



# John Michael Kohler Arts Center

## News Release

### John Michael Kohler Arts Center Celebrates 50 Years of Arts/Industry Residencies in Kohler Co. Factory

Sheboygan, Wis. – In 1974, visionary Ruth DeYoung Kohler imagined a space between the separate worlds of art and industry where artists could work in tandem with skilled crafts people.

This year, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center's Arts/Industry residency program celebrates 50 years of living out Ruth's vision and of welcoming nearly 500 artists to the Kohler Co. factory in Kohler, Wisconsin. In this space between art and industry, artists and artisans connect, their ways of making collide and shift, and new possibilities arise.

In honor of Arts/Industry's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Arts Center presents a full year of exhibitions and programming on the theme of **Work in Progress**, showcasing the past and ongoing collaborations between contemporary artists and industrial artisans that result in brilliant works of art.

A free Community Celebration on Sunday, March 16, from 12 to 4 p.m. kicks off the Work in Progress theme. Festivities will include touring new exhibitions, hands-on art making, and connecting with current and past Arts/Industry artists. There will also be a Family Fiesta, an iron pour demonstration, and entertainment. Light refreshments will be available.

Working in studios located in the Kohler Pottery and Foundry, Arts/Industry artists-in-residence spend three months creating works of art using the company's industrial materials and equipment. The residency affords the time and space to explore forms and concepts not possible in their own studios.

"'Work in Progress' is a fitting expression for the Arts/Industry experience," said Amy Horst, John Michael Kohler Arts Center executive director. "With its emphasis on exploring new materials, processes, and directions, the residency encourages a lot of experimentation on the part of the artists. It motivates them to exchange creative ideas with the Kohler Co. associates and leads to new ways of thinking about their work."

Through group shows and solo exhibitions, Work in Progress highlights the legacy and future possibilities of this remarkable partnership between the Arts Center and Kohler Co.—from the first artworks created in the residency to work by current artists-in-residence. Additional programming offers opportunities for the public to engage with artists through workshops and demonstrations.

Undoubtedly one of the most remarkable collaborations between art and industry in the United States, Arts/Industry is a vibrant source of inspiration for the local and global art and design communities.

To learn more, visit [jmkac.org](http://jmkac.org). Admission to the Arts Center, located at 608 New York Ave. in Sheboygan, Wis., is free.

#### **Arts/Industry 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Work in Progress exhibitions include:**

##### **Clocking In: 2024 Arts/Industry Residents**

March 16, 2024–March 2, 2025

The twelve artists in residence at the Kohler Co. factory during 2024 exhibit their work in three rotations of approximately four months each. The show includes a range of works—some previously created, some newly commissioned for the exhibition, and some made during their residency.

Artists featured in the exhibition include first-time residents Shae Bishop, Justin Favela, Cathy Hsiao, Sahar Khoury, Lauren Mabry, and Ger Xiong/Ntxawg Xyooj. Returning Arts/Industry artists Sharif Bey, Mary Anne Kluth, Harold Mendez, Martha Poggioli, Lee Emma Running, and Edra Soto will also present work in the exhibition.

### **Workplace**

March 9, 2024–January 19, 2025

This interactive space takes its cue from the innovative pairing of arts and industry that defines the Arts/Industry residency. In this gallery evoking Kohler Co. factory spaces, visitors connect with the process and techniques implemented by both artists and industry workers through demonstrations, lectures, and hands-on activities.

Throughout the exhibition's run, artists, bakers, designers, gardeners, printers, and fabricators will share aspects of their work that demonstrate a common language across creative fields. Inspired by a series of workshops in the 1970s, when ceramic artists and Kohler associates shared industrial and artistic techniques, *Workplace* reveals the ad-hoc and exploratory spirit that fuels interdisciplinary collaborations and offers future possibilities for the Arts/Industry model.

### **Joyce Kozloff: How We Know What We Know**

February 3–June 30, 2024

Joyce Kozloff came to the Arts/Industry program in 1986 with the express purpose of producing ceramic tiles for a commission at Detroit's Financial Center People Mover Station. Kozloff's Arts/Industry residency represents a notable, formative time in her career. Its lasting impact on her work is explored in *How We Know What We Know*.

Works on view follow Kozloff's transition from working in the Pattern & Decoration Movement (during the 1970s and 1980s) to working in cartography (beginning in the 1990s). Among the pieces featured are a mural created during her time in the Kohler Co. Pottery, prints from her *Homage to Rober Adam* and *Voyages* series, and *Targets*, a walk-in globe formed from map panels depicting places bombed by the US.

