

Spring 2027 Exhibitions

Frye Art Museum celebrates 75 years with five exhibitions connecting modern and contemporary art, local and global perspectives, and artists across generations

Seattle, WA
October 15, 2026

In spring 2027, the museum continues its seventy-fifth anniversary program with five exhibitions that exemplify the Frye's unique viewpoint, connecting Seattle with the art and artists of our time. The season pairs self-taught artist Esther Hamerman's lively midcentury depictions of migration, family, and city life with work by her great-granddaughter, the internationally renowned contemporary artist Nicole Eisenman; introduces many recent additions to the Frye's collection; and places a monumental cedar sculpture by Ursula von Rydingsvard in an evolving dialogue with the museum's holdings. New projects by Seattle artists Stefan Gonzales and Serrah Russell reconsider the archive and the Frye's own history, while *Under the Sky* brings Founding Collection landscape paintings together for the first time with contemporaneous photographs. Across the season, familiar materials and stories gain new depth as the exhibitions become a site for experimenting with tradition and placing the present in touch with the past.

Nicole Eisenman | Esther Hamerman: Life After Life
March 13–June 6, 2027

Stefan Gonzales: Field Research
March 6–October 3, 2027

Recent Acquisitions
March 6–September 26, 2027

Boren Banner Series: Serrah Russell
April 28–October 3, 2027

Under the Sky
May 1, 2027–February 13, 2028



Nicole Eisenman | Esther Hamerman: Life After Life

March 13–June 6, 2027

Nicole Eisenman | Esther Hamerman: Life After Life presents the first comprehensive survey of work by self-taught artist Esther Hamerman (1881–1977) in an intergenerational dialogue with her great-granddaughter, acclaimed contemporary artist Nicole Eisenman (born 1965). Bringing together approximately fifty paintings and drawings by Hamerman with paintings and works on paper by Eisenman, the exhibition explores how two distinct artists use personal history and narrative to picture community, belonging, and social change.

Hamerman began painting in her sixties while living in New York after a life marked by displacement and upheaval. Born in a rural salt-mining village in Austria-controlled Poland, she later lived in Vienna, Trinidad, New York, and San Francisco. During the Holocaust, Hamerman and her family fled Nazi persecution, eventually reaching Trinidad, where British authorities interned Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria as enemy aliens. After the war, painting became a way to revisit the places she had lived and the people she loved. Her dense, brightly patterned scenes move between rural memories, domestic interiors, gatherings of worship and community, and the modern city, where bridges, trains, cars, ships, and airplanes signal a world in motion.

Eisenman grew up surrounded by Hamerman's paintings, but her distinct visual language is shaped by the culture wars of the 1990s, queer life, art history, and the absurdities of contemporary experience. Her figurative works can be tender, unruly, and satirical, or all three at once. Seeing the artists' works together reveals surprising formal and emotional connections. Both favor crowded compositions and abruptly cropped figures and picture planes, and feature everyday gathering places—city sidewalks, homes, tables, and public spaces—as stages where social structures and private lives meet.

Life After Life brings dozens of Hamerman's works into public view for the first time in fifty years and establishes a fuller account of her contribution to midcentury American art. Eisenman serves as co-curator, bringing both an artistic and familial perspective to the interpretive process. Spanning three of the museum's special exhibition galleries, the show moves through autobiography, domestic space, social gatherings, urban life, and the aesthetics of self-taught and postmodern painting. Across generations, Hamerman and Eisenman conjure a world where people can find refuge, recognition, and room to belong.

ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

A major catalogue published with Marquand Books will provide the first substantial record of Hamerman's practice, with more than eighty color plates and new writing by Eisenman; Faith Brower, former Frye Art Museum director and curator of collections; Catherine Morris, Brooklyn Museum curatorial chair and Sackler curator for Feminist Art; and writer and art critic Sarah Nicole Prickett.

