

FRANCONIA

Celebrating 25 Years of Art & Ecology
Franconia Sculpture Park
2021 Annual Report



In 2021, Franconia Sculpture Park celebrated its 25th Anniversary with an annual curatorial theme of “Authority & Visibility in Public Space”. With the completion of our 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, we now mandate that at least 50% of the artists we work each year with identify as BIPOC, ensuring that there is positive representation by artists of color in rural Minnesota.

For 25 years, we have served artists and audiences across our region and beyond. We have commissioned hundreds of artworks, supported artists from across the globe, and brought communities together to experience the transformative power of art in nature.

We reached this anniversary milestone in a challenging year. Communities across the world continued to struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic. Arts organizations and artists were deeply impacted by the loss of revenue, travel restrictions, and social distancing. And here in Minnesota, we became the epicenter of a long-overdue racial justice awakening.

The work needed to establish a safe space for artists to create and diverse audiences to come together is humbling. Yet the resilience of our community inspires us. Our visitor numbers soaring to nearly 200,000 in 2021 reinforces our belief that people are looking to Franconia as a place where they can heal, connect, and move forward.

Despite the challenges, Franconia finished its 25th Anniversary year stronger than ever. We hosted dozens of public and educational programs, engaging exhibitions in the Mardag Gallery, and welcomed over 55 artists to the park to create work inspired by nature and our ever-evolving world. We have strengthened our commitment to supporting our creative community for the next 25 years.

On behalf of all the board and staff at Franconia, we thank you for your continued support and we hope to see you at the park soon!

Ginger Shulick Porcella,
Executive Director & Curator

Stacy O'Reilly,
Board Chair

OUR VALUES

Contemporary

We aim to be a national model for how a contemporary outdoor museum can engage and collaborate with the community.

Bold

We create bold programming that is ambitious, innovative, and that is responsive to the wants and needs of artists and our community.

25 Years of Franconia Sculpture Park

1996

Franconia Sculpture Park is founded on 16-acres of land 2 miles east of the current location with up to 70 sculptures on display.

2006

Franconia moves locations to current site on St. Croix Trail in Shafer, Minnesota, growing to 20-acres.

2012

Franconia acquires adjacent 23 acres of land to create a contiguous 43-acre site.

2015

Restoration of native prairie begins at the park in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Franconia undergoes periodic prescribed burns of Franconia's upland prairie to benefit wildlife and plant diversity.

2019

Franconia hires its second Executive Director Ginger Shulick Porcella.

2020

Franconia completes 5-year capital campaign and opens the 7,000 square foot Franconia Commons Visitor Center to record crowds.

Franconia launches popular Art & Farmers Market program, Film @ Franconia, and Visiting Artist Program.

Franconia shifts mission of the organization to the intersection of Art & Ecology; works with University of Minnesota and tribal organizations to become better stewards and caretakers of this land we share and call home.

2021

Franconia sees record attendance of nearly 200,000 visitors.

Franconia launches "Public Art is Critical" Residency, FSP Billboard Project, Performance @ Franconia series, and Youth Summer Camps.

Inclusive

We actively work to amplify the voices of those historically underserved in our nation's cultural institutions, while providing a space that is free and open to a diverse public to enjoy.

Local & Global

We bring global artists and ideas to rural Minnesota cultivating critical dialogue between artists and audiences

2021 Overview

In 2021—despite the continued challenges of navigating the COVID-19 pandemic—Franconia Sculpture Park commissioned new work by 55 artists from across the globe through our renowned **Artist Residency** program, as well as through the new **Performance @ Franconia** series. These works highlighted a diversity of artists, mediums, and concepts inspired by our annual curatorial theme of “**Authority & Visibility in Public Space.**”

We hosted our longstanding **Music @ Franconia** series, as well as the second year of our popular **Art & Farmers Markets** and **Film @ Franconia** program. We also welcomed students and families back to the park during our **Multigenerational Artmaking Classes** as well as our first year of **Youth Summer Camps**, with 15% of students attending on a fully-funded scholarship.

Our **25th Anniversary Celebration** was one for the books, as we welcomed over 1,500 individuals to the park to enjoy the new sculptures created throughout the year, the launch of the **FSP Billboard Project**, a rousing musical performance by local hip hop artist Nur-D, as well as an imaginative fashion show by Minnesota-based designer Joshua McGarvey.

2021 also marked our first full year of **Exhibitions in the Mardag Gallery**, with solo exhibitions by New York-based artists Andrew Erdos and Margaret Jacobs (Akwesasne Mohawk), the feminist indigenous Super Futures Haunt Collective, and a group exhibition in collaboration with Emerging Curators Institute (ECI), curated by ECI and Franconia Fellow Kehayr Brown-Ransaw.

In September of 2021 we also completed our first year of our new **Membership Program**, welcoming 285 new paid members to the park in 2021 and raising \$18,857 in donations. This, paired with our most successful year end appeal to date (\$28,600 raised), significant earned income from gift shop sales (\$128,390), and retiring long-term debt allowed Franconia to end our fiscal year solidly in the black. We continued offering digital programming, allowing us to reach even more viewers and learners than ever before by eliminating the barriers for participation. **In total, Franconia served 175,172 in-person visitors (including 43,793 youth) and 144,084 online viewers in 2021.**

OUR MISSION

To foster an inclusive community to create and contemplate contemporary art inspired by nature and our ever-evolving world.

