



THE GALLERY

at Casa

May 24, 2024

Call For Submissions: Nikka Yuko: ReTurning the Stories

Introduction:

The Gallery at Casa is looking for expressions of interest from artists to participate in an exhibition focusing on the Nikka Yuko Japanese Gardens. *Nikka Yuko: ReTurning the Stories* will run from June 14 – August 23, 2025. We are looking for artists to create new work over the next 12 months in response to the theme.

Established in 1967, the Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden has been an important fixture in the cultural landscape of Lethbridge. The name derives from the Japanese words Ni (from Nihon, meaning Japan), ka (from Kanada or Canada), and Yuko, which translates as “friendship”. Nikka Yuko is a testament to the experiences of Nikkei people in southern Alberta; as settlers in the early 20th century, as displaced people forcibly relocated during World War II, and as a resilient community who choose to stay and make the region home.

Thematic Considerations:

The gardens represent many things to different people. Beyond being a landmark, it is also a repository of stories, a living archive, and an aggregator of experiences. We are looking for artists interested in reflecting on the multi-vocal nature of the Gardens. This can include the Nikkei experience in southern Alberta, or each artist’s unique personal understanding of site & space. The contemplative beauty, unique topology, and delicate ecology of Nikka Yuko has profoundly imprinted our community. We invite artists to explore and express how this imprint is shaped by and generates the Nikkei experience in the spirit of what the Nikkei Memory Capture Project calls “returning the stories.” Through our individual and collective memories, in reflection on where we have come and where we will go, we co-create histories of the past and share visions of our future. We are excited to witness how artists return their stories.

Next Steps:

Artists must sign up to the project with an expression of interest to receive ongoing details and be considered for the exhibition. *Nikka Yuko: ReTurning the Stories* is open to all artists. The exhibition will be installed throughout Casa, and in the Waterfield Gallery at the Yates Theatre. This open call invites artists to respond to the site throughout 4 seasons, with the grand opening taking place on Saturday, June 14, 2025.

Nikka Yuko passes will be available for artists with barriers to access to sign-out on a temporary basis. Artists interested in research will have access to archival materials through the Nikkei Memory Capture Project and Lethbridge & District Japanese Garden Society. We will also be organizing coordinated off-season visits, as well as an *en plein air* workshop.

We are looking for artists working in all media, including drawing, painting, photography, video, sound, writing, and more. We hope to include work from all participants, but a final selection of work will occur in May 2025. Casa will pay an honorarium to all artists who participate in the final exhibition.

Nikka Yuko: ReTurning the Stories is being run as a partnership between the Allied Arts Council of Lethbridge and the Lethbridge & District Japanese Garden Society, with support from Nikkei Memory Capture Project.

To Participate:

Artists must register an expression of interest in the project to receive future updates. To register an expression of interest, please send a brief bio, short description of the proposed work, and image examples of past pieces (if possible). Expressions of interest can be sent via email to gallery@artslethbridge.org using "ReTurning the Stories" in the subject line. Registration will be ongoing.

Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden: <https://nikkayuko.com/>

Nikkei Memory Capture Project: <https://nmcp.ca/>