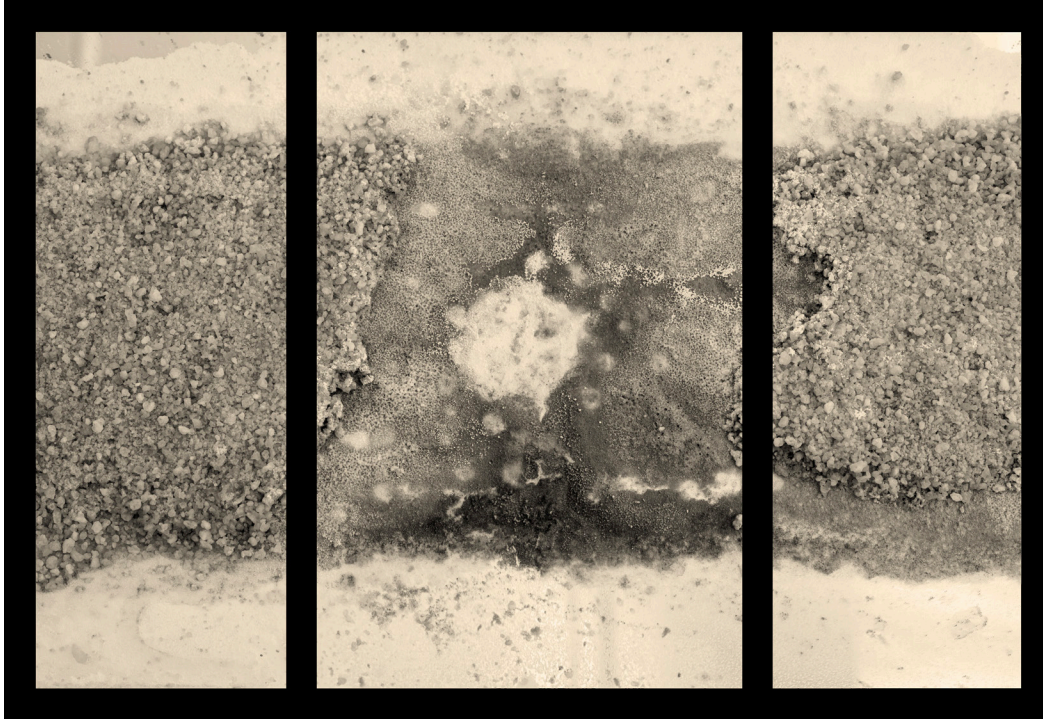
Nicole Eisenman / Esther Hamerman: Life After Life is organized by the Frye Art Museum and curated by former Director and Curator of Collections Faith Brower with Nicole Eisenman.

Generous support provided by William Carleton and Helen Townsend and Frye members. Media sponsorship provided by Encore Media Group.

Our work is supported, in part, by an award from 4Culture.



Images: Nicole Eisenman. *The Session*, 2008. Oil on canvas. 50 1/4 x 61 in. Collection of Albert Sebag. © Nicole Eisenman. Image courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth. Photo: Jens Ziehe; Esther Hamerman. *Polish Village*, n.d. Mixed media on canvas. 30 x 23 3/4 in. framed. Collection of Katherine A. Eisenman. Photo: Jueqian Fang



Stefan Gonzales: Field Research

March 6–October 3, 2027

Seattle artist Stefan Gonzales (born 1994) turns sustained attention toward materials that most pass without a second look. Working across performance, photography, sculpture, and film, Gonzales traces the lives of industrial resources like stones, dirt, and minerals: where they come from, how they are moved, and the histories of land and labor that travel with them. *Field Research*, the artist's first solo museum exhibition, extends a practice first introduced at the Frye through their 2022 Boren Banner Series presentation.

For the exhibition, Gonzales focuses on rock salt, a material used to deice roads. The project stems from a lengthy and careful observation of the material's transformation as it dissolves and crystallizes in water. This research is catalogued via specially constructed floor-based sculptures and accompanying photographic documentation. The photographs, comprising hundreds of sequential images, will be bound into books visitors can handle and displayed on the wall as framed serial compositions. These quiet, methodical works borrow the visual language of Minimalism and Conceptual art while making visible the human effort and land impact of the extraction and transport embedded in an ordinary substance.

A new film documents Gonzales cataloguing stones in archival filing cabinets. Tight framing and jumps in time collapse the archive's apparent order, revealing it as something shaped by the hands and perspectives of those who care for it. Six cabinets presented in a grid become modest monuments, countering the heroic scale often associated with Land art. Gonzales

approaches that history with nuanced critique, questioning ideas of supposedly empty land and the rugged individualism attached to some of the movement's best-known works. In its place, they propose a practice grounded in care and attentiveness to natural materials.

