



## Winter 2025 Season at Esker Foundation



Hangama Amiri, *Man with Vase of Tulips*, 2024. Courtesy of the artist.

### **Opening reception: Friday 24 January, 6-9pm**

Join us to celebrate the launch of our winter 2025 season with three new solo exhibitions by Hangama Amiri, Erika DeFreitas, and Thuy-Han Nguyen-Chi.

## Hangama Amiri

### PARTING/فراق

January 25 - April 27, 2025

Hangama Amiri creates intricately layered textile compositions that muse on home, kinship, and memory. This solo exhibition will extend upon an ongoing body of work that focuses on the artist's personal history and diasporic experience. Amiri and her family fled their home in Kabul in 1996, which necessitated a period of familial separation. Her father worked in Norway and later Denmark, while Amiri lived in Tajikistan with her mother and siblings, before the family settled together in Halifax in 2005. This nine-year separation was marked by the frequent exchange of letters, snapshots, and gifts; missives that outlined the contours of her family's lives and offered glimpses into jobs, celebrations, or daily acts of care.

In the present, Amiri mines this archive of family photos, material fragments, and memories, translating them into lushly detailed textile collages that combine painting, printmaking, quilting, and appliqué techniques. She carefully selects textiles that speak to the specificity of her personal history, acknowledging the ways in which textiles, through their uniquely close relationship to home and the body, become perfumed with meaning and memory over time. Amiri's focus on textiles also nod to familial bonds – her mother taught her to sew – and to long, diverse histories of feminist textile-based practices. Amiri's work can be read as the expression and excavation of memory, connection, and kinship through material and process.

Find more images and information at:

<https://eskerfoundation.com/exhibition/hangama-amiri/>



Erika DeFreitas, *The Black Madonnas of Perpetual Murmurs*, courtesy of the artist.

## Erika DeFreitas

*and that break is the one that shows  
(to shift, a curve, to quiver)*

**January 25 - April 27, 2025**

In 2011, a team of researchers examined the teeth of a woman who lived in medieval Germany sometime during the years of 1000-1200 AD. The researchers found hundreds of tiny blue particles within her dental calculus, which they determined to be lapis lazuli, a metamorphic rock prized for its intense blue colour often used to tint medieval illuminated manuscripts. The researchers deduced that this woman must have been a scribe who repeatedly licked her pigment-soaked pen nib as she worked on illuminated manuscripts, an area of work previously thought to be dominated exclusively by men.<sup>[1]</sup>

This exchange of artist and material, body and mineral, sparked a realm of inquiry and exploration for artist Erika DeFreitas to search for absences within the canon of art history. The new and recent works in this solo exhibition commune with a constellation of women in a multi-part dialogue that transcends space and time. These women range from the medieval scribe with lapis lazuli embedded in her teeth, to the subject of an 1870 painting by French artist Frédéric Bazille, to the artist's paternal grandmother, who was one of a community of women who tended to a statue of the Black Madonna of La Divina Pastora Church in Siparia, Trinidad. Spanning collage, video, performance, and photography, DeFreitas' work excavates presence within absence, and manifests kinship and memory within gesture and process.

<sup>[1]</sup> Brigit Katz, "Blue Pigment in Medieval Woman's Teeth Suggest She Was a Highly Skilled Artist." Smithsonian Mag, January 10, 2019.

Find our more at:

<https://eskerfoundation.com/exhibition/erika-defreitas/>



## Thuy-Han Nguyen-Chi

*The blue of the sky depends on  
the darkness of empty space behind it*

**January 25 - April 27, 2025**

Interweaving family lore, mythology, science fiction, and digital abstraction, Thuy-Han Nguyen-Chi's 2022 film *Into The Violet Belly* follows the collaboration between the artist and her mother, Thuyen Hoa, who fled Vietnam after the end of the American War via a near-calamitous sea journey. Oscillating between voices, visual registers, and timescales—was it seven months or seven thousand years?— *Into The Violet Belly* offers up an image of its multiplicitous structure: a massive digital swarm, tiny avatars of migrating bodies, swimming in an infinite blue.

More images and info at:

<https://eskerfoundation.com/exhibition/thuy-han-nguyen-chi/>

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