

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Reedsburg Acquiring Unique Public Art Piece for New Downtown Park

Reedsburg, Wis. - April 16, 2014

A new downtown park in Reedsburg, Wis. will feature as its centerpiece neither a tank nor a Civil War canon, but something much more unique: A bona-fide retired harvesting combine, clad almost fully in stained glass panels and illuminated from within.

The piece, titled *Ruminant (the Grand Masticator)*, is the brainchild of Midwestern artist Karl Unnasch, whose public art has recently been featured on NBC's 'Today' show and *Voice of America* international broadcast news.

Ruminant was originally one of seven temporary professional art installations set up in October 2013 along the Farm/Art DTour route – a 50-mile self-guided scenic back roads tour through the hills and valleys of Sauk County in conjunction with Reedsburg's [Fermentation Fest](#). Positioned in an open cornfield along rural County Highway F – where the effect of its night-time illumination was particularly striking – it quickly became popular with locals and visitors alike. Said Joann Mundth Douglas, founder of Reedsburg *ArtsLink* – a fledgling local arts non-profit – and head of the *Ruminant* Acquisition Committee, "Karl's piece made a big impression on our community ... (it) drew a lot of attention and locals really identified with it as a monument to Reedsburg's agricultural heritage."

Ruminant was designed as a multi-tiered homage to the notion of the 'harvest' and becomes a beacon of discovery for its viewers, offering ample opportunity for creative interpretation. The references to 'rumination' – both in its literal and in its metaphoric sense – percolate downward from the anthropomorphic whole to the themes found within the stained glass panels adorning the body. Each of these panels is also a unique work of art, some of which play with the concept of 'chewing' in its various forms, and others of which use harvest-oriented or agriculturally-themed images to depict historical and cultural musings and even raw humor.

Unsurprisingly, *Ruminant* created waves well beyond Reedsburg as well. The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis featured a lengthy [article](#) about the piece in its blog, and the Soap Factory – the largest independent contemporary art gallery in Minneapolis/St. Paul – published an [interview](#) with Unnasch based on the piece. Multiple agriculturally oriented publications have also done interest stories on *Ruminant*, and even John Deere, the manufacturer of the combine, featured it in their company newsletter.



Although the associated Fermentation Fest only lasted for 10 days in early October 2013, popular demand kept *Ruminant* on display in the field until March 2014. During that time, the Reedsburg *ArtsLink* initiative formed a committee headed by Joann Mundth Douglas to permanently acquire the piece for the City of Reedsburg.

The plan is to place *Ruminant* in a new city park to be converted from a vacant lot space located just opposite the Reedsburg Area Chamber of Commerce, where it is intended to become a Reedsburg landmark and to attract curious visitors to the city. Says Mundth Douglas, “Karl’s piece is so compelling, we believe that it will both distinguish Reedsburg and attract visitors year round for many years to come.”

Community members in the Ruminant Acquisition Committee have already raised over half of the funding needed to acquire Ruminant, and have just launched their private fundraising efforts for the balance. For more information about donating, one may contact Joann Mundth Douglas or visit the Karl Unnasch website at www.karlunnasch.com.

More images and details for *Ruminant (the Grand Masticator)* can be found on its Project Page at <http://www.karlunnasch.com/project-pages/2013.10-ruminant-stained-glass-harvesting-combine.htm>.



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About the Ruminant Acquisition Project:

The Ruminant Project is a Reedsburg *ArtsLink* initiative. Reedsburg *ArtsLink* is a catalyst for connecting creative people of all disciplines within and beyond the Reedsburg community to strengthen “the culture” of arts and culture in the Reedsburg Area.

About the Artist:

Karl Unnasch's work has been exhibited as far as Europe and has been acclaimed in publications as esteemed as The New York Times and Art in London Magazine. In 2013, Unnasch was also counted among the Artists of the Year by the Minneapolis *CityPages* Magazine. While continuing to exhibit, Unnasch today focuses primarily on public and architectural art, most typically incorporating stained glass and sculpture into his work. Over the last half a decade, he has installed notable works at prominent locations including educational facilities, medical wings, banks, theatre lobbies and public gathering spaces. For more information, visit www.karlunnasch.com. Or, visit the Project Page for *Ruminant (the Grand Masticator)* at <http://www.karlunnasch.com/project-pages/2013.10-ruminant-stained-glass-harvesting-combine.htm>.

Contact:

Joann Mundth Douglas
Head of the Ruminant Acquisition Committee
E6180 Churchill Road
Reedsburg, WI 53959
608-393-2795
joannmundthdouglas@gmail.com

Contact:

Karl Unnasch, Artist
31314 Hwy. 30
Chatfield, MN 55923
507-272-0452
karl@karlunnasch.com
www.karlunnasch.com

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