



LA NAPOULE ART FOUNDATION



MISE EN ABYME

ERIN LEANN | KAITLYN
MITCHELL | TUCEK

PRESS KIT



JULY 12 -
SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

CHÂTEAU DE LA NAPOULE
Mandelieu-La Napoule
www.LNAF.org

Erin LeAnn Mitchell, Livin' High Cotton, 2024, fabric, foam, glitter, buttons, feathers

Kaitlyn Tucek, Fountain No. 1 (detail), 2025, oil, acrylic, crayon on canvas

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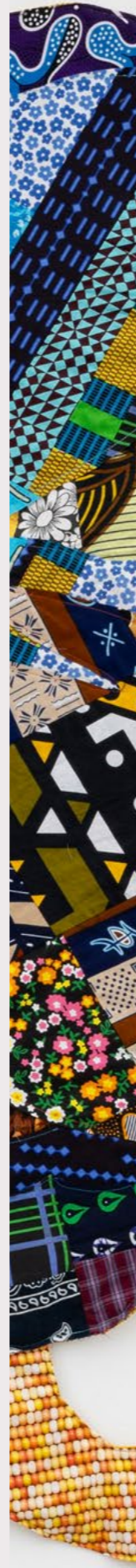
01

GENESIS OF AN *IN SITU* EXHIBITION

At La Napoule Art Foundation, exhibitions are born above all through encounters. They take shape through exchanges, experimentation, and the relationships woven with artists in residence, as well as through immersion in a place imbued with a rich history, the vision of its founders, and the traces left behind by the many artists who have inhabited it. The Château acts as a catalyst, a living space that influences and transforms projects, becoming a true creative partner. Its architecture, gardens, textures, and the visible marks of time actively contribute to the emergence of artworks and narratives.

The DNA of exhibitions at La Napoule lies in the freedom given to artists to explore, to experiment, and to push the boundaries of their practice as far as possible.

Here, exhibitions are neither “turnkey” productions nor simple selections of pre-existing works. Projects unfold over time, often *in situ*, through an ongoing dialogue with the space, with the teams, and between the artists themselves. The curatorial process remains open and fluid, capable of evolving until the very last moments in order to preserve the living momentum of creation and its deeply spontaneous nature.



Erin LeAnn Mitchell, *Livin' High Cotton*, 2024, fabric, foam, glitter, buttons, feather
60 in x 84 in
Photo: © Erin LeAnn Mitchell

02

CORRESPONDENCES

Mise en abyme brings together the works of Kaitlyn Tucek and Erin LeAnn Mitchell, two former residents invited to return to the Château and place their artistic worlds in dialogue. Though they had never met before, they share a common experience of the place, a similar creative intensity, and a strong commitment to experimentation, research, and intuitive processes.

While their approaches are remarkably different, they respond to one another with striking clarity. Nearly saturated colors, recurring motifs, rich and varied materials, symbols, and narratives move from one work to another in an organic conversation that gradually developed not only between the artists themselves, but also with the space and the Foundation team. Dialogue, freedom, openness, and exchange form the very foundation of this exhibition.

Painting, textile, ceramics, installation, and performance coexist here without hierarchy. The works evolve, transform, and contaminate one another. They resist fixed categories in favor of a sensory, intuitive, and immersive approach. This multiplicity of mediums reflects a deeply free, generous, and contemporary artistic vision.

From this proximity emerge formal, chromatic, and symbolic echoes that sometimes suggest the existence of a shared visual language. Yet *Mise en abyme* is not based on collaboration in the traditional sense, but rather on the gradual encounter of two autonomous artistic universes.

The works of both artists intermingle, respond to one another, and confront each other within the space.



