

ESKER FOUNDATION

Fall 2025



Esker Foundation is located near the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers, a site known as Mohkinstsis, and a deeply significant place within Treaty 7 territory. We acknowledge that the Treaty 7 region is part of the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy, including the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai Nations; the Tsuut’ina Nation; and the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, which includes the Chiniki, Bears paw, and Goodstoney Nations. The City of Calgary is also home to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Districts 5 and 6.

Welcome

The last major retrospective of Jana Sterbak’s work in Canada was the 1991 exhibition, *States of Being*, at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. The exhibition traveled to several American cities, with a single Canadian stop at The Nickle Art Museum (now Nickle Galleries) at the University of Calgary in 1992. There was much anticipation around this exhibition, especially given the controversy that surrounded the work *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic*—a “meat dress” sewn with 50 pounds of raw flank steak. Municipal and federal politicians objected to the work for a variety of reasons, including the perceived misuse of public funds, the role and value of publicly funded museums—and, indeed, of contemporary art more broadly. While the controversy was ultimately short lived, the critical importance of Sterbak’s work has lasted, which makes it especially thrilling to bring the work of this eminent Canadian artist back to Calgary 33 years later.

Spanning almost 50 works from the last 46 years, *Dimensions of Intimacy* presents a comprehensive overview of Sterbak’s ongoing material exploration, featuring important early works as well as several rarely-seen artist editions, photographs, and drawings from Sterbak’s own collection. In short, it is an exhibition that should not be missed.

A huge thank you to Jana Sterbak for countless conversations over the last two years, and to Denis Labelle who has been invaluable in his technical and logistical expertise. Additional thanks to the institutional lenders for this exhibition, the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Hydro-Québec; the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts; Museu d’Art Contemporani de

Barcelona; the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; and the Vancouver Art Gallery.

As part of Esker Foundation’s ongoing commitment to supporting early-career artists based in Calgary, we’re featuring *First Things First*, Anna Semenoff’s thoughtful study of the arch and our collective relationship to the built environment in the Project Space until 19 October. On 27 October, we will open *In the Balance*, a new site-specific installation of ceramics by Kristine Zingeler that celebrates the beauty and complexity of wasp nests.

We’re excited to delve further into our exhibitions this season with programs including a rare in-person conversation



with Jana Sterbak, an artist talk with Anna Semenoff, and a conversation between Diana Nemiroff, former Curator of Contemporary and Modern Art at the National Gallery of Canada, and Johanne Sloan, Professor of Art History at Concordia University in Montréal, about their experiences developing history-making exhibitions with Jana Sterbak. Additionally, we have some great partnerships this season including a talk with Dr. Anne Dymond as part of the University of Lethbridge PUBLIC Professor Series, and an Emerging Writers’ Cafe hosted by The Bookshop at Esker in collaboration with the Alexandra Writers’ Centre Society, the Writers’ Guild of Alberta, and the Writers’ Guild of Alberta Youth Committee.

For details about these exhibitions and programs, please visit our website, social media (@eskerfoundation & @thebookshopatesker), or drop by the gallery—we look forward to seeing you soon.

The Esker Foundation team

FRONT COVER
Jana Sterbak, *Cones on Hand*, 1979.
Courtesy of the artist.

BACK COVER
Jana Sterbak, *House of Pain: A Relationship*, 1987.
Courtesy of the artist.

ABOVE
Jana Sterbak *I Want You to Feel the Way I Do ... (The Dress)*, 1984-1985. Live uninsulated nickel-chrome wire mounted on wire mesh, electrical cord and power, with slide-projected text. Purchased 1986. Collection of National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo by: Robert Keziere.

Jana Sterbak

Dimensions of Intimacy

20 SEPTEMBER–21 DECEMBER 2025

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY 19 SEPTEMBER, 6–9 PM

One of Canada's most influential artists, Jana Sterbak has had a significant impact on contemporary art, artists, and audiences for almost 50 years. This large-scale retrospective presents a comprehensive overview of Sterbak's work, celebrating her pivotal contributions to art history and offering a rare opportunity to experience her work firsthand. *Dimensions of Intimacy* features innovative early work that pushes material and sculptural norms, wearable structures that merge object with performance, significant video and film work, as well as rarely exhibited artist editions, photographs, and drawings from Sterbak's own collection.

Born in Prague, Czechoslovakia (now known as Czechia), Sterbak left with her parents after the Soviet invasion, moving west and settling in Canada. Though she has maintained a home and studio in Montréal for many years, Sterbak remains connected to Europe, where most of her extensive exhibitions and professional life have taken place, and from where she draws her sense of skepticism, irony, and dark humour. Sterbak's biography provides a study of contrasts, most notably between the personal and the public or political, and between freedom and dependence—an existential foundation from which she unsympathetically scrutinizes the human condition.

Provocative material exploration is central to Sterbak's practice. Often noted as being difficult to classify by medium or style, it is precisely this resistance to conformity that makes her material choices so surprising and powerful. Influenced initially by minimalism, her unconventional materials are selected deliberately to express a direct relationship between material and idea. Granite,

Jana Sterbak,
Sisyphus Sport, 1997.

All images are
courtesy of the
artist unless
otherwise noted.





Jana Sterbak, *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic*, 1987.

metal, or electrical wire speak to ideas of weight, permanence, or restriction. In contrast, chocolate, bread, or meat, offer an immediate association with food, and speak to value, tradition, and decomposition. Her materials are often ephemeral, intangible, or transformative, like the ice that forms the slowly melting chairs of *Dissolution (Auditorium)* (2001); the electricity that powers the Van de Graaff generator producing an electrostatic shock to anyone that touches *Seduction Couch* (1986-1987); or the raw flank steak that is stitched into a dress that over time dehydrates into a leathery skin in the much discussed and often copied *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic* (1987).

