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ND State Parks to Host Artist in Residency Program

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and the North Dakota Council on the Arts are partnering once again for the Artist in Residency program within the North Dakota state parks. The Artist in Residency program offers artists the opportunity to stay and work in unique environments for one week where they’ll have the opportunity to draw inspiration from a park, demonstrate their skills and assist park visitors of all ages in discovering their artistic side. The 2017 Artist in Residency program takes place at Beaver Lake State Park (July 16-23) with artist Johnathan Campbell; Cross Ranch State Park (July 30-August 6) with artist Kalyn Dewitt; and Lewis & Clark State Park (August 6-13) with artist Nicole Gagner.

Johnathan Campbell is a Bismarck native and a visual artist. As a teen, he remembers his mother purchasing a 35 mm camera and, not long after that, darkroom equipment and materials needed to develop film. He started out as a Geology major that resulted in a Visual Arts degree. He did not engage much in photography as an art form until 2014 for the purpose of photographing insects. Campbell realized that he missed manipulating light and, in his words, jumped back into it with gusto! Johnathan will be at Beaver Lake State Park July 16-23. During that time, park visitors are welcome to join him during his nightly night painting and astrophotography. On Friday, July 21, Johnathan will be at the park’s amphitheater at 10:00 PM discussing light painting art as well as the techniques and tools he utilizes to create each work of art. On Saturday, July 22, Dakota Explorers of all ages are invited to the beach area at 3:00 PM to take pictures the “old fashioned way,” utilizing film cameras. A limited number of cameras will be available. At 10:00 PM, meet at the amphitheater to explore the basics of drawing with light to create a variety of images inspired by the night’s sky as well as the shadows of the park’s landscape.

Kalyn Dewitt has called North Dakota home for the past fourteen years. She is currently pursuing a Fine Arts degree in Ceramics at Minot State University. Raised by an artist mother, she has been exploring art her whole life. Kalyn is interested in the creative process as it relates to both the internal and the external environment of the artist. She loves the physical sensations of manipulating and responding to the clay. She feels it is a contemplative practice that connects the maker to both themselves as well as the earth they are using to make art. Kalyn invites everyone to visit her at Cross Ranch State Park’s Bagnell yurt at any time during the week of July 30-August 6 to learn about her creative process and historical influences. At 8:00 PM on Friday, August 4, folks can get their hands dirty with some wet clay while learning the ancient technique of pinch pottery. On Saturday, August 5 at 11:00 AM, there is another opportunity to do pinch pots. At 8:00 PM, learn, watch and help Kalyn decorate the bare clay surfaces with combustibles and fire for decorative effects. All are welcome to pick out a pot from the previous night’s pit firing and learn how to add decorative weaving by meeting at 11:00 AM. All of the activities will take place at the
Bagnell yurt, weather permitting. In the event of unfavorable weather, activities will be held at Cross Ranch State Park’s River Peoples Visitors Center.

Nicole Gagner is a visual artist who is inspired by texture, saturated color, and unique plays of light and form. She primarily works with oil paint and feels that an expressive hand is a characteristic of her art, having loose, flowy brushwork and a textural interplay of colors. She enjoys photography and drawing, using such skills more as a way to sketch out ideas for paintings. Nicole is always on the hunt for new places, people and things to paint, new friends to look at art with or drink coffee with while talking about art. Gagner will be doing so at Lewis & Clark State Park while she is there the week of August 6-13. Throughout the week, Nicole will be exploring the park, finding places and objects of inspiration. If you see her along the trails or in the buttes overlooking the park, feel free to speak to her about her art or watch her create a work of art! On Friday, August 11, Nicole will display her art that she created during her week at the park. Meet at the amphitheater at 8:00 PM to see Lewis & Clark State Park through her eyes and take an opportunity to visit with her about her week and talents. On Saturday, August 12, park visitors are encouraged to join Nicole at the park’s amphitheater at 2:00 PM where she will share many of her tips and tricks pertaining to watercolor, collaging and various other kids of drawing media. All ages are welcome to explore their artistic side. Supplies will be provided.

This project is supported in part by a grant from the North Dakota Council on the Arts, which receives funding from the state legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts. The event is free of charge in accordance with a daily or annual pass.

The residency program recruits writers, composers, visual and performing artists to experience the North Dakota state parks and resources, allowing them to illustrate their experiences through their talents while providing opportunities for our park visitors to do the same by participating in hands-on workshops. Amy Schimetz, the full-time Interpreter at Lake Metigoshe State Park, has been coordinating the program for several years and states, “the program is for serious professionals who deeply care about our state parks, wanting to contribute to them as well as benefit from them.”

The goal is to continue creating works of art that showcase, document and celebrate the North Dakota state parks while providing opportunities for visitors to become stewards, with a deeper appreciation of artistic works inspired by the state parks. It is hoped that the artworks generated from this program will characterize the state’s beauty for present and future generations, giving park visitors an opportunity to see North Dakota through the eyes and ears of contributing artists.

The mission of North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department is to provide and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities through diverse parks and programs that conserve the state’s natural diversity.

For more information contact Amy Schimetz via email at aschimetz@nd.gov.

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*The North Dakota Council on the Arts is the state agency responsible for the support and development of the arts throughout North Dakota, and is funded by the state legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts.*