



FRANCONIA

sculpture park



2023
Annual
Report





*Left: Sugar Shack
created by Alex
Legeros and
Thomas Putzier at
Franconia in 2017*

MEET ALEX LEGEROS!

Franconia Sculpture Park's New Executive Director

It is with great excitement that I introduce myself, Alex Legeros, as the new Executive Director of Franconia Sculpture Park. The privilege of serving in this role is both an honor and a dream come true. Coming from a family of artists, my path in life has supported people's needs through creativity. In a world that can feel uncomfortably stagnant, Franconia is a place where the needle moves: this organization represents bold, forward thinking where the voices of artists take root.

As a new local resident, Franconia Sculpture Park has become my new home, but it already had a special place in my heart. I had the chance to create a large sculpture here in 2017 with my partner Thomas Putzier. The chance to be part of this Franconia community made an incredible difference in our lives in ways that I know more people need.

I want to expand opportunities here, not only for contemporary artists, but also for the nearly 200,000 annual visitors who make Franconia a beloved part of their lives. The park's open air spaces for learning, rich restored lands for reflection, and abundant areas for creation are a center for experimentation. We can be our best selves together at Franconia!

I invite you to join me in embracing the artistic energy that defines this space. I am grateful to share this journey with you and all the park's visitors, patrons, artists, volunteers, and staff. Together, we will continue to shape the artistic landscape and build a vibrant, creative community. Thank you for being a part of this extraordinary adventure with us.

Sincerely,
Alex Legeros

Executive Director
Franconia Sculpture Park

LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Dear Friends of Franconia Sculpture Park,

Franconia wrapped up an inspiring, remarkable and successful year. Inspiring because during the transition in Executive Director, Franconia needed to lean on its staff and ask its friends for assistance. Franconia's call for support was met by generous, enthusiastic support to its mission. Sara Rothholz Weiner and Sharon Loudon kindly agreed to lead the Park during the spring and summer. Franconia staff redoubled their efforts and succeeded in delivering on the mission, supporting art, artists and visitors. Their commitment to Franconia was selfless and impactful.

It was a remarkable year because leadership transitions are difficult. The Franconia Board and community held to our steadfast belief that Franconia is a special place and it was important to find the right person to lead the organization. Alex Legeros energized us from the first conversation. Alex brings not only experience, he brings an approach to leadership, art, community, legacy and ecology that fits Franconia and its mission superbly. His first few months leading the Park have confirmed our optimism. Alex is the right person at the right time for the sculpture park.

The year ended successfully thanks to your unwavering support. Your commitment to Franconia Sculpture Park has been instrumental in sustaining our mission and creating a space where artists can thrive. It is through your generosity and dedication that we can continue to provide a platform for artists to push boundaries and bring their visions to life.

Thank you,
Stacy O'Reilly

Board Chair



RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

Franconia Sculpture Park's 2023 curatorial theme "Public Art is Public Health" was chosen to reflect the state of our world after the tragic onset of Covid-19 in 2020. Since 2020, Franconia has remained open with record-setting attendance, reflecting the increased need for unique and enriching spaces.



Above: Artist-in-Residence Cameron Cameron with her completed sundial sculpture titled "Always time for friends"



Above: Sean Noyce's sculpture titled "45.381620, -92.707344 (Solstice)"

Right: Sean Noyce activating his sculpture at Franconia's 2023 Midsummer Performance Festival



In 2023, Franconia hosted 8 Writers-in-Residence, 8 Mid-Career Artist Fellows, and 2 Artist Parent Fellows.

Franconia's Residency programs are unique in more ways than one. Franconia provides Writers-in-Residence with a \$1,000 stipend to support themselves while staying at the park. Writers find that financially supported residency programs are few and far between, so Franconia Sculpture Park is proud to offer some assistance to Writers-in-Residence in this way.

In July of 2023, Franconia hosted two Artist Parent Fellows and their families for two-week residencies. Artists Beili Liu and Yuliya Lanina brought their children and partners to stay with them while they worked on their personal art practices. The children attended Franconia's Youth Summer Camps while the parents worked, and on their off time they took many trips around the St. Croix River Valley for hiking, swimming, and connecting with nature.