Sterbak's materials are the stuff of everyday life; familiar objects so ordinary that we rarely give them any notice. This material approach grounds her work in the world, making it more relatable. As Sterbak has stated, "I prefer to call my work 'objects' or 'situations', rather than 'sculpture'. To relegate an object to the rarefied world of art negates its power to disturb and the potential for discovery. A really successful work of art has the ability to make us reconsider our perceptions—not only inside the museum, but also out in the world."¹ For example, the standard dressmaker's measuring tape used in *Cones on Fingers* (1979) and *Cones on Hand* (1979) ironically transforms this simple tool of the domestic and fashion worlds into an eccentric prosthetic device for fingers or hands. These works propose a dual reading, critically addressing the unrealistic proportions imposed on the female body, while also serving as a reminder that life is measured, an ever-decreasing sum that cannot be escaped.

At the heart of Sterbak's scrutiny is the struggle for freedom. Her frequent references to the body are intended to remind us that we inhabit a corporeal envelope that, regardless of our histories or actions, both conditions and limits our freedom. She also strategically addresses the political systems, power dynamics, and social norms that influence and control bodies and bodily experiences. Sterbak suggests that structures of confinement not only manifest via these external pressures, but also—possibly more crushingly—via their internalization, which impacts our sense of self and our relationships with others. These tensions are given physical form in work that literally contains the body or physically limits its movement. *Sisyphus Sport* (1997) and *Sisyphus II* (1991), as the titles clearly imply, reference the well-known Greek myth of Sisyphus and slyly reduce this tale to its essential thematic and material components. The weight, struggle, and futility of life are represented in a simple granite backpack and aluminum cage structure with a rounded bottom that makes balance impossible. The installation of the work includes a looping film depicting a man in this cage attempting to remain upright; his struggle to balance always fails, yet his need to succeed is endless. *I Want You to Feel the Way I Do ... (The Dress)* (1984-85), evokes the damaging effects of love in the hands of characters who play out narratives of suffering and revenge. The work includes a text that

¹ Jana Sterbak and Lena Nievers, "On the Passage of Time: Jana Sterbak in Conversation with Lena Nievers," in *Jana Sterbak: Life-Size* (Vienna: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2017), 74.





Jana Sterbak, *Sisyphus II*, 1991.
16mm film and mixed media.
Collection of the Vancouver
Art Gallery, Acquisition Fund.
Photo courtesy of:
Vancouver Art Gallery.



Jana Sterbak,
Dicey, 2024.

reads like a poison letter which is made even more sinister by the outstretched arms of an ominous electrified dress seeking an embrace that, if given, will only cause more harm. The larger-than-life-size mechanized crinoline in *Remote Control II* (1989), the male chest hair sewn into the transparent fabric of *Distraction* (1991) and *Nightgown (Chemise de Nuit)* (1993–2014) draw attention to social expectations with regard to appearance and behaviour, how policies and laws limit or control sexuality or gender expression, and remind us of the ways in which certain bodies continue to be privileged, marginalized, or controlled.

PREVIOUS PAGES
Jana Sterbak, *Distraction*;
and *Jacket*, 1992.

The bed is the one place that is inextricably connected to the cycle of life—it is the place of sleep, but also of birth, sex, sickness, and death. *Bread Bed* (1996–2025) highlights most precisely the ways in which Sterbak entwines the conventional with the visceral. The mattress is a single loaf of golden-brown bread, a gesture reminiscent of fairy tales or folklore. In this work, the common becomes extraordinary, not because the mattress has metamorphized into something more valuable like gold, but because its material replacement is equally as common. Sterbak's substitutions are not magical transformations; they simply underline the absurdity of the ordinary. This bread bed is uncomfortable because we think about bread as something nourishing we consume and digest, not as something to receive and hold our bodies in all of their leaking, sweating, fetid states.

Sterbak celebrates the productive friction inherent in the tension of opposites. As she has stated, “I think attraction/repulsion is inherent in the most successful works of art—if it’s all repulsion, nobody would engage with it; if it’s all happy and positive and attractive, it can easily fall into the realm of decoration or sentimentality. The push and pull recalls our daily existence. The great thing about an artwork is that one can present mutually exclusive propositions—not sequentially, but all at once.”² Sterbak² Ibid, 77 understands the human condition as an ongoing narrative of provocative contrasts: absurd and rational, flawed yet perfect, fragile but strong, and her material and thematic scope reflects this. The incongruous impulse to both resist and accept contradiction is itself a paradox, and it is in this place of struggle that Sterbak's work is most at home.

Biography

Czech-born Canadian artist Jana Sterbak lives and works in Montréal and Paris. Among Canada's most renowned and influential living artists, Sterbak's work ruthlessly considers the body and the human condition. Her 40 year career has spanned sculpture, video, installation, and performance.

Her work has been featured in major exhibitions across Canada and internationally, including at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Carré d'Art, Nîmes; the Palais des Papes, Avignon; Serpentine Gallery, London; Museu Tàpies, Barcelona; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck; and Lehmbruck Museum,

Duisburg. Her work is included in many collections including Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the San Diego Art Museum; MAAXI Museum, Rome; the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; the Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane; Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg; and FotoMuseum, Winterthur.

She has won multiple prizes and accolades, including the Prix Paul-Émile-Borduas, the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, the Prix Ozias-Leduc from La Fondation Émile Nelligan, and the John Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship.

PROJECT SPACE

CURRENT EXHIBITION

Anna Semenoff *First Things First*

16 JUNE–19 OCTOBER 2025

For Anna Semenoff, sculpture offers an arena to consider the reciprocal relationship between the built environment and our perception and experience thereof; or, how the world we make, makes us in turn. She is interested in the psychosocial impacts of technological structures, and how our built environment creates possible futures of which we are not yet aware.

