

FRANCONIA

sculpture park



2024 ANNUAL REPORT



LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ALEX LEGEROS

Joy, peace, togetherness, with a kick of inspiration. Just as nature provides in abundance what we need at any given time, Franconia Sculpture Park has a bottomless well of these magic ingredients. What's a year like when everyone you meet smiles?

In 2024, we took time to invest in these forces. Take a look in this report at the variety of strategies we've deployed to create relationships between contemporary art, nature, and communities alive today.

Along the way, I see sparks! Franconia gives folks with big ideas the freedom, time, space, tools, and connections to materialize a better world. Every day, every activity, every interaction at the park contains a welcome and positive energy.

We are reaching towards fully using all Franconia has to share. Donors are making a huge difference at Franconia because, after nearly thirty years, our mission is clear and money makes it possible. Your financial contribution is what powers our nonprofit to pay artists, work with communities, and operate a nationally-recognized residency program. Please help us fill the residency house to capacity, offer cool education programs year-round, and ensure all who work here have decent equipment and facilities. You'll love what happens, and imagine how many others can feel the same way thanks to your support!

I'm also proud to acknowledge Franconia's lineage of leaders whose strength keeps Franconia pointed in the right direction. This year we welcome Lann Briel as our new Board Chair. Lann is an independent film artist and media content creator, as well as a leader in the Twin Cities' arts nonprofit ecosystem. Lann has been a program officer at the Jerome Foundation, following work with Forecast Public Art, Twin Cities Public Television, and as the coordinator for MN Artists, a program of the Walker Art Center. A member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe, she is an advocate for Indigenous rights and is interested in advancing Indigenous art and artisans in film and contemporary art. I am thankful that my graduate school colleague from the U of MN's Arts and Cultural Leadership program joined me in bringing the best Franconia can be to life in our next chapter.

All of us together continue to take risks, discover new ways of existing, give back to the future, and enjoy being here, today. By connecting through the best parts of ourselves and our planet, we're creating a better world.

Cheers,
Alex Legeros

Executive Director



Alex Legeros with Franconia's recent Board Chairs: Lann Briel (2024+), Stacy O'Reilly (2021-2024), Dorothy Goldie (2018-2021), and Amy McKinney (2015-2018).

NEW! ARTISTS-IN-LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

New in 2024, Franconia launched a residency program that welcomes the next generation of creative leaders to use Franconia as a palette. Artists-in-Leadership are given a financial stipend and the agency to shape Franconia through their own lens, addressing a wide range of topics important to contemporary cultural organizations.



Fletcher Wolfe

Fletcher Wolfe (they/them) is a puppeteer, educator, and improviser based in Minneapolis. Their work is rooted in expressive absurdity.

Fletcher organized multiple puppet-centered activities at Franconia throughout 2024. They hosted paper mache workshops where participants created cardboard versions of some iconic Franconia Sculptures that were then part of the Karl Oskar Days and Wannigan Days parades.

For the Midsummer Pride Party, Fletcher and their collaborators performed Queer Puppet Clash, a live comedy show that spun tales of epic puppet battles and dramatic puppet romance.



María José Castillo

María José Castillo (they/them) is a Colombian artist and graphic designer based in Minneapolis. Through printmaking, book design, illustration and installation, María José explores language and communication.

In 2024, María José tackled a huge project for the park: creating new informational signage and sculpture signage. New welcome and notice signs are already installed by the Visitor Center as shown in the photo above. By summer 2025, every sculpture in the park will have new didactic signage that will be easy to read and able to withstand Minnesota's extreme weather!

Ivonne Jasso Yáñez

Ivonne Yáñez (she/her) is an interdisciplinary artist and fashion designer from Mexico City. Ivonne's current artistic practice leans towards creating immersive installations and soft sculpture.

Ivonne played a big role in organizing the 2024 Franconia Art & Artists Celebration. She planned a successful Artist Market in the Education Center that included 10+ artist vendors, hands-on screenprinting for visitors as well as live music.



NEW! PRAIRIE ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Torey Erin

2024 marked the first year of Franconia's **Prairie Artist Residency**. Twin Cities-based artist Torey Erin was selected for this flexible Residency program, and spent long days studying our prairie and developing community engagement events.