SPOTLIGHT ON: ARTIST RESIDENCIES

In 2021 Franconia launched two new Artist Residency programs.

The **Writers Residency** welcomed 4 writers from various backgrounds and disciplines to Franconia in the winter to work on a project of their choosing. The selected writers were the Oracle of Los Angeles Amanda Yates Garcia, curators Maymanah Farhat and Natalia Mount, and songwriter Storm Large, who even hosted a pop-up, online concert as a fundraiser for Franconia. This pilot program proved to be so successful that the Writers Residency was our most popular application category for the 2022 residency season.

The **Public Art is Critical** residency—in partnership with Hennepin Theatre Trust—welcomed 5 Native artists to the park for a short-term residency. This new residency is designed specifically for BIPOC artists exploring critical discourse in public art. This summer we were honored to welcome Angela Two Stars (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate), Juleana Enright (Oglala Lakota), Missy Whiteman (Northern Arapaho & Kickapoo), Raymond Janis (Oglala Lakota) and Sheldon Starr (Oglala Dakota) to the park.

In addition to these two new residencies, Franconia welcomed **4 Visiting Artists** to the park to create new work, as well as **10 Fellowship Artists** and **15 Emerging Artists**. We hope you visit the park in the coming year to see all the new work on display!



Installation by 2021 Franconia Fellow Amy Ritter, a project designed to destigmatize affordable housing

SPOTLIGHT ON: FSP BILLBOARD PROJECT

Thanks to a generous grant from the East Central Regional Arts Council through an appropriation from the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the State's general fund, Franconia was able to launch the **FSP Billboard Project**. This rotating curatorial and art platform is designed to amplify artists of color in Minnesota.

In celebration of Franconia's 2021 curatorial theme of "**Authority & Visibility in Public Space**," the inaugural project designed by Somali-artist Yasmeenah makes visible the innovative creatives that contribute to Minnesota's thriving and diverse cultural ecosystem.

Located at the intersection of Highways 8 and 95, the 10 x 28 foot billboard currently on display invites visitors to consider the critical question, "How well prepared are you to meet the changes necessary to make the world a more human dwelling place." The text is overlaid atop the yearbook-style portraits of twenty Black artist and curators, a powerful project representing Black autonomy and self-determination.

The following three billboards to be commissioned through this project in 2022 include work by Jose Dominguez, Inkpa Mani (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate) and Angela Two Stars (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate).



Visitors gather at Franconia's 25th Anniversary for the unveiling of the FSP Billboard Project

SPOTLIGHT ON: MARDAG GALLERY

With the open of **Franconia Commons** in September of 2020, Franconia is thrilled to now have indoor gallery for both group and solo exhibitions. **The Mardag Gallery** is a rotating exhibition space that helps redefine sculpture, expanding beyond the traditional confines of the medium to present the work of artists from across the globe whose work may not be suited for an outdoor exhibition environment.



September 2021 opening of "After, Other & Before" in the Mardag Gallery, curated by Kehayr Brown-Ransaw.

SPOTLIGHT ON: SUMMER CAMPS

2021 marked the first year that Franconia offered week-long summer camps for youth. For this first year, Franconia worked with Franconia alumni Emmett Ramstad to host three weeks of **Installation Summer Camps** alongside Franconia's **Emerging Artists-in-Residence**.

Students were able to experiment with materials, concepts, and tools to create their very own large-scale installations that were on public display at Franconia alongside the work of professional artists. The completed work was on display throughout the summer and enjoyed by thousands of visitors.



SPOTLIGHT ON: PERFORMANCE @ FRANCONIA

Franconia's 50-acre landscape populated by Native plants, pollinators, and nearly 100 sculptures is the perfect backdrop for performance art.

In 2021 Franconia hosted numerous **performance art events**, ranging from Shakespearean theatre to commissions of new, contemporary performance art.