First Things First, Semenoff's new sculptural installation, is a spatial, material, and conceptual study of the arch; an architectural form that connects or delineates space, and whose geometry allows it to bear excessive weight and span large distances. The arch's necessity and ubiquity were diminished somewhat with the widespread usage of reinforced concrete, a material that has become an omnipresent feature of our world, forming the basis of homes, skyscrapers, bridges, highways, and dams alike.

Semenoff's series of three self-supporting arches unfold in sequence, creating a succession of portals or thresholds in space. Each arch consists of a series of transparent resin blocks, which have been cast into interlocking forms. Hollow beeswax pyramids form the keystone and base of each arch. In keeping with Semenoff's architectural reference point, the structural integrity of the arches is entirely self-evident. Gravity, geometry, and compression hold the form together; nothing is hidden.

We encounter *First Things First* within the architecture of the Project Space, within the built environment of Inglewood, itself dominated by concrete and glass. The raking prairie light that refracts through the glassy resin and is absorbed by the flesh-like beeswax is not direct sunlight, but is rather a reflection of the glass façade across 9th Avenue. Cumulatively with *First Things First*, Semenoff meditates on the relationship between structures, reality and meaning, and searches for wonder and enchantment within the material and formal possibilities of sculpture.

Biography

Anna Semenoff is a sculptor based in Calgary, AB. located on Treaty 7 Territory. She completed her BFA in sculpture from the Alberta University of the Arts (2019), and her MFA in fine art from the University of Guelph (2024). She is interested in the study of structures and systems of perception, and the ways they influence our understanding of our built environment, and how we occupy it.

First Things First was produced in residence at the Kiyooka Ohe Art Centre, and with support from the Esker Foundation Commission Fund.

Anna Semenoff, *First Things First*, 2025.
Installation view. Photo by: Blaine Campbell.



PROJECT SPACE

UPCOMING EXHIBITION

Kristine Zingeler *In the Balance*

27 OCTOBER 2025–22 FEBRUARY 2026

Kristine Zingeler’s artistic practice emerges from a process of slow and attentive looking, curiosity, and wonder. She is drawn to the beauty and resonance of nature’s detritus: rocks, seashells, feathers, tree bark, seed pods. Her studio is filled with an ever-expanding collection of objects and fragments, often gathered from her garden, or nearby walks with her family. She approaches these objects with the empathy and curiosity of a maker, parsing the complexities of their colour, form, and texture in a bid to understand their creation.

In the Balance, Zingeler’s new site-specific installation, offers a series of ceramic vessels inspired by the overlooked beauty and labyrinthine complexity of wasp nests. While wasps (of which there are over 100,000 known species, and potentially millions unknown) tend to be popularly maligned as vengeful pests, their predilection for both predation and pollination make them crucial to the balance of an ecosystem. Wasps are also inveterate makers. Certain varieties of wasp mix tree bark or other plant matter with their saliva to make a fine, paper-like substance which forms the hexagonal architecture of their nests. For Zingeler, these paper wasp nests are a source of endless fascination, pointing to the wasps’ material ingenuity and highly complex social structure, and to seasonal cycles of renewal, growth, and dormancy.

Zingeler begins each ceramic work with hand-coiling; winding and looping ropes of clay into forms that echo classical Greek pottery. She then turns her attention to the vessel’s surface, adding or subtracting textural details to create patterns or subtle gradations in a process that is both responsive and improvisational. The physicality and unpredictability of clay is crucial to Zingeler’s process: it becomes yet another conduit for wonder and curiosity. This unerring attention to the subtle and the

unnoticed is at the heart of Zingeler’s practice. We, in turn, are encouraged to slow down and attune ourselves to the seductive, the enigmatic, and the weird hidden in the detritus of our own lives.

Biography

Kristine Zingeler pursues an interdisciplinary art practice that involves photography, collage, drawing, painting, and sculpture. She holds a BFA in Painting from the University of Calgary and has furthered her education through skill sharing, residencies, and experimentation. Her work is included in the collections of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Fairmont Palliser Hotel, the University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine, as well as numerous private collections. Addressing themes of interconnectedness, time, and the relentless state of flux that both humanity and our planet experience, Zingeler’s work is subtle yet impactful and relies on an extensive process of collecting, documenting, and assembling. Throughout her practice runs a thread of curiosity and enthusiasm for the seemingly mundane. She elevates rocks, feathers, nests, insects, plants, and other apparent detritus to a place of preciousness. You can find her quietly working in Moh’kinstsis Treaty 7 Territory. She is represented by Herringer Kiss Gallery, Calgary.

Courtesy of the artist.

Produced in part with support from the
Esker Foundation Commission Fund.



ESKER PROGRAMS & ENGAGEMENT

Our FREE programs connect people with contemporary art and provide a wide variety of alternative access points to our exhibitions through experiential and exploratory learning opportunities. Through collaboration with artists and community partnerships, we encourage creative expression and meaningful engagement with the arts.

For the most up-to-date information for registration for our programs please visit:

eskerfoundation.com/program/current



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Tel: 403 930 2490

Email: programs@eskerfoundation.com

Please review the listings carefully. Registration is required to participate, unless noted otherwise. Space in the programs is limited.

LEFT

Participants at Babak Golkar's
Clay Workshop.
Photo by: Mike Tan.

RIGHT

Artist talk by Babak Golkar.
Photo by: Wayne To.



TALKS

In Conversation with Jana Sterbak

Saturday 20 September
1–2 PM

Join Jana Sterbak and Director/ Curator Naomi Potter for an afternoon chat about the significance of *Dimensions of Intimacy*, the largest Canadian retrospective of Sterbak's work in 33 years. Addressing specific work, career highlights, personal anecdotes, and even advice, this informal and candid conversation is a rare opportunity to hear Sterbak speak about her life and work.

From a Communist Doctor to Madonna's Cone Bra: Museums and Cultural Diplomacy in Troubled Times—Talk with Dr. Anne Dymond, UofL Public Professor Series

Thursday 2 October
6–8 PM

Dr. Anne Dymond explores the mobilization of Canada's art and museums for political purposes, starting with Canada's engagement with China in the early 1970s. Her lively presentation of fascinating objects reveals how in troubled times, art and museums can act as bridges that connect us across challenging divides.