Parent Artist-in-Residence Yuliya Lanina working on paintings in the Franconia Residency House

"The sculpture garden offered a wealth of resources (space, material, time) for the artists and the children. For a short, 2-week residency, I appreciated the pressure-free nature of the residency. A time to reflect and experiment is so valuable for artists, especially also with the presence of kids and family members."

—Beili Liu
Family Artist 2023

MUSIC @ FRANCONIA

Franconia Sculpture Park hosted eight musical acts as part of the 2023 Music @ Franconia series, with genres ranging from salsa music, folk and country, to rock, indie, and R&B/rap.



Above: Keep for Cheap performing at Franconia's Earthen Amphitheater



*Dua Saleh at Franconia
Photos by Bump Opera*

In September 2023, as part of the 27th Annual Art & Artists Celebration, a rainy night had Franconia's Driscoll Education Center turned into a hopping concert venue to host St. Paul native musician, actor, and activist Dua Saleh.

FILM @ FRANCONIA

2023 saw record numbers in attendance for our Film @ Franconia series! Cult classic films *The Shining* and *The Dark Crystal* drew excited crowds to the park.

Franconia also hosted the 4th Annual Franconia Five Minute Film Festival, highlighting filmmakers from Minnesota and Wisconsin. The 2023 Five Minute Film Festival was also the first event in which Franconia's new Executive Director, Alex Legeros, was introduced to our patrons! Alex welcomed the crowd and exclaimed "I love this place, I love the mission of Franconia Sculpture Park and if there's one thing I want you to know is that it wouldn't be possible without you being here and without your support!"

The Five Minute Film Festival boasted more than 45 exciting and unique submissions.



*Our screening of *The Shining* was possibly the most attended film event at Franconia ever!*

EDUCATION

At Franconia Sculpture Park, we are deeply committed to education. We offer free art workshops during events, affordable art classes in the spring and summer, and three weeks of youth summer camps every July. We provide engaging tours for visitors of all ages, especially school groups, aiming to inspire creativity and a love for art. **Our dedication to accessible education is at the heart of our mission.**



Above: Workshops students showing off their finished soft sculptures

Left top: Students with off their kites at Franconia's kite workshop

Left bottom: Students preparing natural ink watercolors using invasive species



"[My child] got three bee stings while at camp and still claimed it was the best week of his life!"

—Summer Camp parent, 2023

5 free art workshops
at Franconia events

111 participants in Franconia's
all-ages art classes

1,763 students served through
field trips

29 youth summer camp
attendees



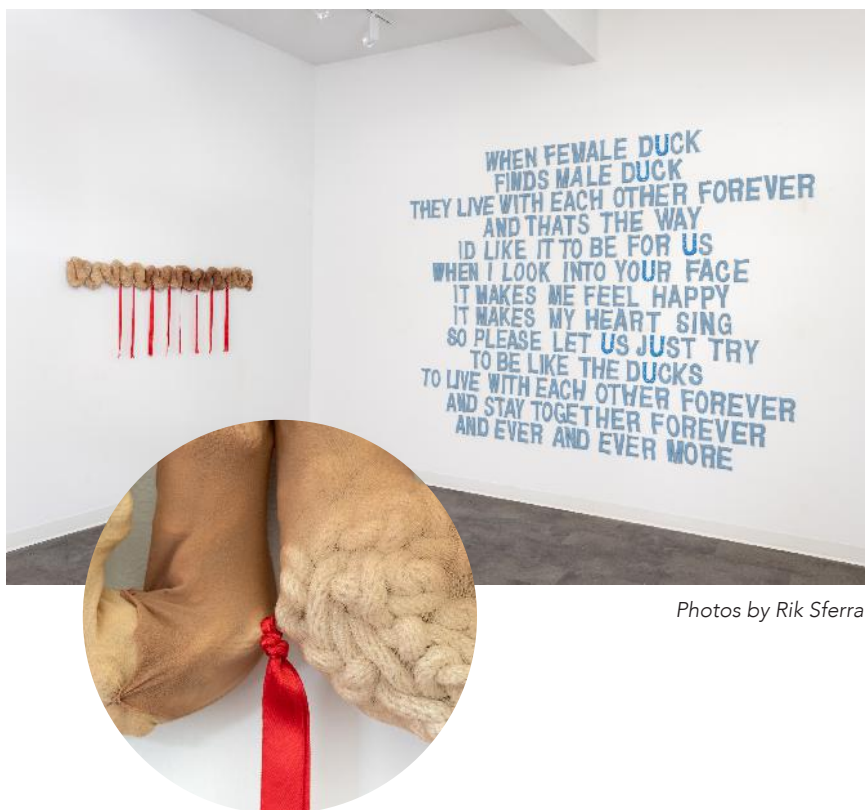
EXHIBITIONS

In 2023, Franconia Sculpture Park curated and hosted four unique gallery exhibitions in the Mardag Gallery.