Field Research creates a focused study of material lifecycles, seriality, and the vulnerability of archives. Presented alongside historical landscapes from the museum's collection in *Under the Sky*, on view in the adjacent gallery, the exhibition also opens a conversation about how artists across generations have continued to rethink picturing the land.

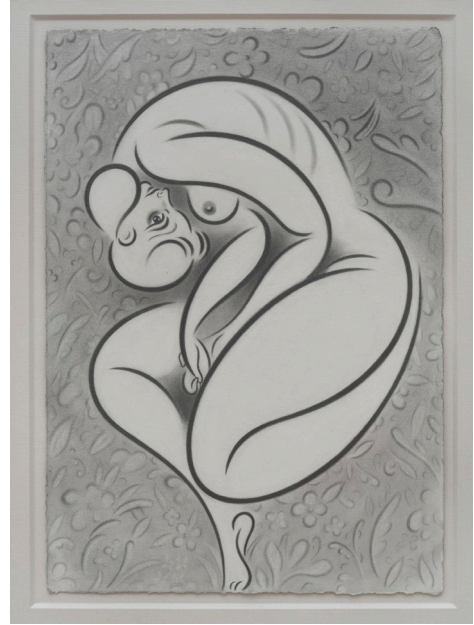
Stefan Gonzales: Field Research is organized by Georgia Erger, Curator.

Generous support provided by Frye members.

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Image: Stefan Gonzales. *Crystal Crater*, 2026. Dye sublimation aluminum prints. 24 x 36 in. Courtesy of the artist



Recent Acquisitions

March 6–September 26, 2027

The Frye Art Museum's collection has grown considerably in recent years, with 2025–26 marking one of the most significant periods of expansion since the museum was founded. *Recent Acquisitions* offers a first look at many of these additions and a snapshot of the collection's emerging shape. The focused presentation brings together a dynamic range of paintings, works on paper, and sculptures representing over one hundred years of artistic production. Expanding narratives of both twentieth- and twenty-first-century art, the exhibition reinforces the Frye's commitment to serve as a home for modern and contemporary art alike.

The exhibition favors visual affinities and unexpected conversations rather than following a strict chronology. A large-scale work on paper by Vik Muniz (American, born Brazil, 1961) appears alongside prints by Diane Simpson (American, born 1935), LaKela Brown (American, born 1982), and Seattle artist Clyde Petersen (American, born 1980), revealing distinct approaches to printmaking and narrative. Modern and contemporary works move between abstraction and figuration, demonstrating how artists at different moments in time have used symbol, pattern, image, and scale to render personal and cultural histories visible.

Recent Acquisitions also advances the Frye's commitment to platforming Indigenous artists and the breadth and depth of their practices. Two sculptural baskets by Washington artists Joe Feddersen (born 1953, Omak, WA, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation) and Carly Feddersen (born 1982, Wenatchee, WA, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation) and a jingle-cloud sculpture by Seattle-born, Portland-based artist Marie Watt (born 1967,

Seattle, Seneca Nation of Indians)—all acquired through the inaugural Assembly Art Fair in summer 2026—are presented in dialogue with James Washington Jr.'s (American, 1908–2000) intimately scaled bird sculptures from the 1960s.

Rather than attempting a comprehensive account of all new acquisitions, the exhibition reflects the museum's priorities for future collection growth: fostering a more expansive understanding of art making in the Pacific Northwest, informed by national and international perspectives and made possible by the generosity of artists, collectors, and supporters.

A dedicated section of the exhibition places a monumental sculpture by Ursula von Rydingsvard (American, born Germany, 1942) in dialogue with select recent acquisitions. On loan from the Akron Art Museum for two years, *rzeński* (2014) will continue to serve as the anchor to a rotating presentation around which the works on view will change over the course of the loan.

Standing nearly nine feet tall, *rzeński* is constructed from red cedar and rubbed with powdered graphite, creating forceful abstract forms with rugged, textured surfaces. Its title is a Polish word that conveys the feeling of a breeze or the gentle movement of branches bending and swaying in the wind, qualities echoed in the sculpture's form.