The University of Lethbridge's PUBLIC Professor Series is designed to spark thought-provoking discussions and bring a diverse group of experts and researchers from the University campuses into the communities that they serve. Find more information at: www.ulethbridge.ca/research/public-professor

Presented in collaboration with the University of Lethbridge PUBLIC Professor Series.

Dr. Anne Dymond (Ph.D. Queen's University) is Associate Professor of Art History and Museum Studies and Chair of the Department of Art, at the University of Lethbridge. Her book *Diversity Counts: Gender, Race, and Representation in Canadian Art Galleries* (MQUP 2019) was the first large-scale quantitative assessment of gender and ethnicity in Canadian art galleries and was described by art historian Allan Antliff as "a path-breaking study and an invaluable contribution to our understanding of the contemporary art scene in Canada."



**PUBLIC
Professor**
SERIES

Artist Talk with Anna Semenoff

Thursday 16 October
6–7 PM

Sculptor Anna Semenoff is interested in thinking about how the world we make makes us in turn. In this artist talk, Anna Semenoff will discuss the ideas and process behind her Project Space installation, *First Things First*, and her exploration of the relationship between architecture and perception.

Curating the Work of Jana Sterbak: Diana Nemiroff and Johanne Sloan In Conversation

Thursday 13 November
6–8 PM

Both Johanne Sloan, professor of art history at Concordia University in Montréal, and Diana Nemiroff, former curator of contemporary and modern art at the National Gallery of Canada, have curated Jana Sterbak exhibitions: in 2025 Sloan curated *Corpus insolite: Jana Sterbak* at the Musée des Hospitalières in Montréal; and in 1991 Nemiroff curated *States of Being* at the National Gallery of Canada. This conversation will weave together personal recollections, stories of reception, and insights into the curatorial process each of them developed while working alongside Sterbak to create these significant exhibitions.



TOURS

Tour with Katherine Ylitalo and Naomi Potter
Friday 10 October
6–7 PM

Join Calgary-based curator, writer, and educator Katherine Ylitalo and Director/Curator Naomi Potter for a tour of *Dimensions of Intimacy*, where they will reflect on the reception of Sterbak’s work over the last four decades. This tour will be an opportunity for Ylitalo to reflect on her involvement installing Jana Sterbak’s *States of Being*, presented at The Nickle Art Museum (now Nickle Galleries) at the University of Calgary in 1992 where Ylitalo was Curator of Art from 1990–1996.

Curatorial Tour with Naomi Potter
Thursday 23 October
6–7 PM

Dimensions of Intimacy is a bread mattress, a backpack of stone, a human skeleton made of chocolate; it is a house of pain, a cage of struggle, a bed of passion, and an angry dress—what do all these have in common? Join Director/Curator Naomi Potter for a tour of the unique material exploration of Jana Sterbak’s work.

Conversational Exhibition Tour
Thursday 6 November
6–7 PM

Esker Curators Elizabeth Diggon and Shauna Thompson take audiences on a tour of the exhibition *Dimensions of Intimacy* where questions and discussion are encouraged and always welcome!

Behind the Scenes Exhibition Tour
Thursday 11 December
6–7 PM

Interested in learning how *Bread Bed* was made, or how we safely installed a work of art that shocks visitors? Join Director/Curator Naomi Potter and Head Preparator Doug Haslam for a behind the scenes tour to better understand what went into the complex and unique installation of the exhibition *Dimensions of Intimacy*.

Participants led by Tyson/Coach T from Recess Calgary on a tour of Inglewood as part of the Imaginarium workshop. Photo by: Mike Tan

KIDS & FAMILY
Bring the Baby Art Tour & Tummy Time
Fridays, 24 October & 5 December
12–1 PM

Introducing babies to works of art lays the groundwork for visual, cognitive, and language development.

Parents, caregivers, and their babies are invited to join us for this relaxed tour in which babies will have time to freely explore the exhibitions then enjoy ‘tummy time’ social fun on artist Yvonne Mullock’s extraordinary interactive sensory blankets, created especially for babies.

Registration essential. Only for children 2 years old and under, with their caregiver.

Create Together Family Workshops
AGES 0–12
Saturdays, 25 October & 6 December
11 AM–1 PM

Families with children up to 12 years old are invited to experience the themes of our current exhibitions through collaborative art-making and shared creative experiences. Each workshop encourages curiosity and playful engagement with new ideas, materials, and art forms. Connect, make memories, and Create Together!

Parents or guardians participate for the duration of the program. All materials will be provided.

Registration essential. For families with children up to 12 years old.

