

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT, ATLANTA INTOWN, BUCKHEAD

The Pollinator Art Space in full bloom at The Goat Farm

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by Isadora Pennington
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The Pollinator Art Space, photograph provided by Sabre Esler.

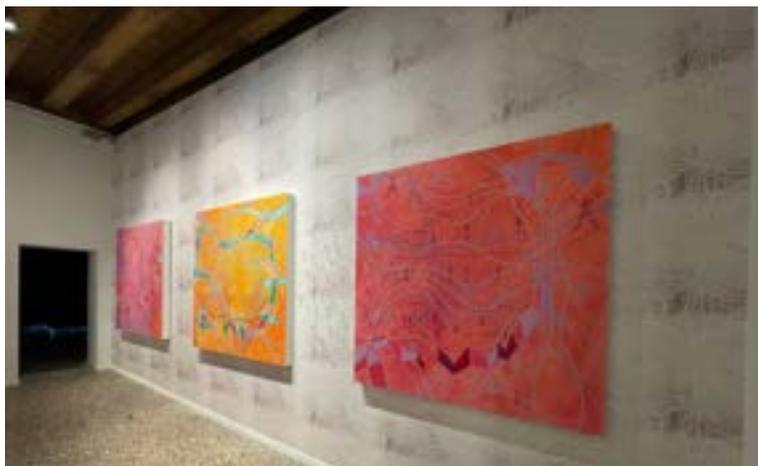
The Pollinator Art Space, which opened at The Goat Farm in 2024, is an intimate pop-up art exhibition space that is offering opportunities to artists on the Westside of Atlanta.

“I’m trying to give artists an audience,” said founder Sabre Esler.

Esler is a **multi-disciplinary artist** whose works explore the intersections of art and science. She has exhibited extensively, both in Atlanta and in cities across the country, and her exhibition “Magical Meta Meditations” was featured at Palazzo Bembo at the Venice Biennale in 2024.



Artist Sabre Esler during an open studios event.



“Magical Meta Meditations” at Venice Biennale.



Photographs provided by Sabre Esler.



A lifelong creative, she recalls first falling in love with art when in the third grade she recreated “Sunflowers” by Van Gogh in dried beans for a project. “I had so much fun,” she recalled.

Later, Esler studied art at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, Philadelphia Academy of Fine Art, and SCAD Atlanta where she received her MFA.

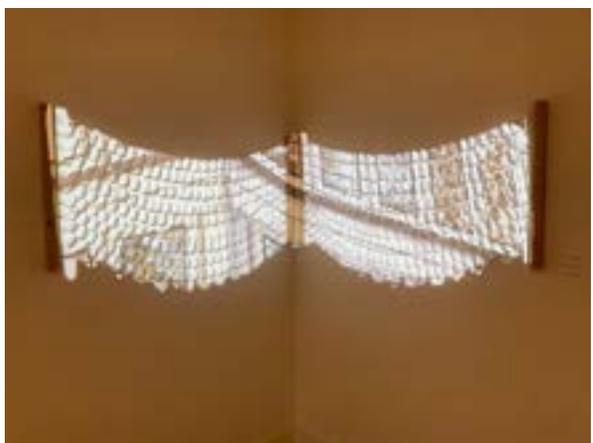
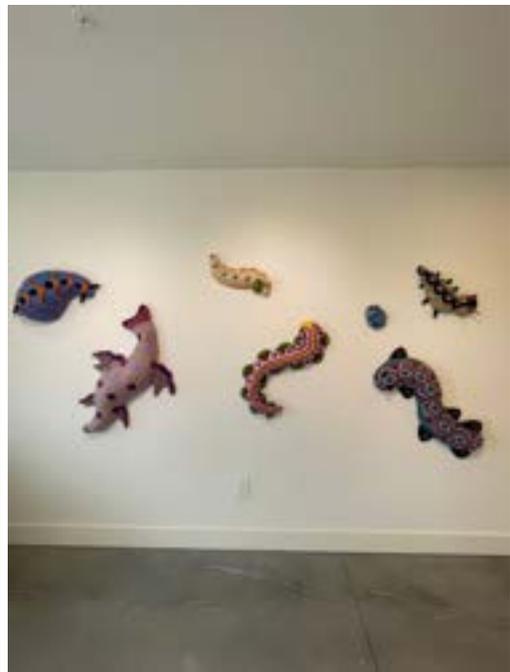
For many years, Esler focused on her individual creative practice. As an exhibiting artist, she first started contemplating the need for a venue like The Pollinator Art Space when she was seeking out a location for her thesis in 2015. Years later, she pitched an exhibition to several local galleries and was denied. These experiences made her consider alternative models for exhibition spaces in Atlanta.

