JANET JAFFKE

LETTER TO MY FATHER

Art Cake, Gallery B - 214 40TH STREET, BROOKLYN, NY
Reception: Sunday, November 8, 2026

November 8 - December 6, 2026

Yellow Chair Salon is pleased to present *Letter to My Father*, a site-specific installation by Janet Jaffke created for Gallery B at Art Cake. Developed over the past year, the work transforms her father's handwritten journals into an immersive environment of translucent fabric, silkscreened text, suspended forms, and light.

The project began with a personal encounter in Virginia. While visiting her father during a period of serious illness, Jaffke discovered a journal he had begun in 1958. She was struck by the beauty of his handwriting and the intimacy of its contents: brief observations of family, nature, and the passing of days. The journal revealed not only a record of a life, but a way of paying attention to one. What began as an interest in handwriting became an encounter with memory, mortality, and the enduring ways people communicate across generations.

Rather than presenting individual works within a gallery, Jaffke takes the entire room as her surface. Long strips of translucent, silkscreened fabric descend from the ceiling, while additional forms are suspended throughout the space. The room is largely dark; light rises from below and passes through the transparent layers, creating an atmosphere that is both physical and ethereal. Excerpts from her father's writing appear on gauze and lightweight fabrics—enlarged, fragmented, and layered. The handwriting does not need to be deciphered to be felt; it becomes a physical trace of a person, suspended in space.

In this respect, *Letter to My Father* enters into dialogue with artists who have transformed intimate archives into spatial experiences. Like Chiharu Shiota's immersive fields of memory and Ann Hamilton's sensory explorations of language, Jaffke invites viewers to encounter writing physically rather than simply read it. Yet where others often build through heavy accumulation, Jaffke works through transparency and lightness. The importance of textiles and repair also places the work in conversation with Louise Bourgeois, where stitching becomes a vehicle for exploring vulnerability, memory, and recovery.

This meditation on repair runs deeply through Jaffke's practice. Drawing on her Buddhist background, she explores the duality of being human—understanding suffering and joy, breaking and healing, as inseparable. Her materials carry this philosophy: while her past work relied on burlap to evoke labor, weight, and endurance, gauze suggests fragility and the possibility of repair. In *Letter to My Father*, the heavier vocabulary of her earlier work gives way to light. The fabric becomes almost immaterial, suggesting the delicate space between physical life and memory.

The form of the installation emerged through a transformative process. Initially conceived as a collection of individual works, Jaffke was challenged through her ongoing mentorship with artist Michael David to treat the entire room as the work itself. She embraced an open-ended approach, developing large modular elements that could be assembled and rearranged in response to the architecture. The resulting environment is intentionally fluid, shifting as the viewer moves through the space.

The title describes both the source of the work and its essential gesture. Her father spent decades writing to himself, to his family, and to the future. Jaffke answers in another language: fabric, light, space, and form.

He wrote all this time. This is her response.

Janet Jaffke is a Chicago-born, France-based fiber and mixed-media artist whose practice explores memory, lived experience, the human condition, and transformation through material. She studied textile design and fiber art at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has exhibited internationally. Working with burlap, gauze, thread, and found materials, Jaffke explores the relationship between suffering and joy, vulnerability and endurance, and the possibility of finding beauty through repair.

Letter to My Father will be on view at Art Cake, Gallery B, beginning Sunday, November 8, 2026.

JANET JAFFKE

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2025–2026 — Independent Study with Michael David
2024–Present — Critical Discussion Symposium, Yellow Chair Salon (with Michael David and Astrid Dick)
2020–2024 — Critical Discussion Group (with Cheryl Taves and Bill Porteus)
2019 — Color & Design Workshop with Mark Eanes, LaRomita School of Art, Umbria, Italy
2019 — Art2Life Creative Visionary Program
2015 — Art2Life Creative Visionary Program
2000 — Continuing Education, School of the Art Institute of Chicago
1982 — BFA, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

EXHIBITIONS

Solo Exhibitions

2023 — *Raw Hope*, Noyes Art Gallery, Evanston, IL, USA
2018 — Galerie 21, Altkirch, France

Selected Group Exhibitions

2026 — *Germinations*, Silo12, three-person exhibition, Läufelfingen, Switzerland
2026 — Art Capital, Paris, France
2025 — *Tactile Terrain*, Jackson Junge Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
2025 — *Art as Refuge*, O'Hanlon Center for the Arts, Mill Valley, CA, USA
2025 — YCS Residency Exhibition, Art Cake, Brooklyn, NY, USA
2024 — 25th International Open, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
2024 — Art en Mai (invitational), Pont de Roide-Vermondans, France
2023 — *Lift the Sky*, Front Porch Gallery, Carlsbad, CA, USA
2022 — *Fantastic Fibers*, Yeiser Art Center, Paducah, KY, USA
2021 — Woven Women's Voices Project, Front Porch Gallery, Carlsbad, CA, USA
2020 — Advancing Women Artists, Florence, Italy
2017 — Salon des 40, Saint-Louis, France
2017 — Tom Robinson Gallery, two-person exhibition, Chicago, IL, USA

