

Iowa State artists help celebrate state parks centennial with '20 Artists, 20 Parks' exhibition

AMES, Iowa — Iowa's state parks have inspired visitors ever since the first site, Backbone State Park, opened in Delaware County in 1920.

A century later, the parks' natural beauty is still a source of inspiration. A new art exhibition called "[20 Artists, 20 Parks](#)" opens next month in Des Moines before traveling to Dubuque, Clarinda and Sioux City. It showcases artwork that 20 Iowa artists made last summer in 20 state parks — all to celebrate the state parks centennial in 2020.

The show is organized by the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs; the Iowa Department of Natural Resources; and Iowa State University.

"The artwork is as varied as the parks themselves, from the Maquoketa Caves to Stephens State Forest to Gull Point on Lake Okoboji," said the Iowa Arts Council's Veronica O'Hern, who helped curate the show. "Together the paintings, sculptures, textiles, photos, videos and other art forms capture the sights and sounds of these unique pockets of the Iowa landscape."

During their residencies last summer, the Iowa State artists — including graduate students and faculty members from the Colleges of Design, Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Liberal Arts and Sciences — worked closely with DNR park rangers to learn about the parks' ecosystems. The artists visited often to take notes, draw sketches and gather ideas. They created their artwork on-site or in their studios and will return to their assigned parks in summer 2020 to lead public demonstrations.

"This project is really a win-win. It encourages Iowans who love the outdoors to appreciate art, and art fans to get outdoors," said Todd Coffelt, chief of the DNR's State Parks Bureau. "Both elements — art and nature — contribute to Iowa's high quality of life."

Organizers decided the exhibition should travel in order to share the artwork statewide, as part of the [DNR's yearlong celebration](#) of the parks centennial. Outdoor activities will ramp up this spring and summer at the 72 state parks and forests to highlight the importance of recreation, historic preservation, art, culture and natural resources.

"Iowans understand how precious our relationship is with the natural environment," said Luis Rico-Gutierrez, dean of the ISU College of Design. "We're delighted to work with the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Cultural Affairs to invite the public to enjoy and interact with our state parks in new ways."

The 20 parks that are included in "20 Artists, 20 Parks" are featured on the [project website](#) and on the [Iowa Culture mobile app](#), a free and interactive tool to discover arts, history and cultural destinations across Iowa. More information about how to visit the parks is on the app, which the public can download for free from Google Play and the App Store. Visitors can also find state park information at iowadnr.gov.

"20 Artists, 20 Parks" Traveling Exhibition

March 16 – May 2, 2020

Polk County Heritage Gallery
111 Court Ave., Des Moines
Reception: Thursday, April 9

May 30 – Sept. 20, 2020

Dubuque Museum of Art
701 Locust St., Dubuque
Reception: Friday, June 5

Sept. 30, 2020 – Jan. 8, 2021

Clarinda Carnegie Art Museum

300 N. 16th St., Clarinda
Reception: October (Date TBD)

Jan. 30, 2021 – May 9, 2021

Sioux City Art Center
225 Nebraska St., Sioux City
Reception: Saturday, Jan. 30, 2021

Featured State Parks and Artists

- Backbone State Park, Dundee – **Kimberly Moss**, *assistant professor of art and visual culture, College of Design; and coordinator, biological/premedical illustration program*
- Brushy Creek State Park, Lehigh – **Austin Stewart**, *associate professor of art and visual culture, College of Design; and Omar De Kok-Mercado*, *natural resource ecology and management program coordinator, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences*
- Gull Point State Park, Okoboji – **Paula Streeter**, *associate teaching professor of art and visual culture, College of Design*
- Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, Keosauqua – **Nancy Thompson**, *associate teaching professor of art and visual culture, College of Design*
- Lake Darling State Park, Mt. Pleasant – **Rob Wallace**, *associate professor of ecology, evolution and organismal biology, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences / College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*
- Lake Macbride State Park, Solon – **Firat Erdim**, *assistant professor of architecture, College of Design*
- Lake of Three Fires State Park, Bedford – **Amy Harris**, *associate teaching professor of art and visual culture, College of Design*
- Maquoketa Caves State Park, Maquoketa – **Brent Holland**, *associate professor of art and visual culture, College of Design*
- Mines of Spain State Park, Dubuque – **Joe Muench**, *professor of art and visual culture, College of Design*
- Palisades-Kepler State Park, Mt. Vernon – **Celinda Stamy**, *assistant teaching professor of art and visual culture, College of Design*
- Pikes Peak State Park, McGregor – **Barbara Walton**, *associate professor of art and visual culture, College of Design*
- Pilot Knob State Park, Forest City – **Christopher Yanulis**, *graduate student in integrated visual arts, College of Design*
- Pine Lake State Park, Eldora – **Jennifer Drinkwater**, *assistant professor of art and visual culture, College of Design; and ISU Extension and Outreach community arts specialist*
- Rock Creek State Park, Kellogg – **Anna Segner**, *assistant teaching professor of art and visual culture, College of Design*
- Stephens State Park – **Clark Colby**, *assistant teaching professor of art and visual culture, College of Design; and ISU Extension and Outreach 4-H Youth Development communications and creative arts program specialist*
- Stone State Park, Sioux City – **Carol Faber**, *associate professor of graphic design, College of Design*
- Walnut Woods State Park, West Des Moines – **Deborah Pappenheimer**, *associate teaching professor of art and visual culture, College of Design*
- Wildcat Den State Park, Muscatine – **Kristen Greteman**, *graduate student in history, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*
- Viking Lake State Park, Stanton – **Olivia Valentine**, *assistant professor of art and visual culture, College of Design*
- Yellow River State Forest, Harpers Ferry – **Nathan Edwards**, *assistant teaching professor of art and visual culture, College of Design*

Contacts

Michael Morain, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, (515) 725-1141, michael.morain@iowa.gov
Todd Coffelt, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, (515) 330-9204, todd.coffelt@dnr.iowa.gov

Heather Sauer, Design Communications, (515) 294-9289, hsauer@iastate.edu

-30-

The Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and its divisions – the State Historical Society of Iowa, including the State Historic Preservation Office; the Iowa Arts Council; and Produce Iowa, the state office of media production – empower Iowans to build and sustain culturally vibrant communities by connecting to the people, places and points of pride that define our state. The department promotes creativity as a catalyst for innovation, empowers Iowans to preserve history, and shares the stories of Iowa to connect past, present and future generations. iowaculture.gov

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources provides recreational opportunities in Iowa's state parks, manages fish and wildlife resources, and ensures the health of Iowa's forests and prairies. Just as importantly, the DNR protects air, land and water through technical assistance, permitting and compliance programs. The DNR also encourages the enjoyment and stewardship of natural resources through outreach and education. The mission of the DNR is to conserve and enhance natural resources in cooperation with individuals and organizations to improve the quality of life in Iowa and ensure a legacy for future generations.

Iowa State University is Iowa's largest university and one of the nation's leading public research universities. Iowa State faculty, staff and students are dedicated to improving lives in Iowa, the nation and the world. The university focuses on the total student experience and prepares students to apply their knowledge to solve 21st-century challenges. In the 2018-19 academic year, Iowa State enrolled nearly 35,000 students from all 50 states and 126 countries. As Iowa's land-grant university, Iowa State advances its mission of putting science, technology and human creativity to work through teaching, scholarship, research and outreach.

February 11, 2020 5:14 pm

Tags: Exhibit