Torey organized two nature-based workshops, a sunset concert and projection event with ambient music group More Light, and concluded her residency with Star Field: A prairie seeding dance party.



Star Field was an event that had a lasting impact on participants and Franconia alike. Torey and volunteers tilled one acre of turf in Franconia's overflow parking lot, preparing it for seeding. The topsoil, along with scrap hardwood and decomposing brush, was sculpted into a traditional German raised garden bed called a Hugelkultur mound, which will provide renewing rich soils for future years. During the event, people broadcasted seeds of asteraceae and danced them into the land to a quadraphonic soundtrack by DJs Ian Babineau and Paul Crary.

MUSIC @ FRANCONIA

This summer, Franconia staff and volunteers worked around the clock to build a brand new performance stage behind the Commons building. The many performances we hosted on the new stage were a joyful celebration of the surrounding prairie, our local community, and the summer sun. In August, hundreds of indie music fans flocked to the park to see Jeremy Messersmith, Mike Kota, she's green, and Daphne Jane. The back lawn overflowed with picnic blankets and lawn chairs as visitors enjoyed live music in the wide open prairie.

At Art & Artists in September, Franconia hosted the Oshkii Giizhik singers, a community-based group of Native American women singers from the Fond du Lac/Duluth area. And at Puppets in the Park in October, Mexica Yolotl wowed visitors with traditional Aztec drumming and dancing, celebrating pre-Hispanic history and heritage.



5 MINUTE FILM FEST

2024 was a big year for our **Annual Franconia 5 Minute Film Festival!** Due to unfavorable weather, we screened the 5th Annual 5 Minute Film Festival inside the Driscoll Education Center, and it was packed to the brim with eager viewers! This was the first year we were able to screen the festival at a second location: Trylon Cinema in Minneapolis.

Through a grant from the East Central Regional Arts Council, we were able to give all 15 finalists a cash prize of at least \$100!



EDUCATION

At Franconia Sculpture Park, we are dedicated to providing accessible arts education to people of all ages. Group visits & tours, free & paid art workshops, and three joyful weeks of camp every summer form the core of Franconia's educational programming. This year, over 3,000 students visited Franconia as part of a group. Franconia provided low-cost guided tours to nearly one third of these students, introducing them to contemporary art by world-class artists.

Franconia's spring workshop series featured classes on natural dyeing, papermaking, printmaking, beading, and more, all offered on a sliding scale. Free art workshops at events throughout the year served over 1,000 visitors, encouraging expression and exploration for people of all ages.



2,800 students served through field trips

1,020 people attended our free drop-in workshops

220 people attended our all-ages spring art classes



EXHIBITIONS

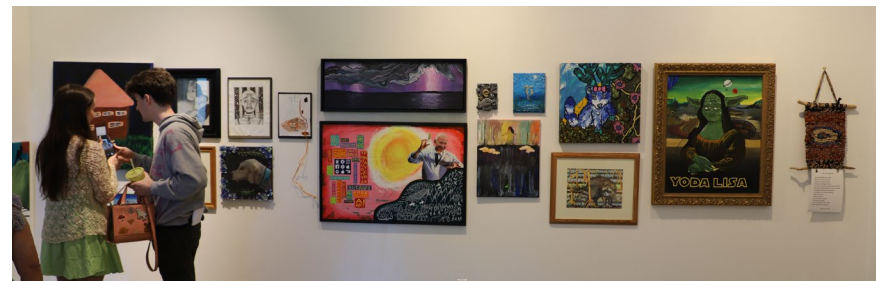
In 2024, Franconia Sculpture Park curated and hosted four unique gallery exhibitions in the Mardag Gallery.

The Art of Heather Friedli Heather Friedli

4/23/24 – 5/27/24

Franconia Sculpture Park was proud to present *The Art of Heather Friedli*, showcasing Franconia's first Artist-in-Residence of 2024.

Heather Friedli's contemporary impressionist oil paintings, characterized by bold brushwork and vibrant colors, illuminate scenes of cloudscares, water, and native flora. Rooted in her family's Native American and Mexican heritage, her art seamlessly intertwines with the landscapes she inhabits. Heather is often immersed in the wilderness when creating, taking her paints outside to capture the liveliness of nature. Her art is a powerful synthesis of her deep love for and experiences within the natural world, embodying the beauty, rhythm, and color of the land.