Kids Studio
AGES 7–12
Saturdays, 25 October & 6 December
2–4 PM

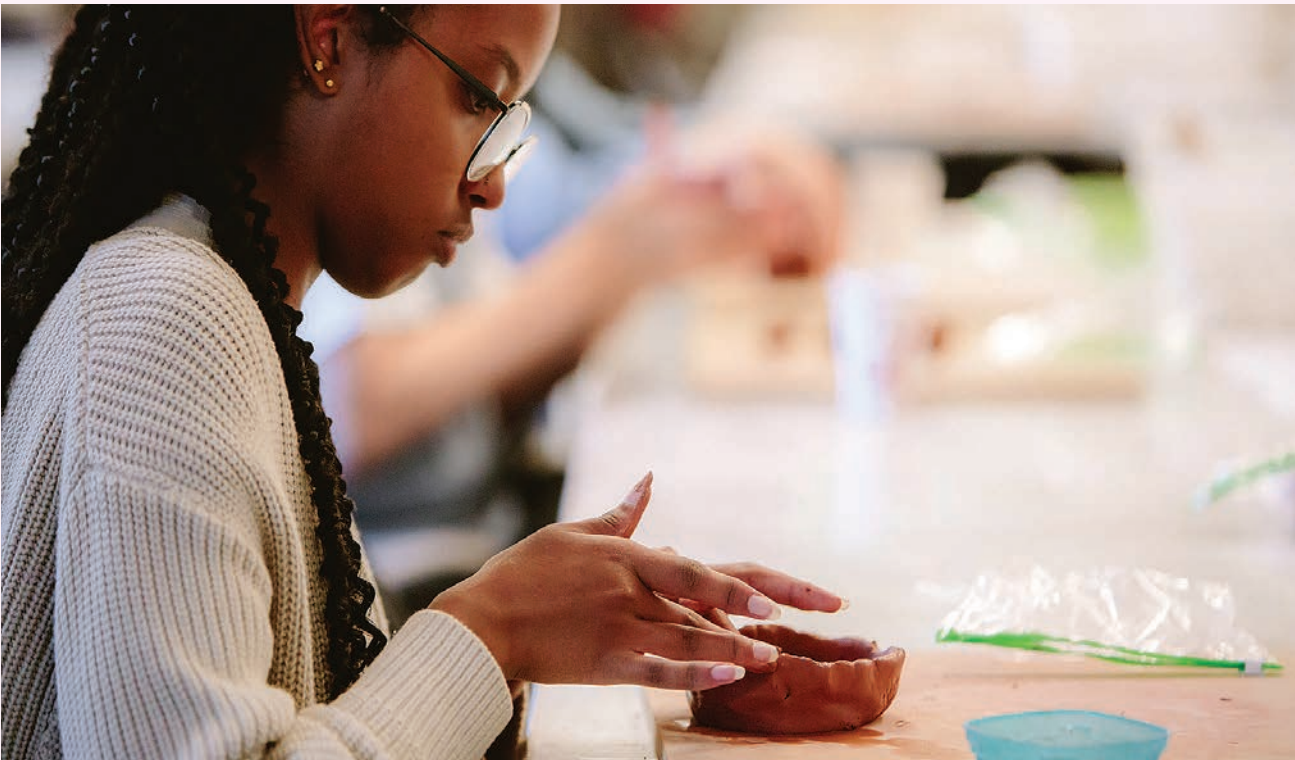
Kids Studio is a series of hands-on workshops designed for children aged 7 to 12 where they can explore their creativity through artistic and imaginative play. These workshops introduce fun and conceptual ways of thinking and creating, while providing a space where young artists can independently experiment with different art mediums and techniques.

Parents or guardians are asked to stay for the duration of the program, unless otherwise indicated on the event registration.

Registration and parental consent essential. For kids ages 7-12 years old.

Young visitors enjoy Summer Community Night. Photo by: Mike Tan.

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS



BOOKSHOP AT ESKER
EVENT

Emerging Writers' Cafe
AGES 16+
Thursday 20 November
6–8 PM

Hosted by The Bookshop at Esker in collaboration with the Alexandra Writers' Centre Society, the Wrtiers' Guild of Alberta, and the Wrtiers' Guild of Alberta Youth Committee.

The Emerging Writers' Café is a meet-up for local early-career writers of all genres looking to develop their projects and ideas. It is a space to share work, practice giving and receiving feedback, access resources and support, and spend focused time writing. Whether you are looking to strengthen your skills, make progress on a project, workshop new ideas, join us to connect and grow with Calgary's writing community!

Registration essential.
Recommended for ages 16 and over.

Cozy Community Night
Friday 28 November
5–7 PM

Hello friends and families! Drop-in for an evening of family-focused exhibition tours, fun art-making activities for kids, youth, and adults, free refreshments, and a special one night only 15% Community Discount at The Bookshop at Esker.

Registration not required,
all are welcome.

Stay tuned for more exciting workshops and events to be announced!



Check our website:
eskerfoundation.com

Subscribe to our e-newsletter,
and follow us on social media
[@eskerfoundation](#)

Photos by: Mike Tan and Elyse Bouvier.

YOUTH STUDIO



Youth Animation Camp

Presented in partnership
with Quickdraw Animation Society

Sunday 9 November–
Tuesday 11 November
AGES 13–18+
Daily times to be confirmed.

Youth Studio connects youth (13–18+) to contemporary art and ideas through free experiential and creative activities led by contemporary artists.

Registration and parent/guardian consent essential for participants under 18.

Registrants must be able to attend all three workshop days.

Have a story to tell and a love for animation? This camp is your creative playground! Youth are invited to dive into the world of stop-motion animated storytelling, and learn animation techniques through intuitive hands-on activities. Whether you are dreaming up fantasy worlds, creating a slice-of-life story, or experimenting with abstract visuals, you will put your imagination into motion and leave with a short-animated film that's all your own.

Artworks created during the workshops may be featured in a public exhibition at Esker Foundation's Bridge Space, giving you a chance to share your story with the world!



BRIDGE
SPACE

A space
dedicated to young
people

Launched in 2021, Bridge is for the young members of our community. It is a space to make visible the incredible work created by children and youth in programs, for youth-led curation, and a space to be claimed by young people for expressions yet to be imagined.



Stories are Stories are Stories

APRIL–OCTOBER 2025

Erika DeFreitas explores how stories and memories connect generations. Despite only having a faint memory of meeting her paternal grandmother as a child, a story told to her as an adult led Erika to believe that her grandmother has been communicating with her in small ways to forge a relationship that defies space and time.

Guided by Erika, the intergenerational participants created the artworks in this exhibition during a one-day workshop. Through storytelling and creative expression, they celebrated connections beyond the traditional parent-child bond—honouring elders, extended family, and chosen loved ones.

In pairs, the participants reflected on their connections through shared memories, while also creating new moments that shape their mutual histories. The workshop concluded with participants taking photos of each other, archiving their newly

formed memories. This process held space for remembrance, highlighting how art and storytelling shape our sense of belonging across generations.

