHOOL

**Q:** What degree/degrees do you have? Science?

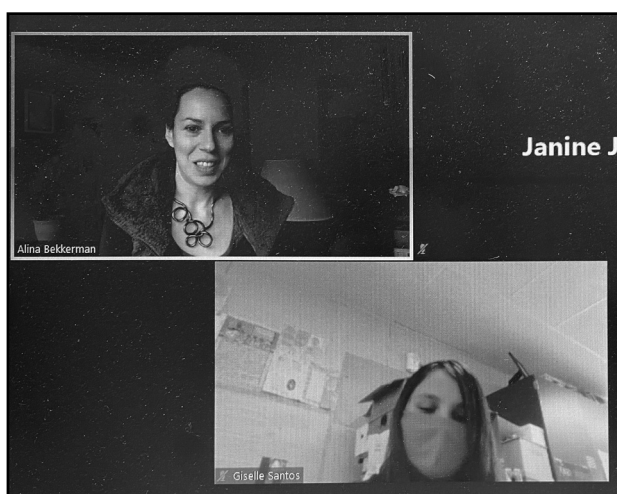
**A:** I got a degree in psychology. I had a bachelor's degree in psychology, and then I got a minor in art history. So unrelated fields — I came to this trash world by connecting with members in my community, and telling people about the things that I care about.

**Q:** When did you start working with Litterati?

**A:** November of last year

**Q:** When did Litterati start?

**A:** Litterati celebrated 7 years recently, so that would make it 2014, when it officially started. I think Jeff's journey started before then with his daughter, that maybe was 2012. He started with



taking pictures and posting on Instagram. Around 2014 is when Instagram became even more than just Instagram for Jeff. He started using that data.

**Q:** Did you have other jobs before this job? Example: Another environmental job?

**A:** When I graduated college I knew I wanted to work in advertising. So I got a job in advertising and had about 10 years in that field. The advertising

that you might see on the internet like for Visa credit card, I worked on some of those. So I wanted some way to make a living in San Francisco, and so that's the route that I went.

The more I was in my career, the more I realized that it wasn't satisfying. It didn't feed my soul. But I did learn data, because online every move you take someone is watching you, and that is all through technology, and some of it is used for good. We collect census

data to understand social economics standing with the city. We make policies based on data, but data also is used to sell more advertising.

**Q:** How did Litterati start?

**A:** Litterati started with our confounder Jeff Kirschner. He and his daughter were walking at a park, he was observing his daughter, and she was observing the environment.

What she said to him was, "Hey, Daddy, that thing is out of place. Why is there this plastic bottle here on the park trail? Can you do something about it?"

Because Jeff had worked in advertising, and in developing apps, so he took this to heart and started Litterati.

**Q:** What's the most harmful thing to the environment?

**A:** Our ignorance of the problems that create

climate catastrophe. If we ignore them and don't draw conclusions about what we are seeing based on facts. I can say plastic, but there's so many symptoms that plastic presents.

**Q:** When and how did you hear about Litterati? What made you want to join it?

**A:** I heard about Litterati for the first time at a conference for the Northern California Recycling Association. Jeff was a presenter, and he presented this new technology which helped a school identify that one of the most littered pieces in their school were the straw wrappers.

By collecting data with the number of items that they collected, and identifying what the main litter problem was, the students said that they didn't want this anymore. They were able to change school policy. Their school no longer has those straws, no longer have those items that they didn't need or

want.

It inspired me, because people that are coming together can change the world. Then, I heard that there was this position with Litterati, and that's how that happened.

**Q:** Did you always have your heart on helping the environment?

**A:** Community is about people coming together, so for me it starts with my friends and family. And from that it grew to participating in events like music festivals, and at music festivals understanding that not everybody is aware of what happens to the trash that leaves our hand, and that began my journey to take trash that is out of place, and try to put it in the right place.

That was one of the things that created my passion for litter. Once I saw it, I couldn't unsee it. It connected back to the community that we live in, and the community of the world.