First on the Wall A group exhibition of emerging artists

6/2/24 – 6/30/24

New this year, and with the support of the East Central Regional Arts Council, Franconia invited artists of all ages to enter their first work into a professional gallery exhibition for a show titled *First on the Wall*. This show echoed the spirit of Franconia, giving artists their first big chance to share their values, ideas, talents, and work. Spanning 2D, 3D, and digital media, 63 artists participated, each receiving a modest cash prize and the chance to be seen by over 6,000 attendees in June 2024.

QUEER GEOGRAPHIES

Sebastian Duncan-Portuondo

7/7/24-7/29/24

Sebastian Duncan-Portuondo's **QUEER GEOGRAPHIES** was created in response to the Pulse Nightclub Shooting in Orlando, Florida on June 12, 2016 – where the victims were primarily Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Latinos/as. A slideshow of photographs featured disco mosaic rocks referencing gay clubs, images of the rubble at Pulse where clubgoers escaped the shooter through holes busted in the walls, and rocks that come from the land. More than 150 participants engaged in workshops during Midsummer and Pride month, creating a new series of disco mosaic rocks, installed as a cairn in the dark gallery. The work now shines its disco mosaic lights on the Franconia Commons Building at its location near the building's entrance.



The Excerpts of Earth

Raheleh Filsoofi

8/11/24-9/22/24

In the summer of 2024, artist Raheleh Filsoofi concluded her residency with a captivating exhibition, **The Excerpts of Earth**, in the Mardag Gallery. This immersive experience explored a sensory dialogue between the artist and the earth, expressed through clay, sound, and poetry.

The exhibition featured ceramic vessels crafted from clay gathered at various sites in Nashville, where Filsoofi is based. Complementing these works, soundscapes recorded during her journey from Nashville to Franconia, as well as during her residency, played alongside her recited poetry, forming an auditory map of her travels. As part of their residency, Raheleh and her partner, Reza Filsoofi, hosted a vibrant community music circle, sharing the rhythms of home through drums they brought with them.



MIDSUMMER PRIDE PARTY

Building on years of queer-inclusive Midsummer festivals, Franconia hosted its first ever Midsummer Pride party in June 2024 for folks and families throughout the region.



Puppeteers from Queer Puppet Clash filled the Education Center with uproarious laughter, as audiences watched life-size puppets full of personality enter the ring.

Visitors enjoyed a jubilant drag show, hosted by Quinn Tessential and featuring performances by Ondine Cella, Salty Fears, Megan the Maneater, and Mexica Xadows.

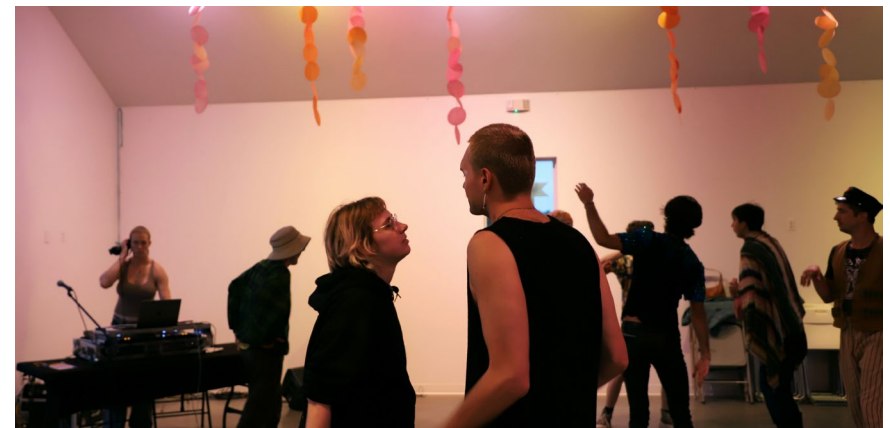


Above: Sebastian Duncan-Portuondo hosted a free disco mosaic rock workshop as part of his Queer Geographies project in honor of victims of the Pulse Nightclub shooting.



Left: Visitors created flower crowns from native prairie blooms, led by Iris Redland of Thunderstorm Floral.

Below: DJ Dazzle provided the tunes to close out the night!



PUPPETS IN THE PARK HALLOWEEN HAYRIDE

For the second year in a row, Franconia hosted the popular autumnal event **Puppets in the Park Halloween Hayride** in collaboration with In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre!