Recurring Exhibitions

2019–2022, 2024 (January and October), 2025 — Salon d’Automne, Paris, France
2017–2019, 2021 — *Front of Bicycle*, group exhibitions, Braswell Art Center and Gallerie Katapult, Basel, Switzerland

ARTIST RESIDENCIES

2025 — Yellow Chair Salon at Art Cake, Brooklyn, NY, USA
2020 — Association del Palmerino, Florence, Italy
2017 — Blueberry View Artist Retreat, Benton Harbor, MI, USA
1992 — Lakeside Art Center, Lakeside, MI, USA
1990 — Art Park, Lewiston, NY, USA
1987 — Art Park, Lewiston, NY, USA

PUBLICATIONS

2023 — *Fiber Art Now*
2022 — *Catch*, book co-author
2022 — *Woven Tale Press*
2018 — *DNA*, Journal d’Alsace
1992 — *Chicago Tribune*, Style Section
1990, 1991, 1992 — *Women’s Wear Daily*
1989 — *Chicago Times Magazine*
1989 — *Made in Illinois*

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

2024 — Artiste Sociétaire, Société du Salon d’Automne
2024 — Finalist, Hopper Prize
2024 — Guest Presenter, Studio Art Quilt Association Conference
2023 — Inspiration Interview, Art2Life Academy

ASSOCIATIONS

Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
Surface Design Association
European Textile Network
Studio Art Quilt Association

