

# Art Preserve Washrooms



The Arts Center's award-winning washrooms put Sheboygan on the map for having the world's best bathrooms, and the new facilities at the Art Preserve are no less impressive.

Artists designed and created the washrooms through the Arts/Industry (A/I) program, a collaboration between the John Michael Kohler Arts Center and Kohler Co. A/I is a competitive residency; artists submit a project proposal and interview to be chosen. Those selected spend months in Sheboygan, working alongside Kohler Co. associates in the **pottery** or **foundry**, to create their proposed art in the factory.

Many A/I residents have never worked in a factory before arriving to Kohler Co. For some, even the process of casting porcelain or metal is an entirely new experience. However, Michelle Grabner, Beth Lipman, Joy Feasley, and Paul Swenbeck were all previous Arts/Industry participants in the foundry. They were invited back to design and **fabricate** the washrooms for the Art Preserve.



Artist-Designed Washrooms

Detail of Joy Feasley and Paul Swenbeck's *Listen, the Snow Is Falling* washroom installation at the Art Preserve, 2021.

## Joy Feasley & Paul Swenbeck: *Listen, the Snow is Falling*

Joy Feasley and Paul Swenbeck are based in Philadelphia and often collaborate in their art practice. Feasley is an abstract landscape painter, and Swenbeck's work combines sculpture, painting, and photography. The displays of artwork on the third floor are large and **immersive**, which inspired Feasley and Swenbeck to create fantastical, immersive environments for the two washrooms on the third floor. They were particularly inspired by artist Emery Blagdon and his "Healing Machine," which is just steps away.



Emery Blagdon, untitled, c. 1955-1986; oil paint, paper, and wood; 9 1/2 x 13 x 3/4 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

Visit [socialstudio.space](https://socialstudio.space) to watch a video workshop of this project to see different ideas for creating your work and learn how to make an equilateral triangle!

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*Listen, the Snow is Falling* is the name of both washrooms designed by Feasley and Swenbeck, but each space is quite different from the other. The first washroom, playfully referred to as “The Ice Cave,” features hexagon-shaped **stalactites** hanging from an angled ceiling. “The Color Room” next door has a rainbow of acrylic tiles decorating the upper half of the walls. Both washrooms have custom-designed toilets and sinks unlike anything cast before at the Kohler Co. factory. Much experimentation went into successfully building those fixtures; the failed castings of the toilets were ground and used in the terrazzo floors. The more time spent in *Listen, the Snow is Falling*, the more surprises are revealed.



Detail of Joy Feasley and Paul Swenbeck's *Listen, the Snow Is Falling* washroom installation at the Art Preserve, 2021.

### **Create: Geometric Vinyl Designs**

Draw inspiration from the equilateral triangles Feasley and Swenbeck use in their washrooms and make connections to the geometric designs in the work of Loy Bowlin.

On a piece of adhesive-backed vinyl, first use a compass and protractor to create equilateral triangles or other geometric shapes with a pencil on the paper-backed side of the vinyl. Cut out your shape with scissors, peel the vinyl off, and carefully adhere to your surface.

You can consider adding designs to a sketchbook cover, a household object like Bowlin did, or perhaps on an object you would find in a washroom, such as a light-switch cover or tissue box.



Loy Bowlin in his Beautiful Holy Jewel Home, McComb, MS. Photo: Sally Griffiths.

**Fabricate** To construct or create a product, often from prepared materials

**Foundry** A workshop or factory for casting metal

**Immersive** In art, immersive spaces typically surround the viewer and may include many objects. It can be artwork placed in an existing space such as a room or home, a newly constructed space, or a space outdoors.

**Pottery** In the Arts/Industry program, this refers to the part of the factory where objects are made out of ceramic material such as clay.

**Stalactites** An icicle-like structure of calcium salt formed by dripping water from the roof of a cave

**Terrazzo** An old method of pouring an aggregate cement-like material, allowing it to cure (dry), and then grinding and polishing it to a smooth finish.