Kaitlyn Tucek, *Fountain Forest 1* (detail), oil, crayon and graphite on canvas with wood, work in progress
40 in x 60 in
Photo: © Kaitlyn Tucek

03

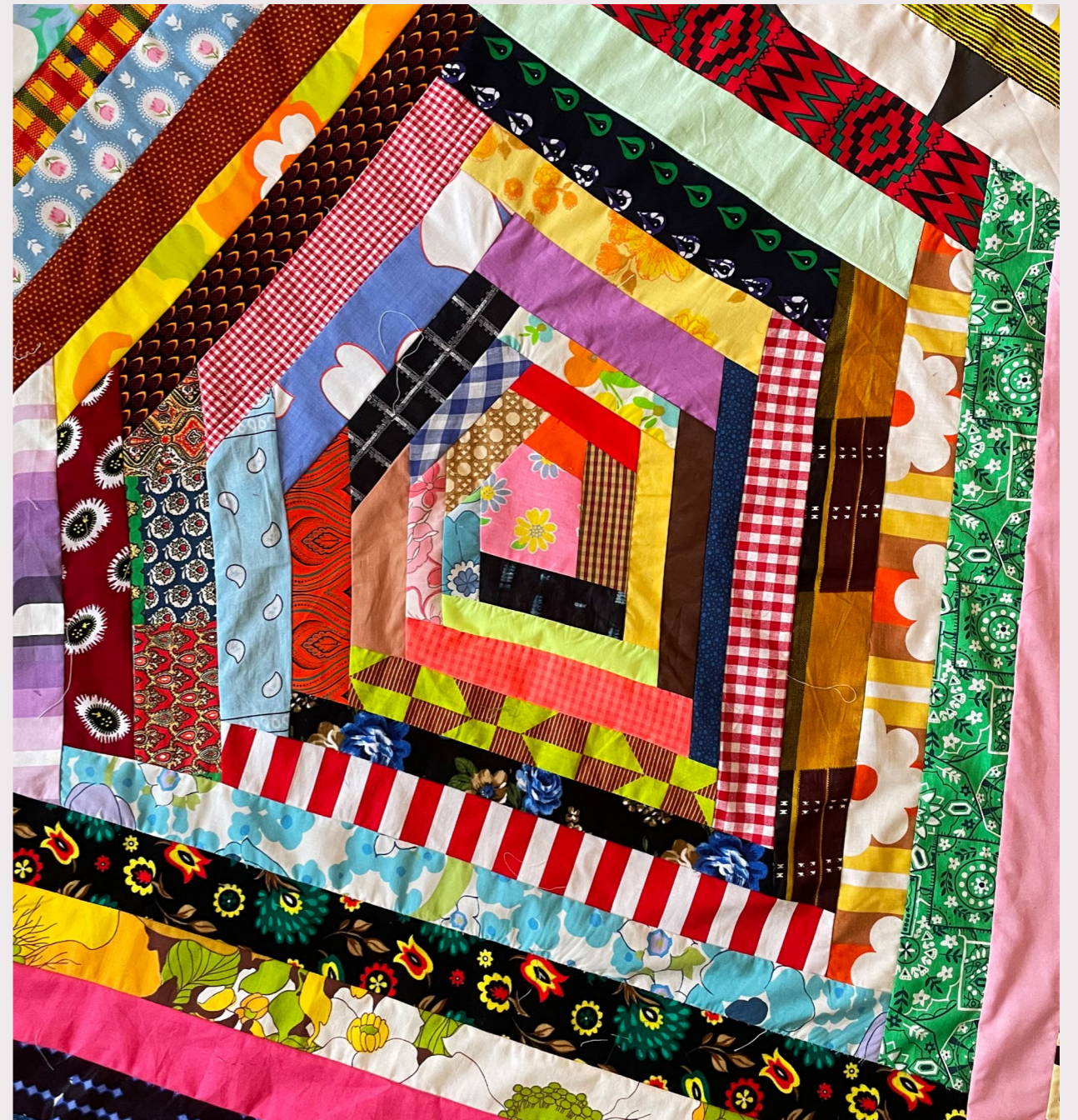
BETWEEN ABYME AND ABÎME

The title of the exhibition, proposed by the artists themselves, plays on the ambiguity between the French terms *abyme* and *abîme*. Historically, *mise en abyme* derives from heraldry, where it referred to an image placed within itself, a motif repeated at the center of a coat of arms.

The word *abîme* — meaning abyss — meanwhile, evokes other imaginaries: depth, vertigo, falling, and the loss of bearings. This overlap between the two notions emerged gradually through the evolution of the French language, intertwining their respective associations and symbolic resonances.

