

LOCAL NEWS

## New exhibit uses Boulder County farms to bring agriculture to life



Devin Reilly helps to set up the installation piece titled “The Regeneration Series: Soil Regeneration Mode,” by artist Nicole Barowetz at the Longmont Museum on Friday. The piece is part of the BMoCA and the Longmont Museum’s new joint exhibit “agriCULTURE: Art inspired by the Land.” (Matthew Jonas — Staff Photographer)

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An experimental new exhibit by the Longmont Museum and the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art asks visitors a question: what is their relationship with the farmland that surrounds them?

The multi-venue exhibition, “agriCULTURE: Art Inspired by the Land,” opens next week at both museums as well as at three Boulder County farms. The Agricultural Heritage Center and Ollin Farms in Longmont and Milk and Honey Farm in Boulder will house artwork from the project June 10 through Sept. 4. The exhibit will be at the Longmont Museum through Jan. 7 and through Oct. 1 at BMoCA.



Eighteen artists from within and outside Boulder County were matched with local farms based on their agricultural interests. The artists were commissioned to create works that reflect the practices of Front Range farmers and even pose solutions to farming-related issues. The resulting pieces accomplish this through various forms, including sculptures, paintings and ceramics.

Jared Thompson, curator of the Longmont Museum’s arm of the exhibition, said

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“It’s really about connecting to the land, and farmers have such a strong connection to land,” he said. “It’s great to see all of our work finally coming to fruition and actually see artwork in the gallery.”

The exhibition is four years in the making. On top of delays from the COVID-19 pandemic, the long timeframe comes from the curators wanting artists to spend at least a year with their farm partners, which gave them the opportunity to experience all four seasons. The whole thing, Thompson said, has tread new ground, particularly the aspect of pairing artists with community members.

“It definitely is an interesting process,” he said. “There’s a lot of moving parts, so there’s lots to manage, but it’s well worth it.”

At the Longmont Museum, large sculptural pieces dominate the special exhibit gallery, including a carousel inside parts of a grain silo and a massive grid-patterned screen made from corn stalks against one of the walls. Taking up around a third of the gallery is a sprawling inflatable sculpture by Boulder-based artist Nicole Banowetz.

The sculpture’s large nylon tubes depict a futuristic fictional mechanism, Banowetz said, something farmers could use to send oxygen and nutrients into the soil. Banowetz was paired with Esoterra Culinary Garden in east Boulder County, which grows food for restaurants using chemical-free methods.

“I really love collaborating with scientists in general, and at least in the case of Esoterra, it’s very scientific,” Banowetz said, pointing to how the soil is often tested for microbes. “Art really can help speak about ... our relationship with nature and where our food comes from.”

Banowetz was inspired by the farm’s use of microbes and pollinators to rejuvenate the land’s unhealthy soil. She hopes her sculpture will make people consider the damage humans have made to soil through pesticides.

“I want people to think about the way they are interacting with soil, specifically,” she said. “We need to promote that ecosystem without damaging it. We are a part of it, but we shouldn’t try to control it by destroying things.”

Across the gallery hangs the corn stalk screen, created by Boulder County artist Patrick Marold. Marold harvested the stalks with local fifth-generation farmer Keith Bateman, who he was paired with for the exhibit. The screen, he said, aims

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“Agriculture in art has always been important to me,” Marold said. “I work from the landscape and the land, and I’m interested in how we, as humans, relate to it. It’s almost like I was waiting for (this exhibition).”

Apart from the environmental message of his piece, Marold wants the screen to capture the beauty of the material itself. People often take it for granted, he said.

“You see beautiful pastures and fields of corn, and there’s an organization to it that every farmer uses,” he said. “There’s a lot of beauty in the way those plants are planted and organized.”

Like the Longmont Museum, BMoCA’s “agriCULTURE” exhibit is a blend of art from several media; there’s even a piece that incorporates dirt from one of the partner farms. Marketing manager Jennifer Chaparro said the exhibit is a good fit with the museum’s mission of making art accessible.

“We definitely like to bring in different elements of the community, because it reaches more people and affects more people,” she said.

Opening receptions for “agriCULTURE” will be held Thursday at BMoCA, 1750 13th St. and Friday at the Longmont Museum, 400 Quail Road from 6 to 8 p.m. More information, including a map of exhibits, can be found at [bit.ly/3ITU0VW](https://bit.ly/3ITU0VW).

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Tags: [Art](#)



## Dana Cadey | Community reporter

Dana Cadey is the community reporter for the Longmont Times-Call. She previously worked for the Times-Call and its sister paper, the Boulder Daily Camera, as a summer intern in 2021.

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## Heart Surgeon Beggars Americans: “Stop Doing This To Your Blueberries”

Dr. Gundry has released an informative free video showcasing exactly which

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