Von Rydingsvard is known for her large-scale sculptures that transform cedar and other timbers through cutting, stacking, carving, and assembling. Born to Polish and Ukrainian parents during World War II, she spent her early childhood in displacement camps for Polish refugees before immigrating with her family to the United States in 1950. While her abstract sculptures are not directly autobiographical, von Rydingsvard's work often creates connections between individual experience and the broader world. Their materiality, form, and labor-intensive production process suggest the ways memory, bodily labor, and personal and collective histories can become embedded in her work.

In the first iteration of the extended loan's presentation, the sculpture is installed alongside recent acquisitions to the Frye collection, including works by Guy Anderson (American, 1906–1998), Paul Horiuchi (American, born Japan, 1906–1999), Hugh Hayden (American, born 1983), Koak (American, born 1981), and Robyn O'Neil (American, born 1977). Through shared materials, process, and evocations of the natural world, their works establish points of connection with *rzeński*. These pairings invite reflection on nature, spirituality, transformation, and the emotional dimensions of human experience, creating a rich setting for close observation. Future rotations will generate new conversations around *rzeński*, allowing different artistic themes and lines of inquiry to come to the foreground over the course of the loan. Von Rydingsvard's sculpture serves as a catalyst for revisiting the Frye's collection with fresh eyes and for bringing artists from different generations and disciplines into contact.

Recent Acquisitions is organized by Rangsook Yoon, PhD, Senior Director of Curatorial Affairs.

Rzeński is generously lent by Akron Art Museum as part of Art Bridges' Partner Loan Network.

Generous support provided by Frye members.

Our work is supported, in part, by an award from 4Culture.



Image: Morris Graves. *Frog Contemplating the Moon*, c. 1944. Tempera on paper. 11 x 13 in. Gift of Heidi and John Rabel, 2026.005.15. Photo: Jueqian Fang; Koak. *The First Dream*, 2026. Graphite and casein on stone grey rag paper. 20 3/4 x 16 in. framed. Frye Art Museum, Museum purchase, 2026.004. Image courtesy of the artist, Perrotin, and Jessica Silverman



Boren Banner Series: Serrah Russell

April 28–October 3, 2027

For the spring 2027 Boren Banner, Seattle artist Serrah Russell turns to the Frye's archive, looking to the museum's history to make something new. Russell will create a hand-cut collage on paper using reproductions of historical photographs from the archive, which will then be presented at monumental scale on the museum's east facade. The commission marks both the first Boren Banner developed through sustained research in the Frye archive and Russell's first public artwork.

Russell (born 1986) works across photography and collage to explore the tension between inner lives and external environments. She cuts apart found advertisements, magazine pages, and editorial photographs, loosening them from their original commercial purpose and rearranging them into spare, poetic compositions. The resulting works can feel affectionate, unsettled, or quietly defiant, with memory, grief, political change, and personal association often guiding how one fragment meets another.

For this commission, Russell focuses on a group of archival materials from museum benefactors Charles and Emma Frye and their business enterprises as well as the original construction of the museum and subsequent expansions. Prominent Seattleites of the early twentieth century, the Fries were children of German immigrants whose successful meatpacking operation provided the means to assemble an art collection of over two hundred paintings. Upon their deaths, they gifted their collection, along with the funds to establish the

city's first free art museum, to the citizens of Seattle. Via Russell's process, intimate archival fragments will become a highly visible public artwork, inviting viewers to encounter the museum's origins through the perspective of a contemporary Seattle artist.

Conceived to commemorate the Frye's seventy-fifth anniversary year, the project treats the archive as mutable material rather than a fixed record. In doing so, the work connects the museum's past to its ongoing engagement with the art and artists of our time.

ABOUT THE BOREN BANNER SERIES

The Boren Banner Series reflects the museum's commitment to showcasing work by Pacific Northwest artists. This biannual series gives regional artists the opportunity to present a piece as a monumental, 16 x 20 ft. vinyl "banner" prominently sited facing Boren Avenue— the Frye's most visible and accessible physical interface.

Boren Banner Series: Serrah Russell is organized by Alexis L. Silva, Curatorial Assistant.

Generous support provided by Frye members.