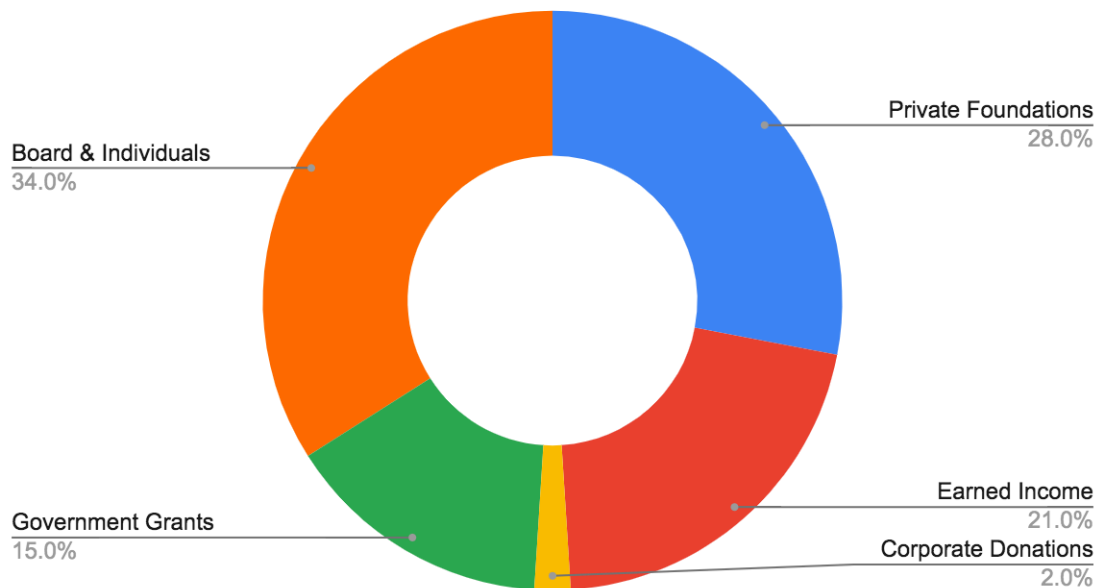
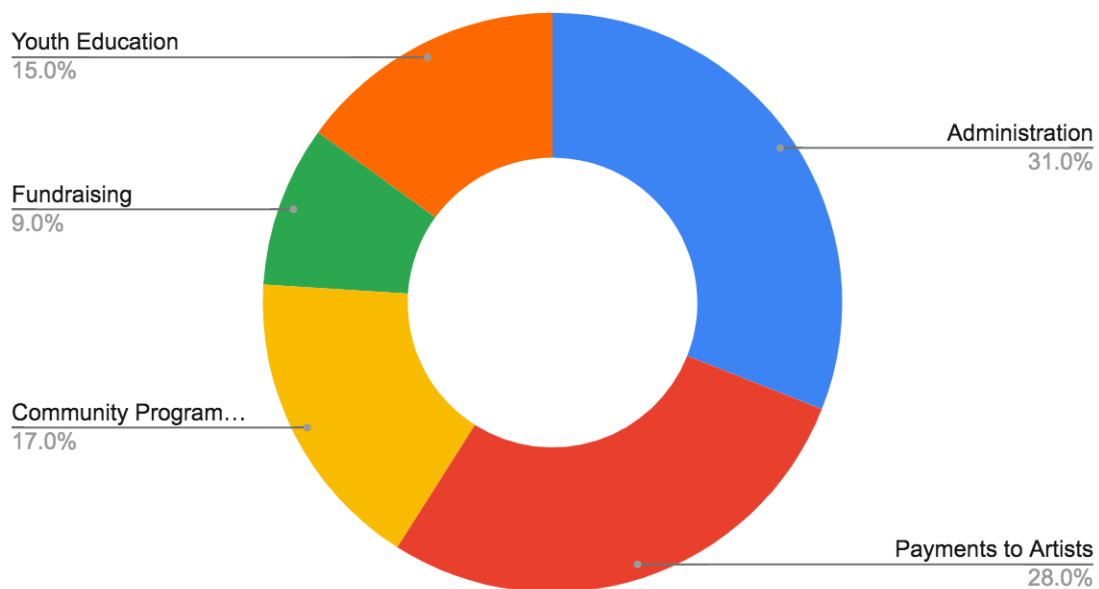
On Saturday, June 19, Franconia welcomed **2,204 visitors** to the park for a series of healing performances around ritual and resilience in celebration of Summer Solstice and Juneteenth, otherwise known as Black Independence Day. Nearly **20 QTPOC+ performance artists** from across the United States converged at the park to create intentional, inclusive and participatory works. This powerful event was thoughtfully reviewed in **MIT's "Performance Art Journal"** by Jennie Klein, one of the foremost historians of contemporary performance art. We look forward to seeing how performance artists reinterpret the sculptures and setting of Franconia in 2022!



Vabianna Santos and Clint McCallum perform as SELF-ESTEEM with Chris Manzione's sculpture "Dazzle"

Franconia FY21 Finances

	2021	2020
Contributed Support	\$637,811	\$554,555
Earned Revenue	\$172,635	\$45,288
	\$810,446	\$599,843
Total Operating Expenditures	\$755,425	\$572,727
Net Income (less capital/COGS)	\$9,511	-\$67,577
Year End Cash Balance	\$67,263	\$87,772

2021 Income Distribution**2021 Expense Distribution**



Return to Sender by 2021 Franconia Fellow Marius Ritiu

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Thank you to our 2021 Major Supporters, especially those generous donors who have made a sustaining contribution to Franconia Sculpture Park. Individual donations have a significant impact on the continued growth of Franconia, demonstrating a strong and lasting commitment our community has on supporting contemporary sculpture and the intersection of art and ecology in Minnesota.

If you would like to join our list of committed patrons to the arts, sponsor a program, or make a corporate or planned gift, please contact Jessica Turtle at jessica@franconia.org or call 651.257.6668.

2021 Major Supporters

\$50,000+

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