

University of Wisconsin-Sea Grant 50th Anniversary Mural

WI Sea Grant celebrated its 50th anniversary year in 2022 and chose to partner with the City of Sturgeon Bay and



commission a piece of outdoor public art with a Great Lakes and science related theme to commemorate the occasion and raise awareness of Wisconsin's precious water resources. Sea Grant, headquartered at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and with field offices around the state, is a science-based organization focused on Great Lakes research, education, and outreach. It is part of a network of 34 Sea Grant programs

nationwide in coastal and Great Lakes states.

Sea Grant was an early and active participant in identifying challenges and opportunities to preserve and improve the waters of the Great Lakes. The artwork will commemorate those efforts and Sturgeon Bay is proud to host it.

The mural was created by artists Don Krumpos and Erin LaBonte of Yonder Studio in Algoma, WI. (see photo, right) in conjunction with scientist and educator <u>Jody Henseler</u> of Manitowoc Public Schools. The mural highlights human uses of the lake and species native to Lake Michigan. The mural focuses on psychedelic-looking algaes – the lake's unsung heroes and the base of our food chain. The "constellations" in



the night sky are, in fact, water molecules. Learn about the art/science project from the creators by scrolling to and watching the video "Behind The Scenes of Wisconsin Sea Grant's 50th Anniversary Mural" by Sea Grant videographer Bonnie Williston.

Read scientist Jody Henseler's message shared at the official unveiling ceremony:



Lake Michigan.

It is the water. Pure and simple.

Those magical, mystical molecules that mesmerize and enchant. The Lake is constantly changing her appearance -- from a deep dark foreboding blue to a warm summer-like seafoam green or a bone-chilling, icy-cold teal. All dependent on how the sunlight dances off her surface. It's that ever-changing look and mood of Lake

Michigan, as the sun's angles change its appearance throughout the day, that captures my attention.

But then my mind starts to wonder.
What is IN that water? A single drop of water?
A single drop of water from Lake Michigan -- our Great Lake?
What is in that?

Hopefully -- there are plankton. The heartbeat of our Lake's food web.

Phytoplankton & zooplankton. Psychedelic looking diatoms & cladocerans like the ones featured in our mural. Living throughout the water column -- from the surface to down over 100 feet deep.

They are the base of all the food sources for Lake Michigan creatures.

Microscopic.

Plankton are the lungs of our planet. Absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen.

As a matter of fact, they produce roughly *half of all the oxygen* on Earth. And did you know that depending on the species, up to a million plankton can fit in a single drop of water?

We need everyone to know about plankton!

We know how beautifully clear our Lake is now. Well, that comes at a cost.

Clarity in the water means very few plankton. And remember plankton are the heartbeat of our Lake's food web -- they are the base.

They keep the Lake ALIVE!

It is with organizations such as Sea Grant, who we celebrate 50 years with here today, and the Center for Great Lakes Literacy, who we need to continue leading the way in Great Lakes education. By quietly creating intersections like this mural -- marrying art & science -- ebbing & flowing into our consciousness.

So as much as water unifies all of us in our need for it. It is the general understanding and reverence for water, Lake Michigan water, that must unite us. Each of us values water in our own way -- whether you fish, paddle, sunbathe, swim, or paint, we need to be bonded together -- like water molecules held cohesively together to form a puddle -- a stream -- a Great Lake -- and an ocean.

It is our job to help preserve and save our Great Lake Michigan!

Thank You Sea Grant for 50 years of educating us & here's to at least 50 more!

Read more about the mural, its message, and its creators:

Science-Themed Artwork Unveiling in Sturgeon Bay City Hall

By Door County Pulse, Peninsula Pulse – October 6th, 2022



To celebrate its 50th-anniversary year, Wisconsin Sea Grant will unveil a work of public art on Saturday, Oct. 15, at the Sturgeon Bay City Hall, 421 Michigan St. The public is invited to an outdoor reception at 11:30 am – a meet-and-greet with the artists, remarks from city officials and light refreshments.

Wisconsin Sea Grant, which is headquartered at UW-Madison, has field offices in several communities around the state. The organization promotes the sustainable use of Great Lakes resources through

research, education, and outreach, and it's part of a national network of 34 Sea Grant programs in coastal and Great Lakes states.