Loves Me, Loves Me Not Maggie Thompson

1/28/23 – 4/16/23

In early 2023, the Mardag Gallery showcased the art of Fond du Lac Ojibwe artist Maggie Thompson in Loves Me, Loves Me Not, an exploration of the personal and universal experience of loss, grief, and love. Through Thompson's multidisciplinary practice, she expands various textile traditions' inherited ways of being and becoming.



Photos by Rik Sferra

Witness III

Sook Jin Jo

4/29/23-6/18/2023

South Korean multidisciplinary artist Sook Jin Jo stayed at Franconia in April and created *Witness III*, a site specific installation in the Mardag Gallery. With a bit of help from Franconia staff and volunteers, Sook Jin Jo utilized reclaimed materials found on Franconia's property as well as a soundscape of everyday noises.

The gallery installation at Franconia Sculpture Park was the third iteration of this project, with the others existing in Switzerland and South Korea.



*Right: Volunteers helping Sook Jin Jo process recycled material for *Witness III**



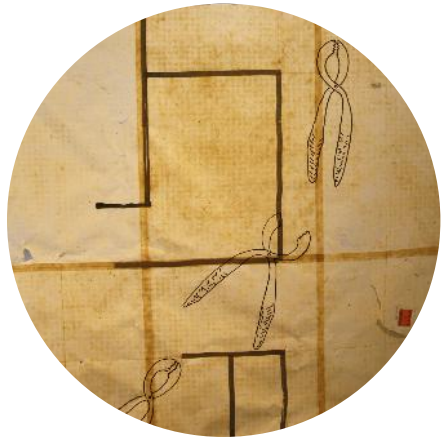
Home Sick

Rotem & Omri Zin-Tamir

7/1/23-9/10/23

In late summer, artists Rotem and Omri Zin-Tamir exhibited *Home Sick*, a processed-based gallery exhibition featuring a 10'x10' sheet of paper that was handmade by the married couple using Abaca and Japanese Kozo fibers and embedded with readymade papers they found in their pockets.

"...We drafted a blueprint of the floor plans of both of the apartments we were each born in, as each of us remembered them, combined into a single living space."



Inventadas

Curated by Alondra M. Garza

9/23/23-11/14/23

Franconia Sculpture Park connected with the Emerging Curators Institute (ECI) to present *Inventadas*, a show curated by Alondra M. Garza, a 2022-23 ECI Curator Fellow. The multimedia exhibition featured new work by Minnesota-based women, trans, and non-binary Latinx interdisciplinary artists including Maria Cristina (Tina) Tavera, Candida Gonzalez, Grover Hogan, Ivonne Yañez, and Keila Anali Saucedo.

Reflecting multifaceted and emotional experiences of being a Latina and non-binary Latine in the United States, the exhibition was a response to problems derived from sexist macho culture, racism, stereotypes, religion, and homophobia. The responses range from romanticism and humor to unapologetic criticism, all the while showcasing the beauty of Latin culture and identities.



Transgression by Candida Gonzalez



Bar Angel
by Grover Hogan

MIDSUMMER PERFORMANCE FESTIVAL

Franconia Sculpture Park's Midsummer Performance Festival was a magical celebration of art, nature, and community. The event featured performances by ten artists and traditional Midsummer activities like crafting flower crowns and solstice sun catchers. The evening culminated in a heartfelt bonfire where participants set intentions for the season. This event embodied Franconia's commitment to inspiring creativity and wonder in our community.



