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Grand Marais Art Colony
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Art Colony Adopts New Mission Statement & Refined Programming

Throughout the Grand Marais Art Colony's 76 year history the organization's programming and mission statement have seen many evolutions. The initial goal of the Art Colony was connected with the Minnesota School of Art (MSA), what is now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD), and then continued into the 80s as a private business endeavor run by Birney Quick and Byron Bradley. The purpose in those early years was to create space for MSA artists to come and work in the dynamic North Shore landscape. Birney, a professor at MSA, had visited art colonies on the east coast that gained their inspiration from European art colonies established at the turn of the twentieth century, and deemed the North Shore a perfect place to establish one. Programs lasted from six to eight weeks over the summer months and along with hosting visual artists, other visiting artists included writers and musicians, as well as dance and theater troupes.

In 1984, when the Art Colony became a nonprofit, the mission statement was fleshed out around a series of objectives, including providing quality instruction, support structures for artists, and program activities that would encourage community participation and education in the arts. Other goals throughout the years included nurturing a vital arts presence in Grand Marais, celebrating artistic freedom and fostering an understanding of the arts. Key to this list of goals was to add to the quality of life through cultural enrichment in our region, which continues to be a core Art Colony value.

COVID-19 gave the organization's board and staff the unanticipated gift of time to plan strategically. In 2020 and 2021 the Art Colony created and evaluated a series of projections about the organization's present activities as well as its future vitality. The following conclusions were arrived at:

- The Art Colony needs to limit, deepen and mature its program elements and commitments.
- The Art Colony needs to refine and be clear about the resources it can sustainably offer to artists.



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- The Art Colony will always serve several audiences and will remain a diverse arts organization both connected to its local community as well as to its broader arts community.

Out of this same process, the following key goals were identified as Art Colony guiding principles:

The Art Colony is an organization placed within the context of the Great Lakes region, that

- Provides a place for artistic engagement that is by nature, physical, intellectual, philosophical, and aesthetic. This space is activated by the coming together of people who work in various disciplines and who exhibit and honor a diversity of thought and outlook.
- Coalesces around art and the issues that matter to and address the concerns of the Great Lakes region and its peoples.
- Is committed to a collaborative approach toward students, instructors, artists, colleagues, and peer organizations.
- Through discussion, sharing work, and demonstration of process, fosters interactions that encourage critical thinking and experimentation.
- Brings today's art, artists, and aesthetic dialogue to a small community.

With this context in mind, the Art Colony board and staff are pleased to introduce its new, refined and adopted mission statement, approved by the Board of Directors as of April 24, 2023:

ART COLONY MISSION STATEMENT

*The Grand Marais Art Colony fosters the exploratory growth
and experimental power of contemporary artists*





Please see the following list of FAQs:

What does contemporary artist mean?

Contemporary artists are simply put, artists who are currently living and actively making artwork in the present. Via their artistic process, they are responding to and interpreting current cultural issues and aesthetic questions.

What skill levels does the Art Colony serve?

The Art Colony continues to serve artists at all skill levels, from beginner to advanced, considering its role to be that of a resourcing activator, helping artists and arts learners take the next step in their learning and artistic process.

Does the Art Colony run classes year round?

Through a series of financial projections and assessments, it was confirmed that offering year-round classes in all mediums was not a sustainable approach for the Art Colony. There are still a number of fall/winter/spring classes that the Art Colony does offer, particularly in ceramics, printmaking, and youth. Most of these classes are multi-week. The main consecutive-day class season is May - October.

Does the Art Colony host a Member Show?

MUSE exhibition will be held in 2023 as a 12 x 12 exhibition at Studio 21, running alongside Art Along the Lake and up through Moose Madness weekend. This exhibition will be open for anyone in the Art Colony arts community, including members, students, instructors, residents and participants will all create and submit work on a 12 x 12-inch surface. *More details forthcoming.*

What kind of residencies does the Art Colony offer?

The Art Colony offers fee-based group and individual residencies that last from 1 to 4 weeks in length. The goal remains to keep these fees affordable for artists and supplement with a scholarship program (see below).





The Art Colony also offers three supported residency programs, which means that the participating artists receive any of the following: free studio space, free lodging, a stipend for their time:

- The Graham Studio Residency is a nine-month juried residency open to two Cook County artists who have lived in the county for at least one year. This program is funded by the Blandin Foundation and works as a launching pad for these two artists, giving them time, space, and compensation to do their art and make goals toward sustainability post-residency.
- The Public Functionary residency is in partnership with Public Functionary, a two-year BIPOC+ studio program in the Northrup King building. Through this residency emerging artists gain experience in applying for and attending a residency, and build their resume. The Art Colony hosts 5 juried artists for 10 days in February.
- The Art Colony's two-week juried residency is open to two artists, one working in the Printmaking studio and one in the Pill Box studio.

Does the Art Colony offer free programming and bring art to the community?

The Art Colony continues to build out its Entry Points program, which offers free and nominally priced artist talks, open studios, demonstrations, and mini-classes to the public.

The Art Colony also offers free programming through its exhibitions, its annual Arts Festival as well as during the North Shore Readers and Writers Festival. Free art activities for all ages also occur during the David Hahn Memorial Art Days, over Moose Madness weekend.

Does the Art Colony offer scholarships or work-study?

Yes to both! The Art Colony has both need and non-need based scholarships for youth and adults, as well as a work-study program that provides class credit for volunteer hours. We also have recently established a residency scholarship.