Jim Hurley, Wisconsin Sea Grant's director, said those in the organization are excited to be celebrating this milestone. "Because our work benefits the Great Lakes and coastal communities, we wanted to do something special in a place like Sturgeon Bay," he said. "We've partnered with the city on a science-themed artwork that we hope inspires residents and visitors alike to learn more about Lake Michigan and its ecosystem."

Artists at work on the mural in late August 2022 (see photo, right). In the foreground, artist/science teacher Jody Henseler examines water samples collected that morning from Lake Michigan, just blocks away from the Algoma studio of Don Krumpos and Erin LaBonte. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Smith.

Three artists – Don Krumpos, Erin LaBonte, and Jody Henseler – created the artwork that will be unveiled on the exterior of City Hall. Krumpos and LaBonte operate Yonder





Studios, an art gallery and event space in downtown Algoma; and Henseler teaches science in the Manitowoc Public Schools.

The mural, which will remain on City Hall for at least a year, highlights human uses of the lake and species native to Lake Michigan.

"Many people are familiar with the prehistoric lake sturgeon, walleye, whitefish and bass, but what about psychedelic-looking algaes like diploneis, stephanodiscus and tabellaria?" Henseler asked. "These are

the lake's unsung heroes and the base of our food chain. They need to be celebrated, known, and understood so that we humans can work to keep our waters clean and these microorganisms thriving."

Local artists and gallery owners Stephanie Trenchard and Margaret Lockwood also played vital roles in the process.

To get more information, contact Jennifer Smith, Wisconsin Sea Grant's science communicator, at 608.262.6393 or smith@aqua.wisc.edu.

Read more about artists Erin LaBonte and Don Krumpos:

The Many Media of Erin LaBonte

By Tom Groenfeldt, Peninsula Pulse – May 3rd, 2023

In Erin LaBonte's Algoma studio, three sculptures of standing women with protruding stomachs and large breasts stand in the corner.

"I made it when I was pregnant," LaBonte explained. "My life, relationship and my experience as a woman are changing, and that has my art changing, too."

Most of LaBonte's creations are about women in some way or another.



"I don't remember the last time that I made a work that didn't have some kind of representation of a woman in it, no matter how abstract it could be," she said.

Women are the constant thread through work that touches many media.

"I am all over the place – collage, painting, sculpture, and photography. I am definitely not a specialist in anything. I like to mess around," she said.

LaBonte likes to work in series, too, because they can keep her going for a while.

"A lot of the time, I'll go back and forth between projects. I don't necessarily design as much as I like to react to things."

As an art instructor who has worked in colleges, high school, and middle school, LaBonte has taught printing, photography, painting, drawing and ceramics. At the end of a day of teaching, she's often tired, but she still seeks to focus on her own work at least two days a week at Yonder, the studio/gallery/event space on Steele Street in Algoma that she owns with her husband, Don Krumpos. It's an easy commute to work – they live upstairs with their three-year-old son, Arthur.



Artemis" by Erin LaBonte.



She Wolf" by Erin LaBonte.

"I like to just come down and think of other things, look at things, listen to music and move things around the studio, putting paint on somewhere and seeing how it looks, or how things stick together," LaBonte said. "When I work in woodcut, that's a lot different because I have it all drawn out before I start carving."

As well, she said, "One thing I really like about woodcut relief prints is that the medium seems political. It has history and has often been used to share the struggle of, and the voice of, the people."

A prime example is a 36-inch-by-48-inch woodcut called "The Unkindness," which stands in her studio.

"I started it the night that Russia bombed Ukraine," she said. "This is an image of Ukraine exploding with a dark side. And then the peaceful side has olive trees and doves and sunflowers. I do it because I feel that stuff happens because of greedy men. I definitely react to things political. I carved a lot of it with a Dremel tool. I really like the look of it, but it's very tedious, and I'm not a patient person."

LaBonte used to do more solo and group shows in other venues, but that has changed since she and her husband opened their own space. LaBonte and Krumpos have accepted that they aren't going to support themselves financially on art alone, so the gallery mostly sells printed T-shirts and sweatshirts, and occasionally a print or painting.

"The stuff I do in my studio, I don't expect to sell," she said. "We've also realized that a lot of our goals aren't going to be met if we depend on art for our financial needs, so we have each specialized in different things – like Don's design work and my teaching. That way, we can do our own passion projects."