This year, we welcomed more performers to the event! Performers from Hijinks Stilts came out to roam amongst the puppets, and dance group Mexica Yolotl joined us to perform traditional Aztec dances and drumming.

Attendees were entertained to the max: the event featured a hayride of the park, a crafting workshop, a scavenger hunt, free pumpkin-carving, face painting, and a special performance by Mexica Yolotl.

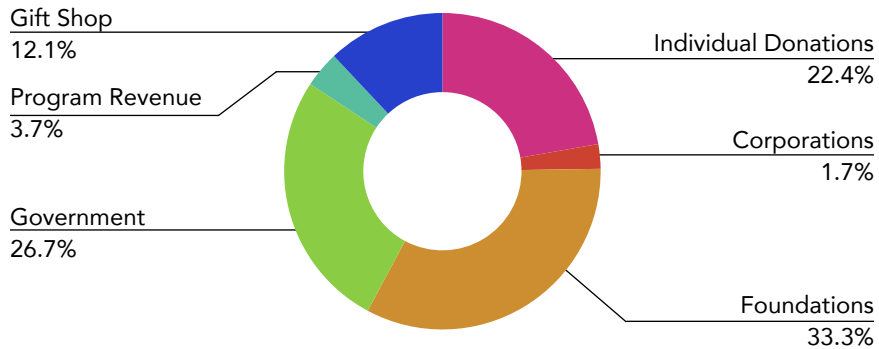


PRELIMINARY 2024 FINANCES

This preliminary information represents activities from the first eleven months of 2024. Copies of Franconia's audited and board-approved financial statements are always available upon request.

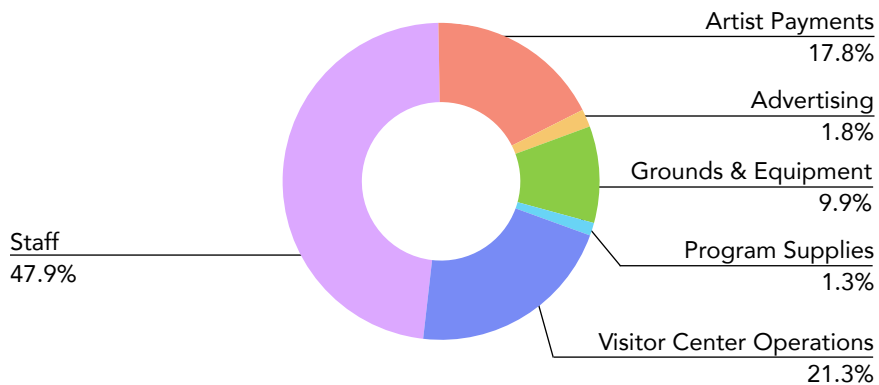
2024 Operating Revenues

January-November Total = \$630,403.15



2024 Operating Expenses

January-November Total = \$686,329.32



Scott Stafford and Benny Olk perform "Only Time" at the 2024 Franconia Art & Artists Celebration

FRANCONIA STAFF

Alex Legeros, Executive Director
 Sarah Buezis, Manager of Public Programs and Education
 Michael Legan, Site Manager and Lead Preparator
 Jane Borstad, Manager of Marketing and Design
 Ross Takahashi, Grant Writer
 Heather Mashuga, Rental Events Manager
 Alyssa Auten, Community Liason
 Linda French, Front Desk
 Kelsey Wenberg, Front Desk
 Lisa Pepper, Front Desk
 Luca Mertens, Front Desk
 Gavin Mashuga, Parking Attendant

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 Lann Briel
 Susan Clayton
 Nora Kaitfors
 Rosie Kellogg
 Sharon Loudon
 Meena Mangalvedhekar
 Beth McGuire
 Sheila Mozayeny-Hale
 Stacy O'Reilly
 Kevin Riach
 Heather Rutledge
 Jeremy Vitalis

THANK YOU ARTISTS!

