Call for Artists
Farm/Art DTour 2020
A Wormfarm Institute Initiative

Where artists explore the timeless connection between land and people

OVERVIEW
The Farm/Art DTour is a 50-mile, self-guided drive through the beautiful working lands of Sauk County, Wisconsin, punctuated by Art Works (large-scale temporary art installations), Field Notes (interpretive signage), pasture performances, roadside poetry, local food, and more. The DTour is part of Fermentation Fest - A Live Culture Convergence including classes, workshops, and art events celebrating live culture in all its forms.

The Wormfarm Institute will commission 6-8 original Art Works to be installed along the DTour route. The work will be on public view from September 25-October 4, 2020. We seek artists (individuals or teams) who are interested in creating site-responsive works that engage with the agricultural landscape, the farmers, landowners, and surrounding rural communities. This is an opportunity to contribute to a unique and exciting project with an established reputation for its innovative approach to creative placemaking.

We seek to curate a diverse group of artists for projects that respond to the land on the edge of Wisconsin’s Driftless Region. Successful past projects have ranged from fixed objects, to interactive environments, to work activated by natural processes. Some have invited hands-on participation, utilized existing agricultural infrastructure, or were installed in/on buildings in the small towns along the route. The viewers (DTourists) are usually traveling by car and guided by a map, so proposals should be large-scale and visually compelling. Artists are responsible for both installation and de-installation (volunteer assistance possible) and will have about two weeks to install and one week to de-install. Unless other arrangements are made, artists retain ownership of the work.

This project has been supported by The National Endowment for the Arts, Wisconsin Arts Board, ArtPlace America, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and The Educational Foundation of America. The Wormfarm Institute, the event’s presenter, is an award-winning non-profit organization with the mission to integrate culture and agriculture along the rural/urban continuum. This will be the 8th year of the DTour (now a biennial) and the first year along a new route.

VISION  “Art Amplifies what landscape quietly asserts” - Max Garland, past Wisconsin Poet Laureate

This project, which began as a celebration of food, farming and rural life, has revealed itself to be a powerful tool for bringing people together across perceived divides. Rooted in an arts and culture focus, we emphasize the cross-sector collaboration necessary to build a vibrant region that values both its rural and urban parts.

In ecology there is a concept called “edge environments” – areas between one sort of landscape and another, where ecosystems overlap. These edges tend to have more diversity (and therefore more hardiness) than either of the adjoining environments alone. These mixed-use zones, both literal and conceptual, characterize the DTour experience and allow us to see new possibilities for our land, our work, and our communities.

The DTour is an invitation for people, both rural and urban dwellers, to follow a path and take a closer look at a rural community and landscape where farming plays a central though changing role.

BUDGET
Wormfarm will fund projects at two levels: $5000 and $2500. Six to eight proposals will be selected from a combination of funding levels. Please indicate on your application which funding level you are applying for. An itemized budget is not required for Phase One.

APPLICATION DEADLINE
Email application to info@wormfarminstitute.org by March 10, 5 p.m. CST. Please include DTour Proposal in the subject line.
SELECTION PROCESS

Artists will be chosen to participate through a two-part selection process. Initial proposals will be reviewed by a jury consisting of the organizers, past DTour artists, and regional and national arts professionals. Up to 15 finalists will be selected and notified by March 30. Finalists will be expected to attend a two-day Orientation in Sauk County, WI in May.

The Orientation aims to deepen the participants’ understanding of the event, the landscape, the current state of agriculture as well as provide an opportunity for artists to meet with event organizers, landowners, past DTour artists, and one another. The weekend will include a tour of the DTour route, shared meals, and ample opportunity to share ideas and ask questions. Meals and housing will be provided. It is our hope that this experience has value independent of being selected for this year. Participants will receive a stipend to help cover travel expenses and subsequently develop a full proposal. Afterwards, finalists will have two weeks to develop a full proposal.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Artistic excellence
- Visual Impact
- Demonstrated ability to realize
- Community Engagement
- Feasibility in the context of the larger event
- Curatorial vision

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please respond with:
- One page Letter of Interest including contact information
- Preliminary Project Concept indicating funding level, not to exceed one page
- Concept drawings or visual references
- 8-10 images of applicant’s recent work demonstrating capacity to realize large-scale outdoor project
- Resume or C.V. not to exceed two pages.

Format:
- Letter of Interest, Project Concept, Drawings, Resume/C.V. should be saved as a single PDF or Word doc.
- Images must be JPEG format, “high” or “fine” quality, file size not to exceed 2 MB per image.
- Image file names should include artist’s last name and be numbered, e.g. “Smith-01.”

Things to keep in mind when developing your proposal:
- Wisconsin weather in the fall can be unpredictable, so plan for rain, cold and high winds.
- The landscape can dwarf even the most ambitious projects.
- DTour audience interaction ranges from drive-by to direct engagement with installations. Keep both scenarios in mind as you develop your idea.
- The DTour runs primarily along farm fields, but also includes woods, wetlands, and small towns. Most sites however, will be located in hay fields or pasture.
- The DTour is expected to attract 20,000-30,000 people from near and far.

TIMELINE

March 10: Email Applications due by 5 p.m. CST
March 30: Finalists selected, notification sent to applicants
May 2-3: Finalist Orientation in Sauk County, WI
May 20: Final Proposals due
June 1: DTour artists chosen, notified
June: Contracts with selected artists, final site selection
September 11-23: Installation of Art Work
Sept 25 – Oct 4: Farm/Art DTour + Fermentation Fest
October 5 – 19: De-installation of work
Articles and images from previous years:

- Fermentation Fest Facebook
- New York Times: A Celebration of Fermentation
- JSOnline: Farm Art DTour Marries Agriculture and Culture
- Arts.gov: Exploring Our Town – Farm Art DTour
- ArtPlaceAmerica.org: Wormfarm Institute Food Chain
- TheAmericanScholar.org: Pungent Metaphors
- JSOnline: Wisconsin’s Driftless Area

Current context / news

- The 10 counties that will decide the 2020 election
- AGWeb.com: Wisconsin Loses 818 Dairies

More about Wormfarm

https://wormfarminstitute.org/about-the-wormfarm/about
https://www.fermentationfest.com/

Reflections from past DTour artists:

"This project was one of the most ambitious I've undertaken in many ways (technical, community engagement, multiple media). It was largely successful from my standpoint and provided an opportunity to try some things I've been wanting to do in a very supportive setting. I hope to keep doing projects that have the same level of direct interaction/collaboration with the viewers, who really helped create the piece."

Joshua Pablo Rosenstock, MA

“The intersection of art, culture, and local agriculture that is so unique to Fermentation Fest made the Farm/Art DTour the perfect place to develop an idea that we’d had for a long time: to create an installation that, through the fun of cooking and eating dumplings, would draw a temporary community of practice together from the visitors on the tour.”

Emily Stover & Molly Balcom Raleigh, MN

"I love the mix. Especially as the mix is encouraged by the map listings - there's not a separation or ranking of pro to vernacular, so it's up to the audience to decide what they respond to, not an audience being told what to think about each one. Love it."

Erika Nelson, KS

"All in all, I love the Wormfarm staff and am so impressed with your attention to detail and your ability to work with complexity, uncertainty and the crazy needs of all of the artists and variables."

Brenda Baker, WI