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Image: Serrah Russell. *towards empathy (The struggle to dream each other's dreams)*, 2015. Photographic collage on paper. 17 x 14 in. Courtesy of the artist



Under the Sky

May 1, 2027–February 13, 2028

Under the Sky brings together selected landscape paintings from the Frye's Founding Collection with approximately fifty contemporaneous photographs from the Maren Monsen and Jeff Grainger Collection of Photography. A visual dialogue across media, the exhibition focuses on works created in Europe and America between 1870 and 1920. In the decades following the Industrial Revolution, landscape paintings became sites for exploring complex themes, from spirituality to national and regional identity, in a world reshaped by new technologies.

Representative of the era's scientific and technological advances, the camera quickly became a tool for documenting the changing world. Photographers recorded bridges, railways, trains, and other signs of rapid modernization, including the construction of new cities such as Seattle through the leveling of hills, the expansion of infrastructure, and the widespread extraction of natural resources. Landscape painters often left those same features out, composing idealized scenes that offered refuge from industrial life. Installed together, the works show how both mediums moved between observation and invention.

Several thematic groupings explore varied approaches to pictorial representations of landscape. Some works employ idyllic scenery to capture patriotic sentiment and celebrate the nation and homeland. Others address broader questions of the human condition through encounters with nature. Painters and photographers often focused on familiar environments, as well as distant locales, finding awe and transcendental beauty in forests, fields, mountains, rivers, oceans, and vistas encountered in everyday life. The exhibition highlights the role of landscape in shaping cultural identity and collective understandings of place.

One of the themes underpinning the exhibition is a shared fascination with light, atmosphere, and the expressive potential of the sky. The rendering of the sky serves not only as a simple visual component or picturesque backdrop but also as a key compositional agent in constructing meaning and mood. It can express weather, season, time, geography, and changing scientific and philosophical understandings of the natural world. Whether working in paint or photography, artists sought to capture fleeting natural effects: drifting clouds, shifting weather patterns, luminous horizons, and the subtle interplay of light across earth and water. Their works range in compositional structure and mood from carefully constructed classical landscapes to more direct observations and documentations of nature. Yet many reveal a common desire to transform the visible world into something emotionally resonant and spiritually evocative.

This engagement with the collection offers a scaled-back and thematically focused version of the museum's frequently presented floor-to-ceiling *Frye Salon*, with concentrated groupings of photographs and paintings encouraging visitors to notice echoes in compositional framing, scale, light, and subject. The Frye's Founding Collection of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century European and American paintings features an abundance of landscape paintings, including works by Eugène Boudin (French, 1824–1898), Hermann Corrodi (Italian, 1844–1905), Ludwig Dill (German, 1848–1940), Arnold Gorter (Dutch, 1866–1933), and Henry Raschen (American, born Germany, 1854–1937), among many others. For this presentation, selections from one of the region's most significant private collections of historical photography complement the museum's paintings. The Monsen-Grainger collection, assembled by Maren Monsen and Jeff Grainger, builds on the extensive holdings of the late Joseph and Elaine Monsen who established one of the most prominent private photography collections in the United States, spanning over 150 years of photographic history. *Under the Sky* will feature photographs by Carleton Watkins (American, 1829–1916), Eadweard Muybridge (American, 1830–1904), Asahel Curtis (American, 1874–1941), Alfred Stieglitz (American, 1864–1946), and more.

Under the Sky is organized by Rangsook Yoon, PhD, Senior Director of Curatorial Affairs.

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Images: Eugène Boudin. *Dordrecht, the Meuse seen from Swandrecht*, 1879. Oil on canvas. 15 x 18 1/8 in. Frye Art Museum, Founding Collection, Gift of Charles and Emma Frye, 1952.011. Photo: Jueqian Fang; Carleton E. Watkins. *Three Brothers, Yosemite, California*, 19th-20th century. Albumen print. 12 1/16 x 8 1/16 in. Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gift of Frederick B. Scheel

About the Frye Art Museum

Founded in 1952, the Frye is Seattle's free art museum, bringing together art and new ideas within a stunning Olson Sundberg Kundig-designed building in historic First Hill. The museum connects Seattle with the art and artists of our time. We collect, exhibit, program, and build community around a wide range of modern and contemporary art, with a special focus on amplifying the voices of living artists. Learn more at fryemuseum.org.

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