

# Labyrinths

New Spring Show at Jane Deering Gallery

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by [CHARLES DONELAN](#)

**EKSTROM UNBOUND:** Artist and UCSB College of Creative Studies professor Linda Ekstrom is perhaps best known for what she has done to the Bible. Her sculptural creations based on the shredding and reconstituting of actual Bibles into hard spheres, soft pillows, and other suggestive shapes, however, are only one small part of Ekstrom's broad-ranging practice in relation to religion and to the idea of the book.



*Linda Ekstrom's "labyrinth: church: 17" is based on a drawing of a labyrinth that once existed at the Reims Cathedral but was destroyed in 1778.*

In *Labyrinth*, her current show running through April 28 at Jane Deering Gallery, Ekstrom heads in a new direction, albeit one that originates in the pages of a different sort of book — one cataloguing the world's most intriguing and extensive outdoor physical labyrinths. Over the last few years, Ekstrom has been opening this special volume (borrowed from UCSB's Davidson Library on a series of long-term faculty loans) and using it as a kind of automatic stimulus for her drawing practice. With her left, non-

drawing hand, Ekstrom traces the contours of one of the plates in her labyrinths book. With her right, drawing hand, Ekstrom mimics the pattern twice, once on the way in, with a pen, in ink, and then again on the way out, with a pencil, in graphite. It's a fanciful yet concrete way of making these distant spaces into physical realities in the present. By moving through the labyrinth of Ekstrom's body, from one hand to the other, sacred networks of passage and occlusion that exist in real space elsewhere become phantoms circulating in the labyrinth of the human nervous system. The results are mesmerizing double images that suggest both architectural and mental space. Does the right hand ever really know what the left hand is doing? Get to *Labyrinth* and decide for yourself.