

M.B.H. Invitational Exhibition, Open Call for Artists

Exhibition dates: Dec.14, 2024 – Feb. 22, 2025

Application Deadline: May 15, 2024

The Mary B. Howard Invitational Exhibition

Every two years, Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra ICA) presents the Mary B. Howard Invitational, a group exhibition featuring the work of regional contemporary artists. For each iteration of the show, Tephra ICA works with a guest curator to produce the exhibition through an open call for artists. This program values exhibition-making as a meaningful collaboration between artist and curator and a generative process that feeds the development and public presentation of innovative new work. The Invitational is named in memory of Mary B. Howard, an artist, long-time board member, and staunch supporter of Tephra ICA.

About the Exhibition

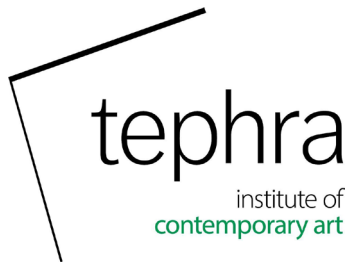
This year, Guest Curator Liz Enszt will work with **three selected artists** to develop a group exhibition, for which each artist creates and presents new work.

This exhibition will focus on the associative power of materials, and how they contribute to the meaning of the artwork, with a focus on textile practices. Because of the way that information becomes encoded within textiles, they have the power to embody and express culture. Interconnection is a fundamental quality of textile construction, and social interconnection is a fundamental aspect of their production. The flexible language of loops, knots, interlacements, and attachments all speak to the relationships of which our world is made. The cumulative and entangled way of building, joining many parts together as one, and organic growth taking place over time through repetition, echoes ecological, social, and political systems.

Liz Enszt and Tephra ICA encourage all eligible artists to apply regardless of whether an artist is working with fiber and welcome artists working with a range of traditional material practices and experimental forms.

Exhibition Prompts:

- What are the ideas, research, and influences in your practice, and how does your work synthesize or articulate the interconnections between them?



- What are ways that you wish to expand your material practice in the next year? Describe how this new material, source, or technique could contribute meaning to your work.

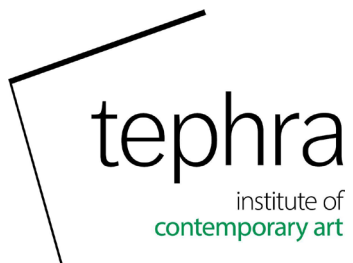
About the Guest Curator

Liz Ensz was born in Minnesota to a resourceful family of penny-savers, metal scrappers, and curators of cast-offs. Liz received a BFA in Fiber from the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and an MFA in Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. With an interdisciplinary approach, their works of installation, textile, and sculpture present a comparative study of the mass-cultural investment in disposability and the human desire to imagine permanence through emblems, monuments, and commemoration. In fall 2018, Ensz joined MICA as full-time faculty in the Fiber department.

Ensz has exhibited their work internationally, including at The Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, UK; Frontviews Gallery, Berlin, Germany; Museum of Contemporary Art, Arlington, VA; Franconia Sculpture Park, Shafer, MN; Smack Mellon, Brooklyn, NY; Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY; Roots and Culture Contemporary Art Center, Chicago, IL; Boston Center for the Arts, Boston, MA; The Mission, Chicago, IL; Unsmoke Systems, Pittsburgh, PA; The Current Space, Baltimore, MD; and Goucher College, Baltimore, MD.

They have been awarded residencies at The John Michael Kohler Arts/Industry Program in Foundry, Sheboygan, WI; Franconia Sculpture Park, Shafer, MN; Salem Art Works, Salem, NY; Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL; Playa, Summer Lake, OR; LATITUDE, Chicago, IL; and Blue Mountain Center, Blue Mountain Lake, NY. Among other awards, they have been the recipient of City of Chicago DCASE Individual Artist Grant, The Creative Baltimore Fund Grant, The Clare Rosen and Samuel Edes Fellowship Semi-finalist Prize, The Gilroy Roberts Fellowship for Engraving, and The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Travel Fellowship.