Special thanks to Allison Seto and Justin Dolores for the photo documentation.

Installation view of *Stories are Stories are Stories* in Bridge Space. Photo by: Mike Tan.



UPCOMING BRIDGE EXHIBITION

We Are The Lodge

NOVEMBER 2025

We Are The Lodge showcases ribbon skirts and shirts created by youth ages 17–20 during a series of workshops held at Esker Foundation in collaboration with Discovering Choices alternative high schools. Guided by Indigenous mentor Pearl White Quills, and supported by her daughter Justice White Quills, participants learned foundational sewing skills while exploring the cultural significance of ribbon skirts as symbols of the body, the earth, and the divine.

Over four sessions, 14 participants crafted ribbon skirts and shirts that reflect both personal expression and ancestral memory. This exhibition honors the act of making as a form of remembering—where each skirt becomes a vessel of personal and collective meaning, stitched with resilience, ceremony, and connection.

Biography
Pearl White Quills, blessed with the name Aa Koa Miyanist Tsi’nih Kiaki (Sings Many Different Songs Woman), is a Niitsitapiaki (Blackfoot Woman) artist from Siksikáí’tsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy). Pearl is an old-style jingle dress Powwow dancer, traditional hand drum singer, seamstress, professional beadwork artist, and mentor, teaching community and creating authentic handmade Indigenous crafts through her flourishing family business, Bright Swan Creations.

Special thanks to: Discovering Choices Schools, the CBE Indigenous Education Team, and the wonderful teachers who made this all possible.

Courtesy of the artists.

UPCOMING EXHIBITION

Winter 2026

In a world of constant notifications, social media connection, doomscrolling, and pervasive AI intervention—that is to say, the practical and relational networks that are producing in us a sense of overarching estrangement from the tangible and present—it is remarkable that painting, in its stubborn rootedness in material and process, persists (or perhaps insists?) with such importance and global presence. While periodically dismissed in art criticism as irrelevant, the vitality, urgency, and resonance of contemporary painting endures.

Painting asks for material engagement, slow looking, and a willingness to dwell in ambiguity. It is tactile, intimate, composed of gestures—quick and slow, instinctive and considered. In contrast to the speed and saturation of our hyper-dig- itized and hyper-connected lives, and in spite of a voracious hunger for novelty, immediacy, and spectacle, painting offers a counterpoint: a space for nuance that our culture rarely grants.

This winter, we're excited to present solo exhibitions by several painters who each locate fleeting instances of connection, tenderness, or desire amidst the everyday, and give visual form to the ambiguity of intimate relationships. Reveling in uncertainty and complexity, these painters offer a resistance against clear narratives and over-definition, often creating works that hover in the space between figuration and abstraction. Each artist explores what is seen, what resists being seen, what is present—but that which we often overlook. These exhibitions ask us to linger, perhaps caught by a detail: the drag of a brush, the unexpected texture of material, the meeting of two colours, or the shift of a surface in changing light.

Photo courtesy of Alexandre Pépin.



PERMANENT COLLECTION

Permanent Collection is Esker Foundation's online publishing initiative. For each season of exhibitions, Esker commissions a response from compelling voices within or beyond the visual arts.

We ask contributors to reflect on our current exhibitions as a means of generating new ideas about and connections between the art-works from a new perspective.

We see Permanent Collection as an expanded exhibition space that explores the points of resonance between and within exhibitions and disciplines. Permanent Collection offers a forum for experimentation, and for innovative, transdisciplinary approaches to discussing art and exhibitions. As a non-collecting institution, Esker is defined by the conversations, ideas, and research that emerge around our exhibitions and programming—this is our model for a permanent collection.

JUST RELEASED

The Poet, The Preacher, and The Painter

Cheryl Foggo in response to
Deanna Bowen *Black Drones in the Hive*

Author, historian, and filmmaker Cheryl Foggo journeys through Calgary's Black History as she narrates the lives, works, experiences, and connections between three seminal figures: *The Poet*, Ethel Lewis, who lived off and on in Calgary and southern Alberta from 1892 until her passing in 1960; *The Preacher*, Andrew Risby (brother of artist Deanna Bowen's grandfather), who was born in Campsie, Alberta in 1917 and pastored a Black church in Calgary from 1946 until his passing in 2002; and *The Painter*, Phillip Risby, an artist currently living and working in both Calgary and Los Angeles.

The Dangling Blue Thread

Jamie Chai Yun Liew in response to
Hangama Amiri, Erika DeFreitas,
and Thuy-Han Nguyen-Chi

"I finger the ornate fabric, hand-painted batik, and wonder whose hands applied the gold, pink, brown, and curvy lines, the bright petals, the soaring birds. I see the scene and feel my skin getting sticky from the thick and humid air. I hear the cicadas rotating in sirens, and the frogs, like the call to prayer, beckoning dusk and night to come—inviting us into a perpetual ritual."

—Jamie Chai Yun Liew

Visitors at Deanna Bowen's exhibition
Black Drones in the Hive, 2024; and
Hangama Amiri's exhibition *PARTING/فراق*,
2025.

Photos by: Elyse Bouvier and Allison Seto.

Explore over twenty texts, musical compositions, poems, and gourmet recipes that respond to over forty exhibitions from the past ten years.



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The Bookshop at Esker is a cultural, literary, and retail hub at Esker Foundation. Programs and events have included book launches, performances, pop-ups, signings, readings, talks and panel discussions.

Visit the Bookshop at Esker at the gallery or online to order the limited-editions featured here, and browse all art books, artist totes, pins and more. Shipping and local pickup are available.

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BOOKSHOP EVENT



EMERGING WRITERS' CAFE

AGES 16+
Thursday 20 November
6–8 PM

Hosted by The Bookshop at Esker in collaboration with the Alexandra Writers' Centre Society, the Writers' Guild of Alberta, and the Writers' Guild of Alberta Youth Committee.