### **Willie Cole: Home Assembly**

July 13, 2024–February 16, 2025

Newly commissioned sculptures alongside a selection of works spanning over three decades are featured in this solo exhibition. By using craft and household objects in his artworks, Willie Cole spreads awareness of women's and enslaved peoples' labor that has been ignored or under recognized and is integral to the history of the United States.

Cole was an Arts/Industry resident in the Kohler Co. Pottery in 2000. His work has appeared in numerous group and solo exhibitions, among them are *Disguise: Masks and Global African Art* at the Brooklyn Museum (2016); *Willie Cole: Beauties* at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University (2019); and *Willie Cole: Bella Figura* at Alexander and Bonin, New York (2019).

### **Mad Dash: 50 Years of Arts/Industry**

March 3, 2024–February 2, 2025

Jack Earl, one of the first Arts/Industry artists-in-residence, said the residency in the Kohler Co. factory felt like a "mad dash at something." This chronological installation of artworks, letters, photographs, and promotional materials reveals the origin and history of Arts/Industry. Every artist donates an object made during their residency to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center's collection. *Mad Dash* presents works from this collection to encapsulate the experience of art making within Kohler Co. and highlight various stages of the artists' careers.

### **Lunch Break: Arts/Industry in Between**

June 29, 2024–January 5, 2025

For fifty years, the Arts/Industry residency program has given space for meaningful connections between the arts and industry. At the core of those moments are the Kohler Co. factory associates who work side-by-side with the artists, giving time, sharing skills and knowledge, and often opening their homes and personal lives.

This exhibition celebrates the associates and the cooperative learning that takes place at the factory. Artists featured include Ann Agee, Michelle Grabner, Patrick Earl Hammie, Sarah Khan, Tom LaDousa, Jack Earl, Beth Lipman, Karen Massaro, Richard Notkin, Risa Puno, Nirmal Raja, David Ross Harper, Laurel Roth Hope, and Timea Tihanyi, among others.

## **No Grout**

June 1–September 1, 2024

*No Grout* showcases tiles created by Arts/Industry artists-in-residence at the Kohler Co. factory. The pieces span all five decades of the residency program, reflecting individual artistic expression and material play, as well as technological and skill-set progressions inherent in factory culture.

## **The Secret of Muddy Water**

February 17–May 19, 2024

When artists began making work at the Kohler Co. factory, they were taught some of the industrial techniques Kohler associates were willing to share. One of these processes, dubbed the “secret” of “muddy water,” allows artists to create large works without the issues of cracking and collapsing that commonly hindered them.

In addition, the residency’s location also became a seed of inspiration for many artists. *The Secret of Muddy Water* celebrates the essence of Wisconsin, the industries rooted in the state, and what makes Arts/Industry’s location a source of delight and wonder for artists who temporarily relocate for the experience.

Arts/Industry is administered by the **John Michael Kohler Arts Center** and generously hosted and funded by **Kohler Co.** Additional support for the 50th anniversary of Arts/Industry is provided by the **Mellon Foundation**.

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## **About the John Michael Kohler Arts Center**

Founded in 1967, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (JMKAC) is dedicated to generating creative exchanges between an international community of artists and a diverse public. Central to its mission is promoting understanding and appreciation of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists through original exhibitions, commissioned works of art, performing arts, community arts initiatives, and publications.

The Arts Center’s collection focuses primarily on works by artist-environment builders, self-taught and folk artists, and works created in the Arts/Industry residency program. JMKAC is the world’s leading center for research and presentation of artist-built environments.

In June 2021, the Arts Center opened the Art Preserve, a satellite campus highlighting its collection of 25,000 individual works of art by more than 30 art-environment builders. The Art Preserve features immersive displays of art environments and curated visible storage of environment components. It also serves as a resource for research on art environments and the artists who create them.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center is located at 608 New York Avenue, Sheboygan, WI. The Art Preserve is located at 3636 Lower Falls Road, Sheboygan. Admission to both is free. For more information, call 920-458-6144, or visit [jmkac.org](http://jmkac.org), [Facebook](#), or [Instagram](#).

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center is supported by corporate and foundation donors, government grants, and its many members. The Arts Center is not an entity of Kohler Co. or its subsidiaries.

## **Hours**

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Thursday: 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday: 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

## **Location**

John Michael Kohler Arts Center: 608 New York Avenue, Sheboygan, WI

Art Preserve: 3636 Lower Falls Road, Sheboygan, WI

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