As an extension of their art practice, they have worked collaboratively to create platforms for others, including as Associate Director of The Visitor Center Artist Camp and Sustainable Practice Symposium, an artist residency in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan; and as a member of the Leadership Team for FORCE: Upsetting Rape Culture, which includes coordinating the 2019 display of The Monument Quilt at the National Mall in Washington DC.



Eligibility Requirements

- Artist must live or work in Washington, DC; Maryland; or Virginia
- Artist must pay a \$25 application fee.
- Artist must have availability during the first two weeks of December 2024 for installation and exhibition opening.

How to Apply

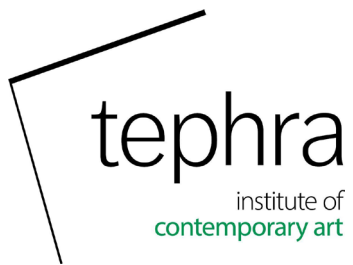
Submit an application through Jotform [HERE](#).

You do not need to submit a specific artwork or exhibition proposal. Artists will be selected based on the quality of prior work and the ideas addressed in their statement of interest and artist statement. Selected artists will be supported in the creation of new work for the exhibition.

Application Materials

- **Statement of Interest** [Max 300 words] addressing the exhibition prompts:
 - **What are the ideas, research, and influences in your practice, and how does your work synthesize or articulate the interconnections between them?**
 - **What are ways that you wish to expand your material practice in the next year? Describe how this new material, source, or technique could contribute meaning to your work.**
- **Artist statement** [Max 300 words]
- **Portfolio Submission and Image List**
 - Up to Ten (10) images

All images must be in jpeg format, sized to approximately 5 x 7 inches at 300 dpi. File name titles should follow this format: "Last name_Firstname_Image number.jpg".
 - Up to 5 minutes of time-based media submitted as a Vimeo, YouTube, or SoundCloud link.



- Image list with Title, Year, and Medium for each item in your portfolio. Descriptions are optional, maximum 50 words each.

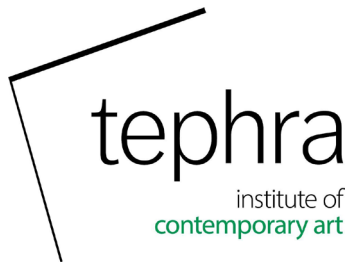
Incomplete or improperly submitted applications will not be considered.

Opportunity Details and Project Timeline

Tephra ICA will provide an honorarium \$310 (based on W.A.G.E. calculator) and a \$1000 production budget for each participating artist. This exhibition is produced at a professional standard, including installation, use of Tephra ICA facilities and material resources, marketing and press coverage, printed gallery guide booklet, exhibition video tour, and online viewing room, as well as the production of associated public programs.

May 15	Application Deadline
June 15	Artist Notifications
June – November	Exhibition and project development, facilitated by guest curator working directly with participating artists
December 2-12	Exhibition Installation
December 14	Exhibition opens to the public, opening reception
February 22	Last day the exhibition is on view
February 24-28	Exhibition Deinstall period

About Tephra ICA



Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra ICA) is a 501c3 non-profit, non-collecting institution committed to promoting innovative contemporary art and thinking. The word “tephra” – matter from geothermal eruptions that lands upon, nourishes, and changes the surrounding environment - emphasizes the institution’s belief in the combustibility of creativity and the generation of ideas and growth that the arts can provide. Leading with curiosity and care, we are a catalyst, generator, and advocate for visual and interdisciplinary arts.

Tephra ICA is committed to equity, and our full list of Social and Cultural Equity Commitments can be found [here](#). Tephra ICA is W.A.G.E. Certified. W.A.G.E. Certification is a national program initiated and operated by W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy), a New York-based organization founded in 2008 that establishes sustainable economic relationships between artists and institutions by introducing mechanisms for fair compensation.

Tephra ICA gallery and offices are located at 12001 Market St. #103 in the Reston Town Center in Reston, VA. For more information visit our website at tephraica.org.