The Emerging Writers' Café is a meet-up for local early-career writers of all genres looking to develop their projects and ideas. It is a space to share work, practice giving and receiving feedback, access resources and support, and spend focused time on writing. Whether you are looking to strengthen your skills, make progress on a project, or workshop new new ideas, join us to connect and grow with Calgary's writing community!

Recommended for ages 16 and over.



ABOVE:

Artist Harvey Nichol, AKLAS Issue #2 Launch.
Photo by: Mike Tan.

EXPLORE OUR CURRENT LIMITED EDITIONS

The Bookshop at Esker proud to collaborate with artists to produce unique limited-edition items that reflect their practice.

These projects celebrate and support each artist's work by creating new avenues for expression while inviting our community to connect with contemporary art in a tangible and memorable way.



Erika DeFreitas: *what is left resembles light and is restless—as we are seen*

Produced on the occasion of the exhibition:
Erika DeFreitas: *and that break is the one that shows (to shift, a curve, to quiver)*

Edition of 60
\$60.00



Jewellery Box Sticker Collection by Emma Goudie
Najeonchilgi Box, Mugunghwa and Floral Taegeuk

This sticker collection is designed to reference a style of Korean jewellery boxes

Edition of 90
\$5.00 each



Care + Wear: *Bodies Crafted for Harm and Healing*

Produced on the occasion of the exhibition:
Care and Wear: Bodies Crafted for Harm and Healing

Limited Edition Print:
Jude Griebel, *Threadbare*, 2023
Hand-tinted linocut on archival paper

Edition of 100 + 5 artist proofs
\$125.00



Tropicana Sponge and Tropicana Brush Enamel Pins by Juan Ortiz-Apuy

Produced on the occasion of the exhibition:
Juan Ortiz-Apuy: *Tropicana*

Editions of 125
\$10.00 each

Purple—Limited Edition Tote by Chloë Lum and Yannick Desranleau

Produced on the occasion of the exhibition:
Chloë Lum & Yannick Desranleau:
The Garden of a Former House Turned Museum

Screen printed by Morgan Melenka

Edition of 250
\$25.00 each

CALENDAR:
PROGRAMS & EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Friday 19 September
6–9 PM
Opening reception of
Dimensions of Intimacy

Saturday 20 September
1–2 PM
In Conversation with Jana Sterbak

OCTOBER

Thursday 2 October
6–8 PM
PUBLIC Professor Series with
Dr. Anne Dymond: *From a Commu-
nist Doctor to Madonna’s Cone Bra:
Museums and Cultural Diplomacy in
Troubled Times*

Friday 10 October
6–7 PM
Tour with Katherine Ylitalo and
Naomi Potter

Thursday 16 October
6–7 PM
Artist Talk with Anna Semenoff

Thursday 23 October
6–7 PM
Tour with Naomi Potter

Friday 24 October
12–1 PM
Bring the Baby Tour

Saturday 25 October
11–1 PM
Create Together

Saturday 25 October
2–4 PM
Kids Studio

NOVEMBER

Thursday 6 November
6–7 PM
Curatorial Tour with Elizabeth Diggon
and Shauna Thompson

**Sunday 9 November–
Tuesday 11 November**
Daily times to be confirmed
Youth Studio: Animation Camp
with Quickdraw Animation Society

Thursday 13 November
6–8 PM
Curating the Work of Jana Sterbak:
Diana Nemiroff and Johanne Sloan
In Conversation

Thursday 20 November
6–8 PM
The Bookshop at Esker:
Emerging Writers’ Cafe

Friday 28 November
5–7 PM
Cozy Community Night

DECEMBER

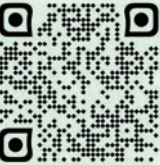
Friday 5 December
12–1 PM
Bring the Baby Tour

Saturday 6 December
11–1 PM
Create Together

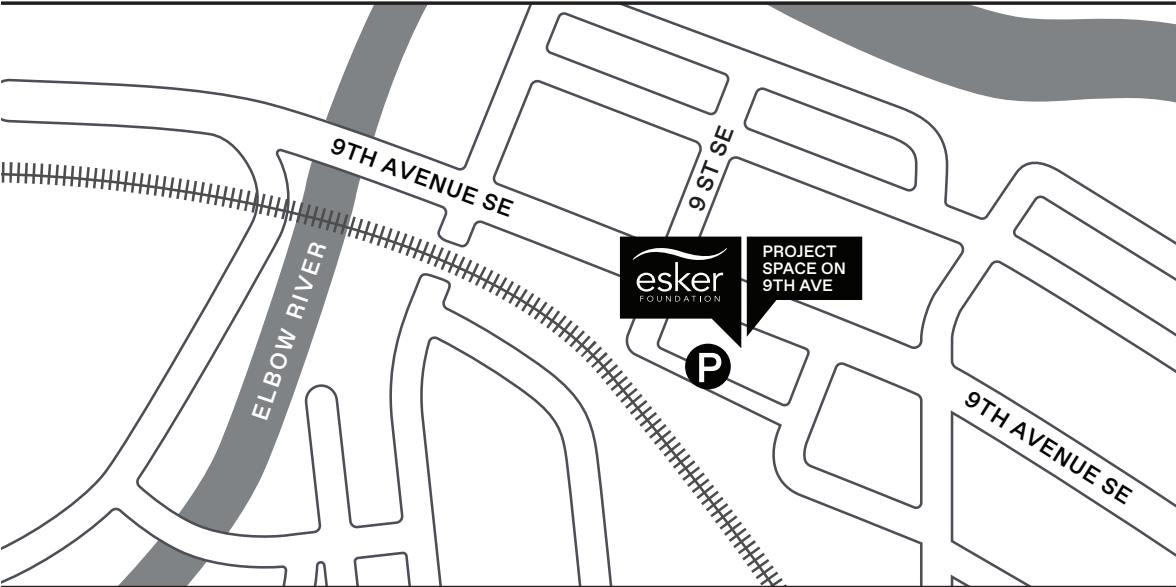
Saturday 6 December
2–4 PM
Kids Studio

Thursday 11 December
6–7 PM
Behind the Scenes Tour with
Doug Haslam and Naomi Potter

PROGRAM CALENDAR
Scan the QR code to
access the online calendar
of free events, workshops,
talks & tours!



