

PRESS RELEASE

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Dan Lawrie International Sculpture Collection Commissions Minnesota Sculptor

PILOT MOUND, MINN./BURLINGTON, ONT. – July 15, 2016

The Dan Lawrie International Sculpture Collection, hosted within Canada’s largest botanical garden has commissioned Minnesota artist Karl Unnasch to create a permanent sculpture.

Joining the collection in July 2016 as the largest installation in its history, *Bloodroot* – consisting of a 25-foot fabricated steel framework inset with backlit opalescent glass – depicts one of Spring’s most graceful and unique endemic wildflowers. Native to Eastern North America, *Sanguinaria canadensis* is also found in Minnesota and held special allure for the Artist in his youth.

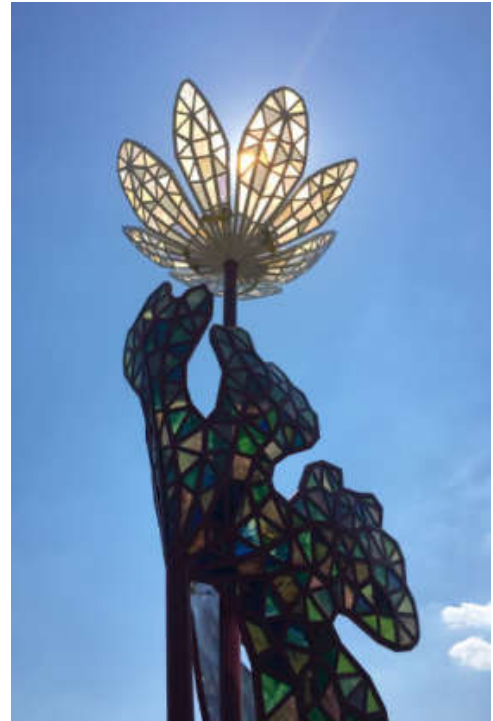


Photo credit: Jeremy Freiburger

Unnasch states, “The bloodroot plant holds a special place in my heart as my first acquaintance with visual language. My earliest memory is when my mother snapped off a bloodroot leaf in Spring from her flower bed and showed me how to make my first marks with its orange sap on my forearm.”

Unnasch had also consulted Canada’s renowned ethno-botanist, Nancy Turner, in his research on the bloodroot plant: Known for its medicinal, spiritual and aesthetic properties by First Nations people, bloodroot upholds a noteworthy historical and reverent status. One of the first woodland plants to bloom in spring, its unique structure contrasts with other more innocuous plants and its delicate exterior masks a red-hued poisonous sap within.

The detailed metalwork on *Bloodroot* was painstakingly executed by another Minnesota sculptor, Sam Spiczka, in collaboration with Unnasch.

“This piece is so photogenic,” states Jeremy Freiburger, Chief Connector and Cultural Strategist at Cobalt Connects, the non-profit arts service organization which manages Lawrie’s collection and a number of other public art programs in the region. Unnasch was selected from an international call which brought 50+ options to the table. Unnasch’s *Burnt Matchstick* sculpture, a 40-foot work currently on exhibit in the Rochester Art Center’s Remick Sculpture Garden, was visually stunning and the group commissioned a new work based on that style with a context relevant to the Royal Botanical Gardens.

Although negotiations are underway to keep that work in Rochester following the end of the exhibition on August 31, 2016, Unnasch is also entertaining other inquiries so its future is still unclear.

Bloodroot may be visited at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington, Ontario – between Toronto and Hamilton at Lake Ontario’s westernmost point.

About the Artist

Karl Unnasch focuses primarily on creating public and architectural art, incorporating stained glass and sculpture into his work. Nestled close to his farmstead roots in Southeastern Minnesota, his works highlight overlooked objects and concepts inherently personal to his rural experiences. Unnasch’s smaller-scale work has been exhibited as far as Europe and acclaimed in publications as esteemed as the New York Times and Art in London Magazine, while his larger-scale, award-winning public art has been featured on prominent U.S. and even international media including NBC’s ‘Today’ show and Voice of America. For more information, visit <http://www.karlunnasch.com/>.

About the Royal Botanical Gardens

Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) in Burlington, Ontario is the largest botanical garden in Canada, a National Historic Site, and registered charitable organization with a mandate to bring together people, plants and nature.

In 2013, local businessman Dan Lawrie made a 10-year commitment to donating sculpture to Royal Botanical Gardens which has created The International Sculpture Collection. For more information, visit <https://www.rbg.ca/>.

About Cobalt Connects

Cobalt Connects is a non-profit arts service organization that connects creative communities; it develops innovative facilities, projects and partnerships through its programs. For more information, visit <http://cobaltconnects.ca/>.

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