Above: Artist and Franconia alum Emma Wood facilitating native flower crown making

Right: Artists-in-Residence Brian and Ryan hosting a homemade pine tree derby





Top: Visitors hanging out at Franconia's Earthen Amphitheater, decorated with prayer flags from Wang Ping's installation "Kinship of Rivers: We are Water"

Above: After hours bonfire on the back porch of the Franconia Commons Building

Left: Herbal oil infusion workshop hosted by Suzanne Lindgren

PUPPETS IN THE PARK HALLOWEEN HAYRIDE

In October of 2023, Franconia Sculpture Park hosted the first ever **Puppets in the Park Halloween Hayride** in collaboration with In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre and Flying Foot Forum Dance/Theatre Company, drawing in an enthusiastic crowd of over 1,500 people, spanning all age groups.

The Halloween Hayride featured mesmerizing large-scale puppetry that brought the park to life in a magical way. Attendees had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the creative process by participating in a mask and puppet making workshop. Free pumpkin carving, hayrides, and an engaging scavenger hunt added to the enchantment of the event.

At Franconia Sculpture Park, our dedication to introducing unique and innovative art forms to the St. Croix Valley Region is unwavering. We are committed to providing visitors with new and exciting artistic encounters that not only captivate the imagination but also strengthen the bonds of our community. **Puppets in the Park exemplifies our mission to bring extraordinary art to our region and create memorable experiences for all.**

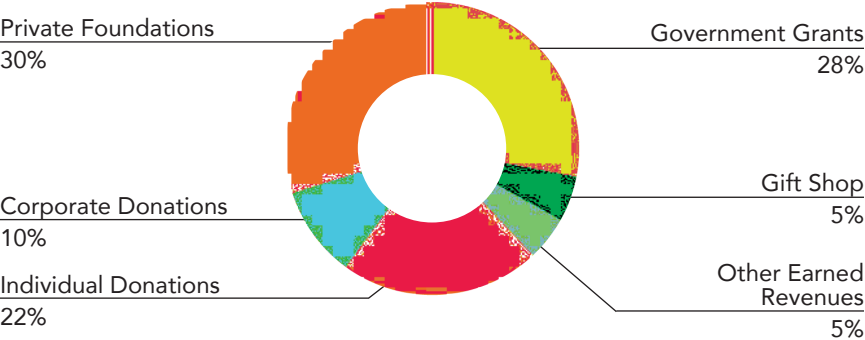




PRELIMINARY 2023 FINANCES

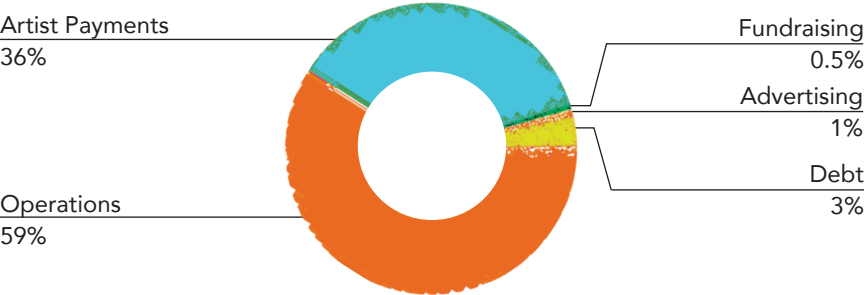
2023 Operating Revenues

Total Operating Revenues = \$600,844.63



2023 Operating Expenses

Total Operating Expenses = \$558,502.92



*Note that Franconia’s 2023 Profit & Loss Statement carries \$92,307 in Depreciation costs not included in operating figures. Board-approved 2023 financial statements will be available in late January 2024. Past Franconia audits are available online or by request.



2023 Performance Artists-in-Residence Brian and Ryan blending into the Franconia landscape

FRANCONIA STAFF

Alex Legeros, Executive Director

Jane Borstad, Manager of Marketing and Design

Sarah Buezis, Manager of Public Programs and Education

Michael Legan, Site Manager and Lead Preparator

Luke Kavaloski, Groundskeeper

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Stacy O'Reilly, Chair

Rosie Kellogg, Treasurer

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Nora Kaitfors

Sharon Loudon

Meena Mangalvedhekar

Beth McGuire

Sheila Mozayeny-Hale

Kevin Riach

Heather Rutledge

We'd like to give a special thanks to former Board member Sara Rothholz Weiner and Sharon Loudon for their time as Interim Executive Director and Interim Art Director in 2023!

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