Suzanne Lindgren
Ember Hasty
Heather Friedli
Torey Erin
Becca Cera
Allison Baker
Max Hautala
Alicia De La Cruz
Alexis Schramel
Maddy Bartsch
Christine (Zeni) Flauta
Kimberley Boustead
Jessie Merriam
Fletcher Wolfe
Sebastian Duncan Portuondo
Rosa Skrade
Allison Witzmann
Chloe Kasper
Chloe Kappel
Grace Murphy
Katie Gibbs
Amanda Meyer
Alyssa Voight
Julie Dahlberg
Ellie Stegmeir
Merlyn Zortman
Hailey Pomeroy
Clark Rowan
Diane Marie
Stuart Raymond
Quinn H.G
Tanáġidaŋ Tó Wīŋ
Misty Rowan
Daniel Wohlenhaus
Babylungs
Tony Juliano
Caroline Johnson
Inga Godsave
Harriet Godsave
Betsy Taylor
Addilyn Green
Linda French
Annelise Wright
Leisa Meeuwen-Ristuben
Kashmir Sprecher
Sarah Hample
Jeremy Bechtold
Zoe Korengold
Angel RempelEwert
Carter Hilde
Ztoninspired
Izzy Borowick

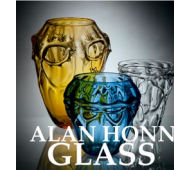
Nedo Kojic
Kim Reding-Kram
Charlie Carlson
Randi Merchant
Faith Curtis
Ella Bobzin
Cady Jacoby
Kendra Rick
Rachel B. Kalema
Panchita Artista
Miranda Johnson
Taryn Meister
Maryam Keshmiri
Shane D.
Day Svardahl
Finn Dutton
Imagine Youngquist
Cindy Bach
Diana Ché
Ethan Herrera
Aidan Herrera
Maya Modelli
Aashirya Nagendar
Marcy Nelson
Amy Rowan
Hawona Sullivan Janzen
Jillian Gryzlak
Amber Dohrenwend
Harper Steinbach
Justis Brokenrope
Jeremy Messersmith
Mike Kota
Zofia Smith
Liam Armstrong
Raines Lucas
Teddy Nordvold
Kevin Seebeck
Daphne Jane
Gary Ruschman
Maurice Fields
Justin Spenner
Caroline Kouma
Corissa Bussian
Galina Dordevic
Joshua Eidem
Joni Griffith
Jill Morgan
Nick Miller
Raheleh Filsoofi
Reza Filsoofi
Angie Hong
Marcie Rendon

Laurie Allmann
Alan Sparhawk
Dave Simonett
The Nunnery (Sarah)
Eamonn McLain
Sequoia Hauck
Merit Thursday
Ryan Stopera
Moira Villiard
Mikhayl Dominguez
Hend Al-Mansour
Grey Anderson
Juan Acevedo
Max Mueller
Caitlin Larson
Helen Hatch
natalia rocafuerte
Ruben Schneiderman
Sarah Abdel-Jelil
Daniel Lubi
Juliet Zuccola
Heidi Arneson
Jacob Docksey
Ivonne Jasso Yáñez
Fletcher Wolfe
María José Castillo
Fairouz Izlam
Meher Khan
Ben Merritt
Lou Faris
Melissa Nyberg
Samael Sullivan
Studio Fermin
Albert Chacon
Malini Basu
Nelson Nelson Liu
Shangyuan Chen
Marlena Myles
Scott Stafford
Benny Olk
Amy Harrison
Woody McBride
Tshab Her
Anna Light
Sage Phillips
Sarah Gustafson
Ian Babineau
Paul Cray
Ty Warbuck
Pearl Monroe
Jennifer Gallagher
Victoria Poeschl

Diana DeRosier
Abby Kosberg
Sara Tennis
Holle Brian
Pattie Forsberg
TJ Moran
Anne Hill
Petra Mertens

Ashlyn Diaz
Jes Reyes
Alyssa Freitas
And more!

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS!



2024 FRANCONIA FUN FACTS!

- Franconia's annual attendance increased by 28%
- 235 Artists got paid through Franconia programs
- We welcomed "Clarence the Crane Truck" to Franconia, a gift from Al and Cynthia Hammel
- Visitors to Franconia spent \$3.2 million at local businesses this year, according to a recent study by Americans for the Arts.
- There are 101 sculptures currently on display, but only "Are You Down?" by Michael Richards will be here permanently.



francoia.org
@francoiamn
info@francoia.org
651.257.6668

Scan this code to make
a donation to Franconia
Sculpture Park!