LaBonte is looking forward to the summer when she will have an exhibit at the Thelma Sadoff Center for the Arts in Fond du Lac June 9 – July 21.

"When I grew up in Fond du Lac," she said, "there never was a venue dedicated to the arts, so I'm really happy that the arts are being celebrated within this community and that I get to be a part of it."

Finding Balance at Yonder

By <u>Tom Groenfeldt</u>, <u>Peninsula Pulse</u> – December 14th, 2022

Don Krumpos navigates making a living while making art.

On a recent weekday morning, Don Krumpos was rearranging things at Yonder, the Algoma gallery that describes itself as a creative space run by artists.

Krumpos was coming off hosting his First Friday event, which featured 16 guest artists participating in an auction that raised \$1,025 for Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin and \$138 for the Transgender Law Center. The evening also included music by Morgan Piontek and drew more than 100 comments on Yonder's Facebook page.

The gallery is a display space, workspace, and event space on Steele Street, which is Algoma's cultural center. Next door is Yardstick, a well-stocked independent bookstore. Across the street is Ruse, a fairly new bar in a 1905 building. And down the block are Clay on Steele – featuring ceramic arts – and Ladybug Glass, which shows glass plus abstract photography and astrophotography.





Art by Krumpos. Photo by Rachel Lukas.

Krumpos is primarily a printer whose favorite work is etchings on copper plates.

"I really enjoy the process, the iterative process," he said. "You are always changing. You print one, and you make changes on it, and then you print it again and see how it looks. I also like wood-block printmaking and screen printing, which I finally have set up, so now we're doing our own T-shirts and things like that."

Krumpos and his spouse, Erin LaBonte, who's also an artist, collaborate on public murals such as the one on Bayside Bargains in Sturgeon Bay and another that will hang from Sturgeon Bay's City Hall. Many Algoma building facades also feature displays of their work, and they have established a reputation as mural creators – work that now pays reasonably well.

"I like to create an art space that people can walk into," Krumpos said of Yonder. The gallery – with its prints, puppets, and assemblages, as well as a three-quarter-scale covered wagon – creates some of that.

"It has a narrative to it. We're building an idea. Just come in and look. We're always working on it, creating a place [where] you can come in and see that it's a little different than anywhere else. It's not going to be a Gap."



Yonder's storefront. Photo by Rachel Lukas.

Krumpos lived in Minneapolis from 2009 until 2013, working as a graphic designer and web designer for companies such as Under Armour, Best Buy, 3M, Medtronic, United Health Care and several other medical tech and insurance firms – work he continues to do from Algoma. He moved back to Wisconsin to teach at UW-Green Bay for a year to fill in for a professor on sabbatical, and then he continued to work as an adjunct for several years.

LaBonte taught art full time at Silver Lake College in Manitowoc for eight years until the school closed in 2020 because of the pandemic. She then taught as an adjunct at UW-Green Bay, and this year, she started teaching art at Kewaunee High School.

The two are working out how to create art, contribute to the community, raise their two-year-old son and build financial security. It's a mix that requires flexibility and improvisation.

Full-time university teaching posts are notoriously scarce, and adjunct positions are notoriously poorly paid. Although Krumpos has enjoyed working for nonprofits and teaching as an adjunct, he recognizes that that sort of work will never pay enough.

"You feel good about it, but you're never getting over that bump," he said, speaking frankly about money and balancing the need to earn with the desire to create art. "It's just, that's the way it goes. Like I would love the transition to this," he said, referring to his printmaking, assemblages, and puppets. "It's still rewarding. A hobby."

Then he paused and reconsidered.

"I'm reluctant to call it a hobby because I feel like being an artist is a frame of mind. You've just got to go to work sometimes and support the things you do want. Then it gives you the freedom to just do what you want and not ask if someone would buy it. You can just do it because you have been bankrolling yourself."

Krumpos has concluded that with commercial jobs, the rate of pay is inverse to the degree of interest in the work, but he questions how many people can make a living from art.

"This idea of making art and selling it – making a good living off of it – it's very difficult. I gave up the dream of thinking [that] somebody can be just an artist. It's very, very difficult. ... I think about that stuff all the time, but now I'm taking the pressure off myself a little bit – off any kind of expectation because I really just enjoy my life. I don't need to show in other galleries because we have our own."