In the works of Erin LeAnn Mitchell and Kaitlyn Tucek, the notion of *mise en abyme* appears through images that repeat, fragment, and continuously transform themselves, while also opening onto more unstable spaces: mental landscapes, incomplete memories, and floating forms situated somewhere between dream, individual memory, and collective memory.

Beyond a simple representational device, *mise en abyme* becomes a way of inhabiting the image itself: as a space without a clearly identifiable beginning or end, where figures, motifs, and narratives seem to endlessly reflect one another, disappear, and then re-emerge in new forms.



Erin LeAnn Mitchell, work in progress (detail)
Photo: © Erin LeAnn Mitchell

04

MEMORY, MOTIFS AND CIRCULATING FORMS

In *Mise en abyme*, certain forms seem to travel from one work to another. An eye appears within a painting before resurfacing in another form a few meters away. Hybrid figures emerge from textile compositions; stitched motifs become landscapes, architectures, or ambiguous presences. In the works of both Erin LeAnn Mitchell and Kaitlyn Tucek, images circulate, shift, and continuously transform themselves.

Although their approaches are very different, the two artists share a particular attention to the mechanisms of memory: a fluid, incomplete, and sometimes contradictory memory that never operates in a linear way. The works do not tell a single story; rather, they unfold through reappearances, associations, slippages, and visual echoes.

In Erin LeAnn Mitchell's work, this logic runs through the textile itself. The reclaimed fabrics, assembled and hand-stitched, already carry traces of use, circulation, and transmission. Her artistic approach draws from the history of the African American quilt while opening it toward freer, more sculptural, and contemporary forms.

In Kaitlyn Tucek's work, painting becomes an unstable space where different temporalities seem to coexist. Forms appear and disappear within translucent layers of material; vegetation, gazes, and fragments of bodies momentarily emerge before being absorbed into new compositions. Her works evoke images in a constant state of mutation.

The exhibition thus constructs an environment in which the works engage less through formal resemblance than through resonance: a shared way of approaching the image as a living space, shaped by memory, sensation, and imagination.



Kaitlyn Tucek, *Fountain No. 1*, 2025, oil, acrylic, crayon on canva
50 in x 58 in
Photo: © Kaitlyn Tucek

05

A SPACE OF RESONANCES AND EXPERIENCES

Conceived for the Château's White Gallery, *Mise en abyme* approaches the exhibition as a space of circulation, perception, and interconnectedness. The works of Kaitlyn Tucek and Erin LeAnn Mitchell do not seek fusion, but rather compose a journey shaped by echoes, contrasts, and shifts in perception.

The exhibition is also rooted in an experimental and evolving approach, conceived as an organic process both by the artists and by the team accompanying the project. The installation gradually takes shape through the works themselves, through intuitions, dialogues, and the possibilities offered by the space, leaving significant room for improvisation, adjustments, and unexpected correspondences.

The volumes of the gallery, its openings, and its perspectives thus become active elements within this construction. Certain works seem to respond to one another across distances, while others establish ruptures, thresholds, or transitional zones. The exhibition unfolds through fragments and successive juxtapositions, revealing correspondences that are at times obvious, at times more diffuse.

Between organic motifs, floating forms, fragmented narratives, and ambiguous presences, *Mise en Abyme* proposes a sensory experience in which the boundaries between interior and exterior, reality and fiction, memory and imagination become porous. The gaze moves, hesitates, returns upon itself, gradually discovering a body of work traversed by shared tensions without ever seeking to produce a single, fixed narrative.



View of the White Gallery at the Château de La Napoule | Photo: © Quentin Descharmes

06

ERIN LEANN MITCHELL

Erin LeAnn Mitchell is a textile artist from Birmingham, Alabama. A graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and holder of a Master's degree in Art Education from Columbia College Chicago, she develops a practice combining textile, collage, and assemblage around questions of memory, transmission, and Black American cultural history. Her work has been presented in several institutions and international art fairs, including EXPO Chicago, Future Fair, Art Basel Switzerland, and the Cité Internationale des Arts.

Textile occupies a central place within her body of work, conceived as a form of living archive. Through reclaimed fabrics, stitched motifs, beads, embroidery, buttons, and sequins, Erin LeAnn Mitchell creates works in which different temporalities, narratives, and cultural references overlap. Her work is rooted in the history of the African American quilt, understood simultaneously as an aesthetic tradition, a space of transmission, and a tool of resistance.