The ideas of an artist co-op, or a pop-up art space, had come up in conversations with fellow artists and colleagues over the years. The final push came when Esler drew close to the end of her residency at Atlanta Contemporary in 2024.

During the four years that she maintained a studio at Atlanta Contemporary, she was able to experience what it would be like to operate a public-facing business model and design for her art practice. Residents at Atlanta Contemporary participate in twice-yearly open studios events, and the resulting conversations and engagements she had with the Atlanta art ecosystem emboldened her to consider her next move.

“Making those connections and having that network is really, really important,” she told me.

Previously a studio artist at a satellite Goat Farm location in Castleberry Hill, Esler reached out to founder Anthony Harper with the idea for an exhibition space. Though the plan for The Pollinator Art Space evolved from a co-op concept into a standalone exhibition space that she ran on her own, she decided she would regret it if she didn’t really give it a try. And so, she did.



Images from “Renewal” with Heather Deyling and Miranda Creagan at The Pollinator Art Space. Photos provided by Sabre Esler.

“It’s crazy,” laughed Esler. “I mean, it is a full time job, and in order to support it I thought I’d be an adjunct professor, so I did that last fall and I also had my own practice... that was just like trying to ride two bicycles at the same time.”

She ultimately dropped the teaching in order to focus on building The Pollinator into something sustainable and meaningful both to her and others.

And what about the name? When Esler was coming up with initial plans for the gallery, she considered a few options, most of which were related to the gallery’s current location. While she liked the names she worried that one day, if she ever had to relocate, it would not make as much sense. A good friend Ramie Little actually came up with the winning name; The Pollinator Art Space.

“We talked about the concept that the goal of the space is to expand the reach of artists by connecting artists, collectors, critics, curators and anyone else in the industry,” said Esler. “I especially like creating new relationships between younger and older artists as well. Creating art can be isolating, so artists need a strong network to succeed.”

The response from the artistic community has been a positive one, with her exhibitions garnering attention and support from participating artists, some of whom have even volunteered to host open hours during the exhibitions. “It was a big love fest, it was just delightful,” Esler said, referring to the successes of the small works show she hosted last fall.

The Art Space operates a bit differently than many commercial galleries, as Esler doesn’t represent artists and instead welcomes guest curators to bring new ideas to use and activate the space. Calling it a “pop-up art space,” Esler has endeavored to keep the process simple and streamlined for artists who have no obligation to the gallery once their exhibition is over.

She also has been working with young, emerging art professionals who want experience operating an art space, such as Brooklyn Carr, her current intern who she describes as “dynamic.”

“I love materiality, and I am particularly interested in installation art,” said Esler when asked about the guiding principles of her curation process. “Although I am a painter in my longest practice, I really enjoy different ways artists use materials to flesh out their ideas.”

One key element to The Pollinator Art Space is that she prefers pairing up artists in thoughtful and compelling duos, and is not particularly interested in solo exhibitions. The exception to that rule is MFA thesis exhibitions, for which she has one available exhibition slot towards the end of 2025.

Up next at The Pollinator Art Space is “You Kissed Me First,” a collaborative photo collage exhibition by artists Jody Fausett and Sharon Shapiro.

The two actually developed the works in this exhibition during a residency at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. In the series, themes of personal facades, tension, longing, vulnerabilities, and hidden pleasures are explored through the combination of vintage photographs with added textural elements.

“When they approached me and told me about their collaboration and experimentation, I thought they were a perfect fit for my programming,” said Esler. “They have stretched their practice and have helped each other grow. It’s perfect for The Pollinator Art Space concept!”

“You Kissed Me First” will debut at [The Pollinator Art Space](#), located at 1200 Foster St. NW, Studio 109, on the Goat Farm campus with an opening reception on Thurs., Feb. 27 from 5-9 p.m. Felicia Feaster will moderate an artist talk with Fausett and Shapiro on Mar. 29 at 3 p.m. and the exhibition will remain on view through April 10, 2025.