

The Hidden Studios Art Tour; Art along the Ice Age Trail A History

The Setting:

It is true what they say, that the drive to the Hidden Studios is itself a visual experience. Consider the warm colored hillsides, on a sunny day with the cool air of early October. Add the twisting back-roads echoing the seismic push and pull of the glacial Ice Age Era. The landscape is rolling, wooded, patched-worked with fields, dotted with lakes and wetlands, streams and rivers. Many of the tour artists live here, back off the road, out of sight.

The Story's Beginnings:

Most of these artists had been show-casing their work in high-profile venues such as galleries or art fairs in Door County, Ann Arbor, Chicago, and St. Louis. Most were represented by a major gallery. Most were recognized by their peers for their signature work. Most were award winners in their specialty. The irony was, most were unknown by community members living around them.

In 2004, a loosely formed artist group discussed opening their studios to the public for a three-day weekend, early October. Consequently, in October 2004, the Hidden Studios Art Tour was started. The geographic locations of artists' studios formed a large – but pleasantly drivable - circle on the map, spanning the Chain of Lakes and Emmons Creek in the South to Sunset Lake in the North.

The Organization:

This October 5, 6 & 7, 2018, will mark our 15th Tour. It feels like the Tour has been coming of “age” for the past few years. Over the Tour’s life, artists and studios have come and gone. Leadership has changed on the steering committee. In spite of the turnover, the Tour organization has remained steady. Everybody has a job to do. Tasks are accomplished. We have maintained a focus on the mission statement and its four embedded goals. Importantly, we continue to attract a unique group of dedicated artists.

Organizing Principles; we agreed...

- ☒ ***We are committed to providing a public art event of high quality and artistic diversity.*** Staying ahead of the crowd has been a challenge. We have been up to the task of being the “best on the block.”
- ☒ ***We are committed to providing “working studios” to show where and how art is made.*** Each Studio is unique due to the art media being used, (painting, stone sculpture, glass, etc.) and the processes employed. The stuff of creation is itself amazing. Then there are demonstrations, explanations of process, and the

opportunity for a personal one-on-one dialogue with the artist and the work. Every question deserves a response. This is the time to begin the dialogue.

- ☒ ***We are seeking to define the Ice Age Trail Area of Central Wisconsin as an art destination.*** People mark their calendars for the first weekend in October. We have built the Tour and people are coming ca. 1,000 strong. The art curious, art lovers, and art patrons come from down the road, up North, the Fox River Valley, Milwaukee, Madison, Minneapolis St. Paul and Northern areas of Chicago.
- ☒ ***Finally, we promote the Tour as a means to sell our art so that we may live and prosper as artists.*** With your eye on a piece of work, talking with the artist about the inspiration, the tools, materials, and process make that piece so much richer. This is what makes the Hidden Studios Tour so unique.

You need to come and see for yourself. Enjoy the art destination of Central Wisconsin – a major exhibition complete with all the “trimmings.”

Date: October 5, 6 & 7, 2018

Times: Friday and Saturday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Sunday 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

More information: www.hiddenstudiosarttour.com

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