

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Artist Lights Up Wisconsin Back-Road**

Reedsburg, WI, October 4, 2013

Southeast Minnesota artist Karl Unnasch is lighting up the countryside this weekend near Reedsburg, Wisconsin with an ambitious art installation: A harvesting combine clad almost fully in stained glass.

Resting nonchalantly in an open cornfield along rural County Highway F, *Ruminant (the Grand Masticator)* is quite a sight even by day – but will be particularly impressive at night, when backlighting behind each of the thirty-four stained glass panels will make the entire installation seem to glow from within.

As one of seven professional art installations 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 – the Unnasch piece is an homage to the notion of the 'harvest'.

As is typical for Unnasch, the piece is also a puzzle: a multi-tiered play on words and concepts. Says Unnasch about his piece: "Reverent and referential, *Ruminant (the Grand Masticator)* acts as a beacon of contemplation that mashes up societal concepts whilst gnawing at orthodoxy."

Just as the combine "chews up" the cornfield, so is the onlooker compelled to ruminate on each of the individual stained glass panels to determine its relevance. *Ruminant (the Grand Masticator)* plays with the concept of "chewing" in the panels of the cab, beginning with its "face" – a close-up of a mustached man chomping with gusto onto a cob of corn – and ranging from Pitts' rendition of PacMan to a kid chewing on crayons to a simple and stark image of a termite. Also in this set is "Chew", a comic book character with special empathic powers activated by chewing.

Other images associated with "the harvest" are represented by various scenes from harvest-oriented artwork, including an image from one of Benton's WPA paintings, 1930s depictions of Batman and Robin in the Victory Garden from *World's Finest No. 11* comic, and a cartoon version of the famous American Gothic painting featuring earthworms with a pitchfork and watering can as the farm couple. The set of

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panels on the corn-head (“teeth”) of the combine showcases a series of traditional rural hand-tools as depicted in Sloane’s *A Museum of Early American Tools*, while others on the rear are sets of silly agricultural puns. Many of the individual panels will be available for sale following the festival; interested persons may contact the artist directly through his website.

Ruminant (the Grand Masticator) can be found five miles north of Reedsburg, WI along the Farm/Art DTour route on County F from October 4 – 13, 2013. The John Deere model 6600 combine, provided courtesy of Manthey Salvage in Mauston, contemplates the world from a cornfield owned by Ron and Judy Churchill. Ron Churchill and sons Keith and Kory assisted Unnasch with set-up.

The Farm/Art DTour is a part of Fermentation Fest – A Live Culture Convergence organized by Wormfarm Institute and made possible in part through support from ArtPlace America, National Endowment for the Arts, the Wisconsin Arts Board and Sauk County UW Extension Arts and Culture Committee with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts. Details about the Fermentation Fest and Farm/Art DTour are available at <http://www.fermentationfest.com>. Details about Wormfarm Institute are available at <http://www.wormfarminstitute.org>.

About the Artist

Karl Unnasch works out of a re-invigorated 1800s mercantile in rural Pilot Mound, MN. His work has been exhibited as far as Europe and acclaimed in publications including the New York Times and Art in London Magazine.

Unnasch currently 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, theatre lobbies and public gathering spaces, in addition to businesses and private homes. This upcoming holiday season, Unnasch will be lighting up a downtown plaza in Silver Spring, MD, just outside of Washington, D.C., with a holiday tree comprised entirely of toys and sporting goods, and illuminated from within through the colored plastic toy panels in a faux stained glass fashion.

More about Karl Unnasch can be found on his website at <http://www.karlunnasch.com>.

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