Janet Jaffke

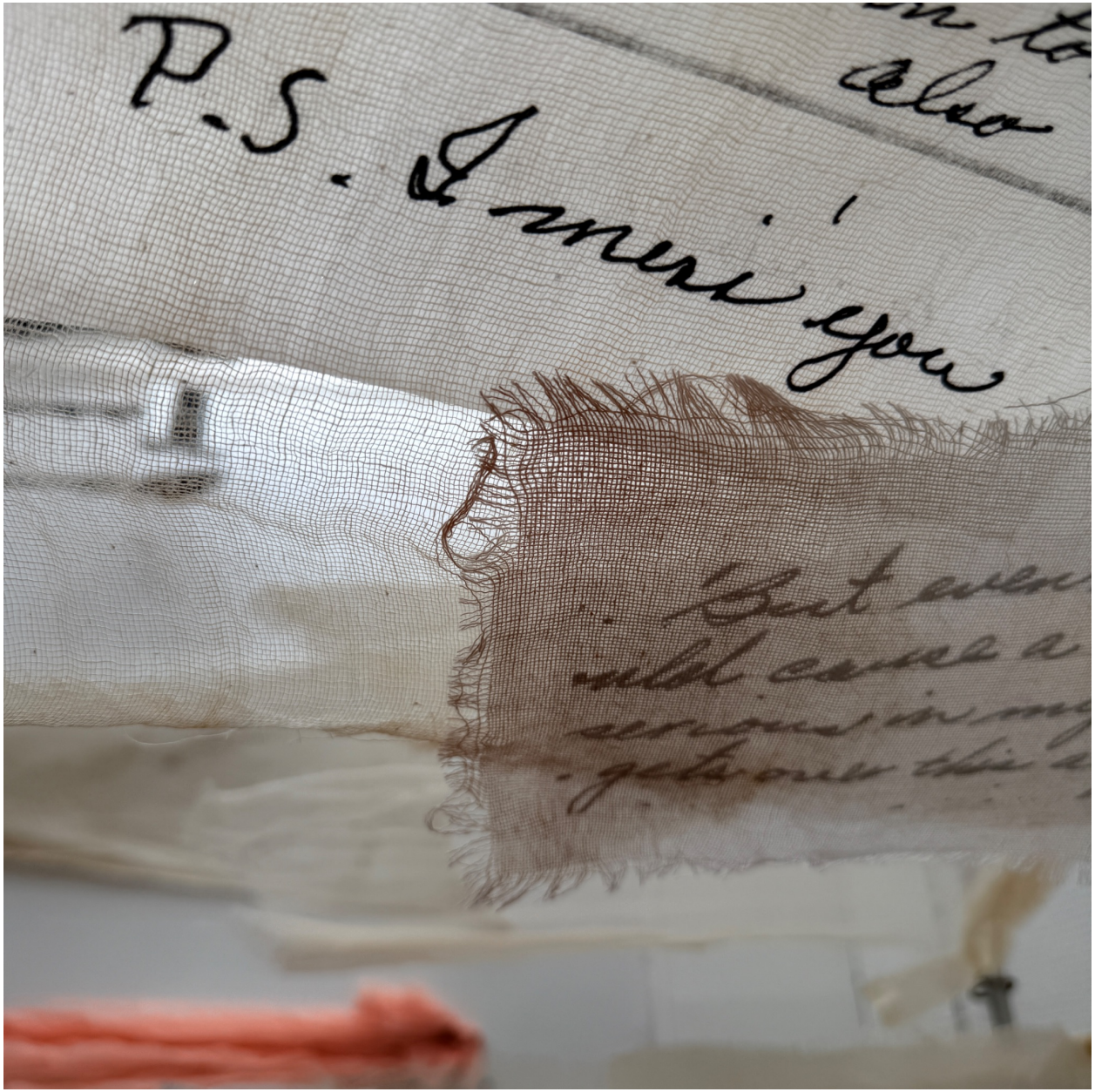
***Letter to my Father,* 2026**

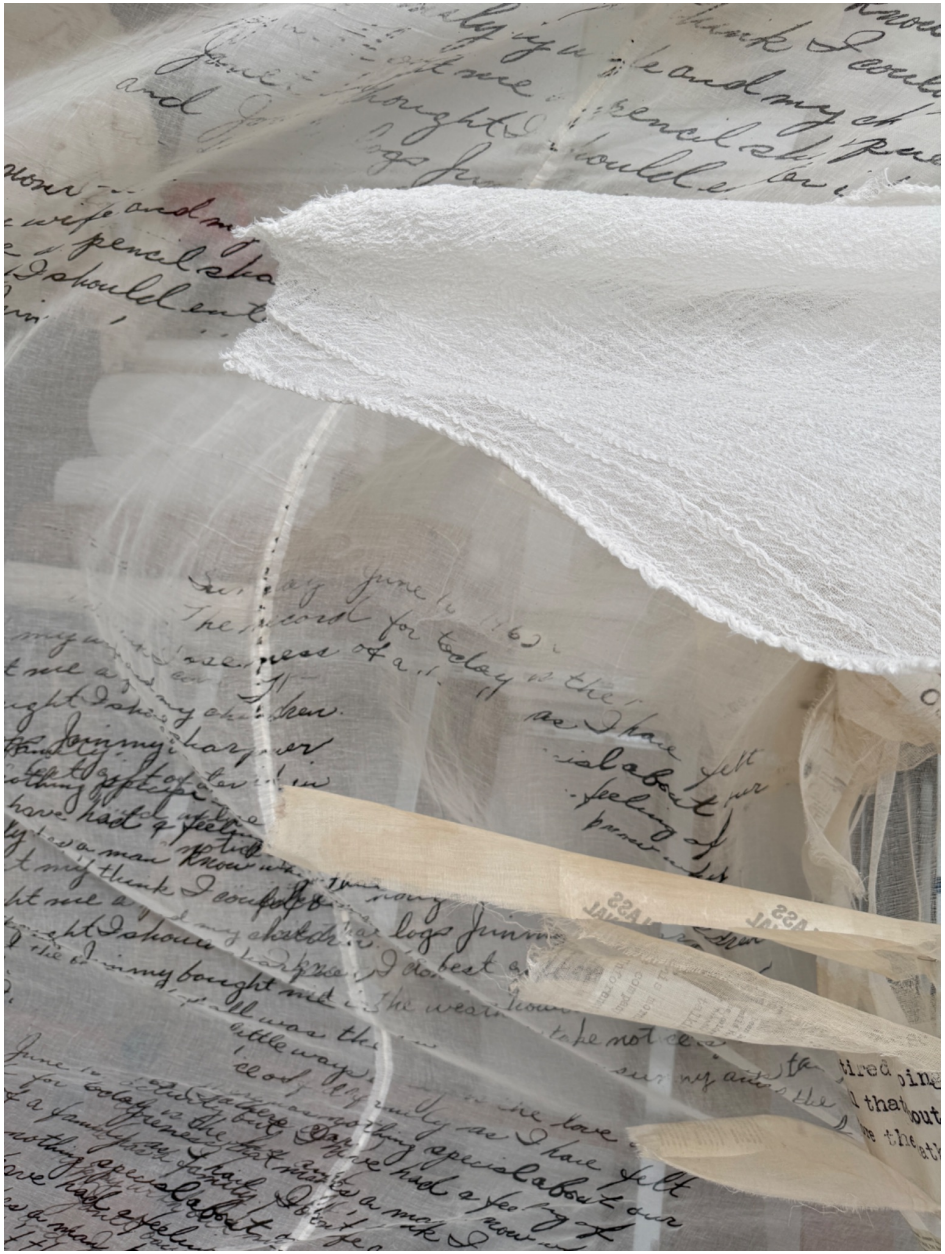
Dimensions Vary

Hand-printed and painted gauze with image transfer

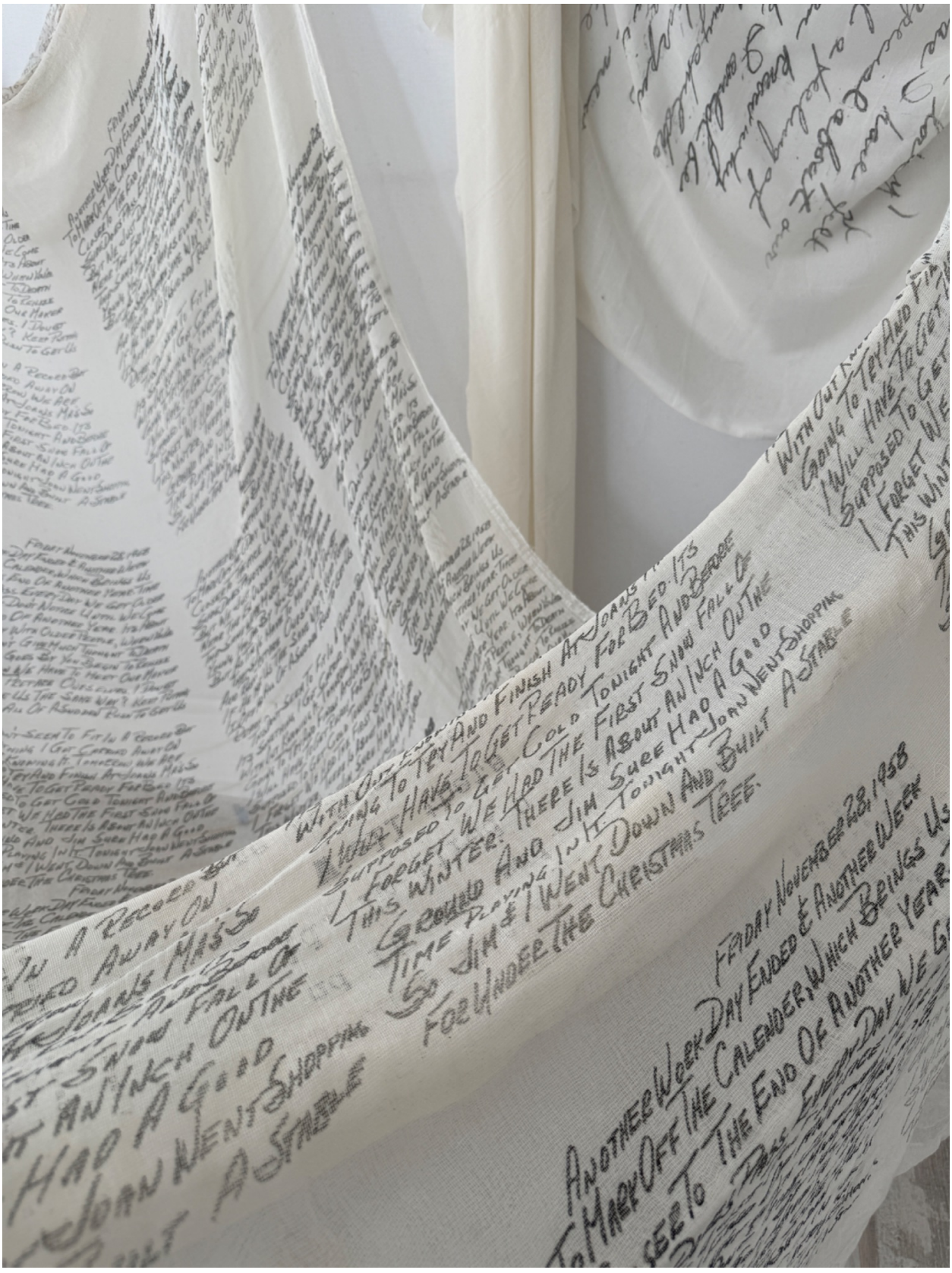
Installation Details

FIRST CLASS
INTERNATIONAL


P.S. I miss you!



GRANDMA
WENT TO
DOOR. ON
HOME FR
THE BU
HER AR
WE B
FOR A
SUNDOWN A NEW DAY.
HOPE CAN BE A REAL LIFE
WITH GOOD ALL


Friday November 28, 1958
Another Work Day Ended & Another Week
To Mark Off The Calender, Which Brings Us
Closer To The End Of Another Year
Time Flying In It Tonight
Jim & I Went Down And Built A Stable
For Under The Christmas Tree.
Jim Sure Had A Good
Laugh And Joan Went Shopping
This Winter. There Is About An Inch Out The
I Forget We Had The First Snow Fall Of
Supposed To Get Cold Tonight And Before
I Will Have To Get Ready For Bed. It's
Going To Try And Finish Ar
With Out