INFORMATION FOR YOUR VISIT



FREE ADMISSION

HOURS

Wednesday to Friday	11 AM–6 PM
Saturday & Sunday	12–5 PM
Monday & Tuesday	CLOSED

PARKING & WIFI
Complimentary for 90 minutes.
Come up to the 4th floor and register your
license plate at the Esker front desk.

ACCESSIBILITY
Esker Foundation is accessible via elevator access
up to the fourth floor, which is available from the
main floor and on all levels of the building. A swing
door with an automatic door control into the gallery
is situated adjacent to the gallery’s revolving door.
Wheelchair-accessible public washrooms are
available inside the galleries, and on the fourth
floor. There are accessible parking spaces in the
surface parking lot at the rear of the building,
these are complimentary for up to 90 minutes.

We all benefit from deeper, relational considerations
of accessibility. If you have any questions or requests
regarding access to the gallery or programs, please
don’t hesitate to contact us at 403 930 2490 or
by email at info@eskerfoundation.com.

PROGRAM REGISTRATION
Programs are free and open to all.

Please visit:
eskerfoundation.com/program/current
to register

TOURS
Private tours on request are available for
groups of 10 to 20, subject to availability,
and with at least two weeks notice.

To enquire about a tour for your group please email:
info@eskerfoundation.com or call 403 930 2490.

Visitors and group leaders can also access
our self-guided tour resources, which are
available in the gallery, and on our website.

CONTACT US AT

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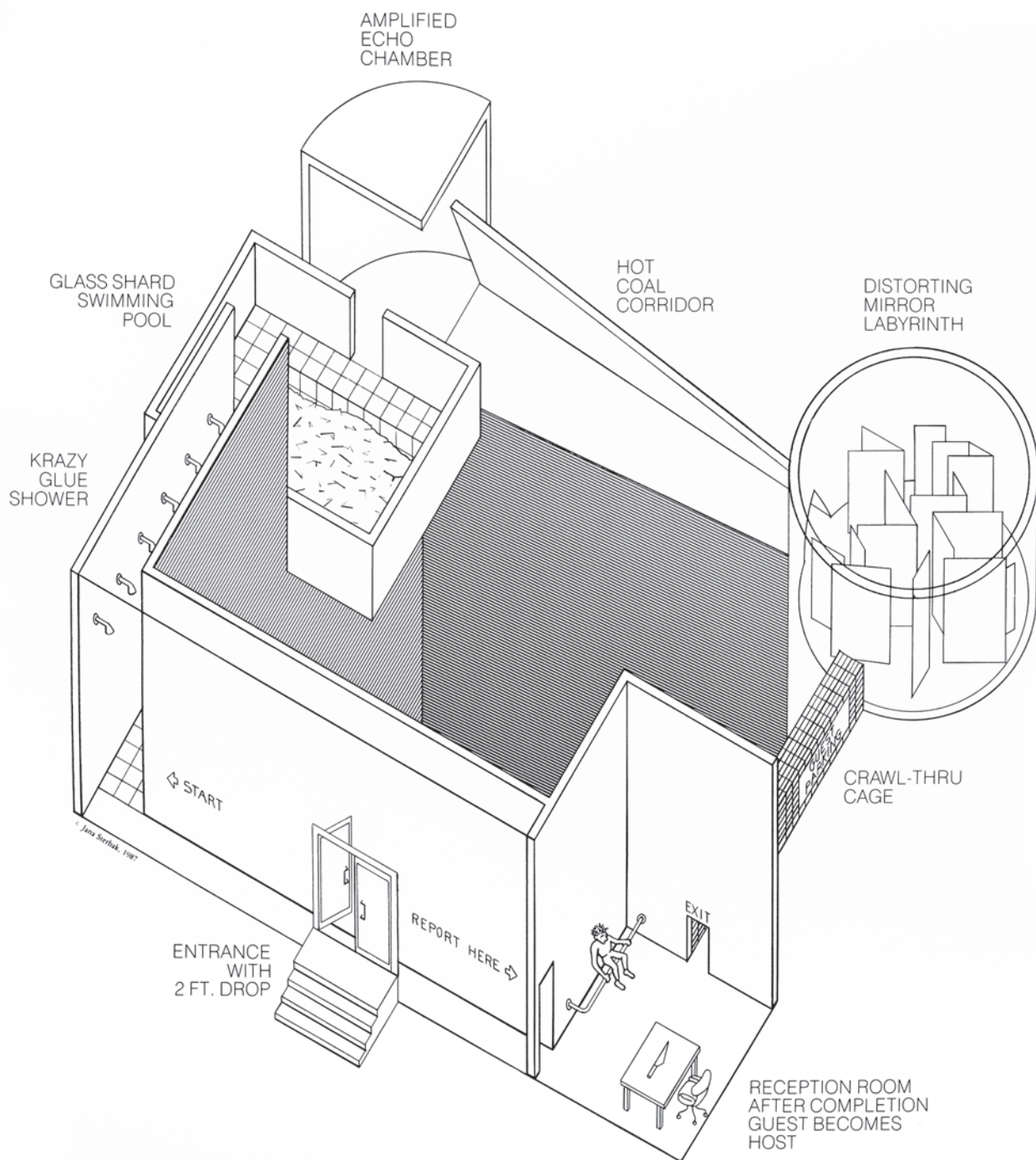
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HOUSE OF PAIN

A RELATIONSHIP