Influenced by figures such as Faith Ringgold, Kerry James Marshall, Sonia Sanchez, and Angela Davis, the artist develops a reflection on diasporic memory and invisibilized narratives. Her works oscillate between intimate memory, collective imagination, and personal mythologies, producing images that are at once familiar and enigmatic.

A former resident of La Napoule Art Foundation, Erin LeAnn Mitchell maintains a particular connection to the Château de La Napoule. Following her residency, she notably discovered that the artist and quilter Faith Ringgold — a major figure of African American art — had also lived and worked at the Château, reinforcing the idea of a symbolic continuity between different generations of Black American textile artists.



07

KAITLYN TUCEK

Kaitlyn Tucek lives and works in Denver, Colorado. Originally from Long Island, New York, she is a graduate of Pratt Institute and holds a Master's degree from CUNY Queens College. A multidisciplinary artist, she develops a practice situated at the intersection of painting, drawing, installation, and the creation of immersive environments. Her work has been presented in several institutions and galleries in New York, Aspen, Palm Springs, and Denver, notably at the Black Cube Nomadic Museum, Leon Gallery, and K Contemporary Gallery. She also teaches at the Clyfford Still Museum and Arapahoe Community College.

Kaitlyn Tucek's work explores the relationships between perception, memory, and image construction. Through an intuitive and gestural approach, her works create spaces in which memories, sensations, and mental projections seem to coexist within a single visual field. Her practice notably draws from forms of automatic drawing and the gradual construction of the image, where lines, figures, and motifs develop through repetition, transformation, and free association.

Her paintings constantly oscillate between abstraction and representation. Floating gazes, ambiguous vegetation, mental landscapes, and organic forms emerge from surfaces traversed by translucent layers and visible gestures. The images seem to appear and disappear within the painting itself, producing compositions that are intentionally unstable and open-ended.

In her recent works, Kaitlyn Tucek also seeks to move beyond the traditional limits of painting by incorporating other materials such as wood and ceramics, giving certain works an almost sculptural or theatrical presence.

As a former resident of La Napoule Art Foundation, the artist maintains a particular connection to the Château de La Napoule. The White Gallery, which will host *Mise en abyme*, had previously served as her studio during her 2023 residency. Her return to this space now acts as a form of temporal superimposition, where memories of the place, past experiences, and new imaginary projections gradually intertwine.

08

IN CONVERSATION

Conceived prior to their arrival at the Château de La Napoule, this conversation accompanies an exhibition already taking shape: completed works, correspondences emerging between their approaches, and shared intentions gradually outlined through dialogue. Erin LeAnn Mitchell and Kaitlyn Tucek discuss the images, narratives, and intuitions that inform *Mise en abyme* before its *in situ* unfolding.

**MISE EN ABYME IDEAS OF REFLECTION, RECURSION AND VERTIGO.
HOW DOES THIS TITLE CONNECT TO YOUR PRACTICES?**

Erin LeAnn Mitchell

Mise en abyme connects to my practice of tracing the layered and recurring histories of the African diaspora, shaped by the erasure caused by the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Through research and textile work, I explore how cultural memory persists in and reappears across generations and geographies.

I'm interested in the repetition and resonance of visual language, ritual, and material traditions throughout Black life around the world and how these echoes create connections across time and place.

Kaitlyn Tucek

The concept of *Mise en abyme* manifests directly in my use of automatic drawing—a practice where the hand moves without conscious control to map the subconscious mind. This technique is inherently recursive; each line responds to the last, creating an endless, mirroring feedback loop of internal imagery. This serves as a framework for my process, utilizing grounding, repetitive motifs to continuously unravel and examine myself.

This methodology mirrors my broader approach to the exhibition space at Chateau La Napoule. Just as automatic drawing layers immediate impulse over deep-seated memory, my site specific work layers current imagination over my past history in that studio. Ultimately, these works invite visitors into a sensual, slightly disorienting labyrinth where they can lose themselves in the layers and discover their own memories.



