

Jen Aitken: Courtyard

January 9-20, 2026



Jen Aitken: *Courtyard*
January 9-20, 2026

Opening Reception
January 9, 6-9 PM

Open Hours
Friday-Sundays, 1-6 PM

Artist Talk with Giorgia Alliata + Ridwana Rahman
January 16, 6:30 PM

Public Programming
January 20, 6 PM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—New York, NY—January 03, 2026—Service is pleased to present *Courtyard*, a solo exhibition by Jen Aitken, developed during her At Service Residency beginning December 10, 2025, and realized within the gallery space where the works were built. On view from January 9 to January 20, 2026, the exhibition opens with a reception on January 9, followed by an artist talk moderated by Giorgia Alliata and Ridwana Rahman on January 16. Public programming on January 20 will mark the closing of the exhibition.

Arriving in New York from Toronto, Aitken spent her time with Service working directly in the gallery at Nine, the home to Service, using the space as both studio and site of experimentation. Through hands-on construction and sustained time to work toward an installation, she developed an environment that centers movement, proximity, and spatial relation. A platform installed at the center of the gallery forms a courtyard-like structure, redirecting attention away from the walls and into a shared interior landscape.

The installation unfolds through movement rather than a single viewpoint. Viewers are encouraged to circulate around the central structure, encountering the work through shifting positions and changing perspectives. The platform functions as a constructed terrain rather than a display surface, with

graduated steps creating a series of settings that hold the sculptures in relation to one another.

Aitken's ceramic sculptures, titled *Dancers*, are presented in pairs. Their positioning emphasizes proximity, balance, and tension, moving between figurative and structural readings. The recurring pairing introduces an intimate dynamic in which meaning emerges through relationship rather than individual objecthood. Scaled in relation to the human body, the works subtly influence how viewers orient themselves within the space.

Material and process remain visible throughout the exhibition. Aitken's recent exploration of clay alongside welding marks reflects a shift away from an overworked geometric vocabulary, allowing form to emerge through making and leaning more fully into a figurative impulse. While concrete and other industrial materials have long suggested mass and weight in her practice, ceramic introduces a sense of transformation—soft to solid, imprint to edge—retaining traces of touch and compression. Surfaces are treated as imprints rather than ornament, resulting in sculptures that feel careful and fragile without becoming precious.

The drawings are presented on the same platform as the sculptures, operating in parallel rather than as preparatory

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works. Lines, marks, shadows, and scale move between mediums, maintaining an ongoing conversation across figure, structure, and architecture.

Courtyard reveals itself through repeated movement and sustained looking. As viewers spend time within the environment—circling, pausing, and returning—perception shifts, and meaning emerges through encounter rather than instruction. The gallery itself holds the trace of the artist's time and process, allowing audiences to experience the work within the space where it was developed.

About the artist:

Jen Aitken is based in Toronto, Canada. She makes sculptures that combine perceptual ambiguity with structural clarity. She uses common industrial materials to create unidentifiable forms about intimacy, syntax, and bodily space. Aitken presented her first institutional solo show at The Power Plant, Toronto in 2023, titled *The Same Thing Looks Different*, which was accompanied by an exhibition catalogue. Her first large-scale public sculpture was installed at the new headquarters of the National Bank of Canada, Montreal, in 2023. She was commissioned by the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC, to create a site-specific installation for its 2020 Women to Watch exhibition. Aitken is represented by Trépanier Baer gallery in Calgary, Alberta, and her work is in public collections across Canada, including Toronto's Art Gallery of Ontario and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

About Site Service and Nine:

Site Service and **Nine** form an interdependent ecosystem of artistic support and curatorial experimentation.

Site operates as a variable, experimental, and nomadic mode—exhibitions, interventions, programming, and traveling dialogues.

Service operates on a more grounded, incubating mode—

artist residencies, public programs, and collective studies.

Nine operates on partnership and connection through an expansive mode—a living field shared with Blue boy, Curmudgeon, and Living Skin.

Together they nurture a cycle of research, making and sharing that centers care, collaboration, and community presence.

To inquire about Site Service's programming, exhibitions, artists, and works, email info@site-service.org.

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