Kaitlyn Tucek | Portrait: © Risa Friedman

SINCE THE EXHIBITION IS BEING CREATED LARGELY *IN SITU* AT CHÂTEAU DE LA NAPOULE, HOW DO YOU IMAGINE YOUR WORK INTERACTING WITH THE ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY OF THE SPACE?

Erin LeAnn Mitchell

As a past resident and now featured artist at the La Napoule Art Foundation, I remain in awe of the footsteps I unknowingly followed there. After being accepted into the residency program, I learned that the renowned quilter and author Faith Ringgold had once lived and worked within the same space, sharing her work with the Foundation. That discovery made the experience even more meaningful, as I found myself connected in both practice and spirit to a Black American quilter whose work has long inspired me. I see myself honoring and carrying forward that legacy through my own textile practice. The Château holds a special kind of magic, and it is always an honor to create and exhibit work within a space so deeply connected to artistic lineage, storytelling, and Black creative history.

BEFORE BEING INVITED TO COLLABORATE ON *MISE EN ABYME*, YOU HAD NEVER MET OR WORKED TOGETHER. HOW DID THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN YOUR TWO PRACTICES BEGIN TO DEVELOP, AND WHAT KINDS OF TENSIONS OR RESONANCES ARE YOU HOPING TO CREATE BETWEEN YOUR VERY DIFFERENT MATERIALS, SPACES AND VISUAL LANGUAGES?

Erin LeAnn Mitchell

Working collaboratively has become both a source of support and creative expansion for us. We've found meaningful connections through shared themes of memory transformation and layered stories.

The dialogue between our practices developed organically through exchange, curiosity, and a willingness to respond to one another's processes in real time.

Kaitlyn Tucek

It's impossible for the work not to interact with the physical space, therefore, it's my responsibility to have a relationship with the space, both its architecture and its history, including my own history. This gallery was my studio in October 2023, and many other things over time.

Currently the relationship with the Chateau is cultivated from my memories, and I can only build upon what I imagined for the space once I'm there again in person. In this way, I'm layering imagination, time and experience—both my own and with others.

Kaitlyn Tucek

We have been in regular conversation for some time now, through very natural and stimulating exchanges in which we share ideas, intuitions, and reflections surrounding the project.

Above all, we are eager to begin working together physically within the space once we arrive at the Château de La Napoule in June.



Erin LeAnn Mitchell | Portrait: © HADAS

WHAT KIND OF EXPERIENCE WOULD YOU LIKE VISITORS TO HAVE WHEN ENTERING THE EXHIBITION?

Erin LeAnn Mitchell

I would like visitors to slow down, spend time with the work, and look closely then look again. Each piece contains layered imagery and embedded meanings that reveal themselves gradually.

I hope the exhibition invites viewers into a deeper engagement with texture, symbolism, and storytelling.

Kaitlyn Tucek

A deeply sensual one. I want all of their senses to come alive, allowing the audience to feel initially unsettled or confused before they connect with their own memories and emotions.

Chateau La Napoule is often described as a fairy-tale environment, a place where an imagination can come alive. The place evokes a surreal and dreamlike experience, simultaneously filled with romance and disorientation.

The chateau and its grounds offer such a beautiful multi-sensory experience, where the textures, flora, light, water, sculptures and sounds all evoke a unique response for each visitor.

I'm interested in collaborating with this specific energy, pushing boundaries to amplify it for the audience and creating a distinct, merged climate inside the White Gallery alongside Erin's work.

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AVAILABLE IMAGES

A selection of images is available to the press upon request from the Communications Department of La Napoule Art Foundation.

Contact: mfrance@chateau-lanapoule.com

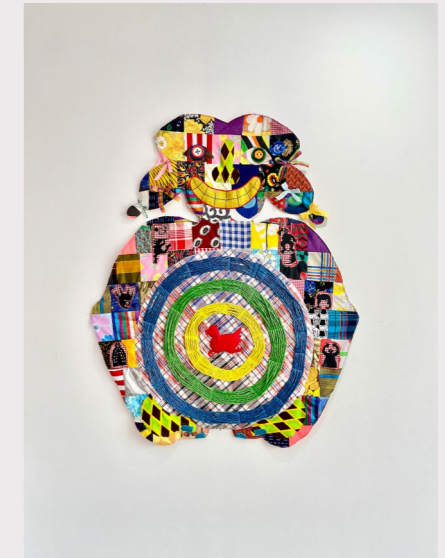
Please ensure that the credits listed below are included with any reproduction.



01. Erin LeAnn Mitchell
Livin' High Cotton, 2024, fabric, foam, glitter, buttons, feather
60 in x 84 in
Photo: © Erin LeAnn Mitchell



02. Erin LeAnn Mitchell
Equally Yoked, 2024, fabric, foam, glitter, buttons, ink
40 in x 60 in
Photo: © Erin LeAnn Mitchell



03. Erin LeAnn Mitchell
Target Practice, 2026, fabric, buttons, ink, ribbons
50 in x 50 in
Photo: © Erin LeAnn Mitchell



04. Erin LeAnn Mitchell
Artist's portrait
Photo: © HADAS



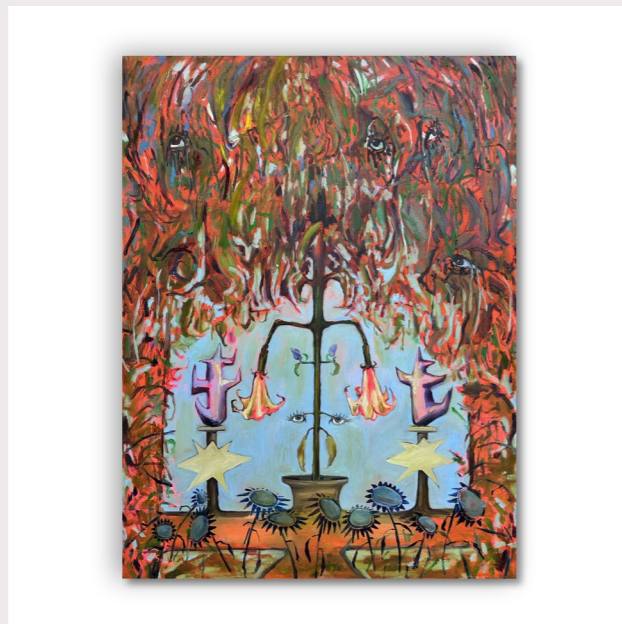
05. Erin LeAnn Mitchell
Artist's portrait
Photo: © HADAS



06. Kaitlyn Tucek
Fountain No. 1, 2025, oil, acrylic, crayon on canvas
 50 in x 58 in
 Photo: © Kaitlyn Tucek



07. Kaitlyn Tucek
Fountain No. 2, 2025, oil, crayon, colored pencil
 on canvas
 52 in x 80 in
 Photo: © Kaitlyn Tucek



08. Kaitlyn Tucek
Fountain No. 7, 2025, oil and graphite on canvas
 30 in x 40 in
 Photo: © Kaitlyn Tucek



09. Kaitlyn Tucek
 Artist's portrait
 Photo: © Risa Friedman



10. Kaitlyn Tucek
 Artist's portrait
 Photo: © Risa Friedman

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

EXHIBITION

Mise en abyme

Erin LeAnn Mitchell & Kaitlyn Tucek

July 12 - September 20, 2026

Château de La Napoule

ADDRESS

Château de La Napoule

La Napoule Art Foundation

Avenue Henry Clews

06210 Mandelieu-La Napoule

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, July 10, 2026 at 6:30 PM

INFORMATION

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OPENING HOURS

Tuesday to Sunday

10:00 AM – 6:00 PM

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LA NAPOULE ART FOUNDATION

Founded in 1951 by Marie Clews, La Napoule Art Foundation is a French-American arts foundation dedicated to supporting contemporary creation through residency programs, exhibitions, and cultural mediation initiatives.

Located on the Mediterranean coast within the Château de La Napoule, a former medieval fortress rebuilt in the early twentieth century by American artists and patrons Henry and Marie Clews, the Foundation welcomes international artists from a wide range of disciplines each year in an environment that encourages research, experimentation, and dialogue between heritage and contemporary creation.



Château de La Napoule | Photo : © OT Mandelieu / Camille Moirenc



LA NAPOULE ART FOUNDATION

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