

## » PRAISE FOR RUMINANT

### Americans for the Arts, Public Art Network Year in Review Winner, 2013.

“A gentle, shocking, hallucinatory creation.”

*Ralph Helmick, Public Art Network Year in Review Juror*

“This monumental piece mashes up the histories of stained glass, comic books, and farm machinery to create a funny, expansive re-telling of the harvest narrative. The gleeful mixing of material and cultural references... adds up to something gloriously unexpected - work that at once respects & stretches its appropriated references and their attendant histories.”

*Aaron Dysart, Walker Art Center's mnartists.blog*

## » ABOUT THE ARTIST

Karl Unnasch creates his work in a turn-of-the-century studio in rural Pilot Mound, Minnesota, not far from his family farm. He keeps one foot in Wisconsin with a second home in La Crosse.

Karl's current focus is primarily public and architectural art, most typically incorporating stained glass and sculpture. His work is both nationally and internationally acclaimed. Visit his website at [www.karlunnasch.com](http://www.karlunnasch.com).

## REEDSBURG ARTSLINK

A multi-disciplinary arts non-profit working to unify, enrich and enliven its community via the arts. ArtsLink adopted The Ruminant/Harvest Park Project as its first major initiative.

[reedsburgartslink@gmail.com](mailto:reedsburgartslink@gmail.com)  
[www.reedsburgartslink.org](http://www.reedsburgartslink.org)

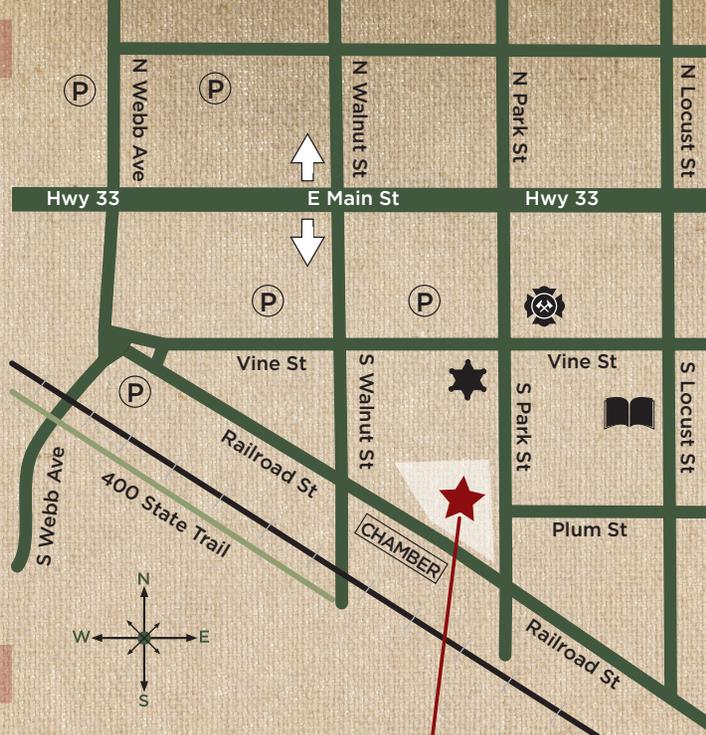
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For more information contact The Reedsburg Area Chamber of Commerce, 240 Railroad St., Reedsburg, WI 53959.

[Reedsburg.org](http://Reedsburg.org) • 608-524-2850



# HARVEST PARK

265 Railroad St.,  
Reedsburg, Wis.

## » FEATURING RUMINANT

Harvest Park was created in honor of Reedsburg's agricultural heritage. It has been designed as a contemplative green space within Reedsburg's downtown campus where both residents and visitors can rest, relax and ruminate. The land for Harvest Park was dedicated by the City of Reedsburg on October 3rd, 2014.

**Help Complete Harvest Park!** We're still working to implement improvements to Harvest Park. Tax deductible donations to support the park's completion can be made with a check payable to "Reedsburg ArtsLink". Please note "Harvest Park" in the memo line of your check and mail it to

Reedsburg ArtsLink,  
E6180 Churchill Rd., Reedsburg, WI 53959.



# RUMINANT

THE GRAND MASTICATOR



PHOTO BY AARON DYSART

A TRIBUTE TO *Agriculture,  
Farming & Food*  
located in  
**HARVEST  
PARK**

REEDSBURG • WISCONSIN

~Best viewed after sunset~

Made possible in part with grants from Sauk County,  
UW Extension Arts & Culture Committee and The Herbert Webb Trust.

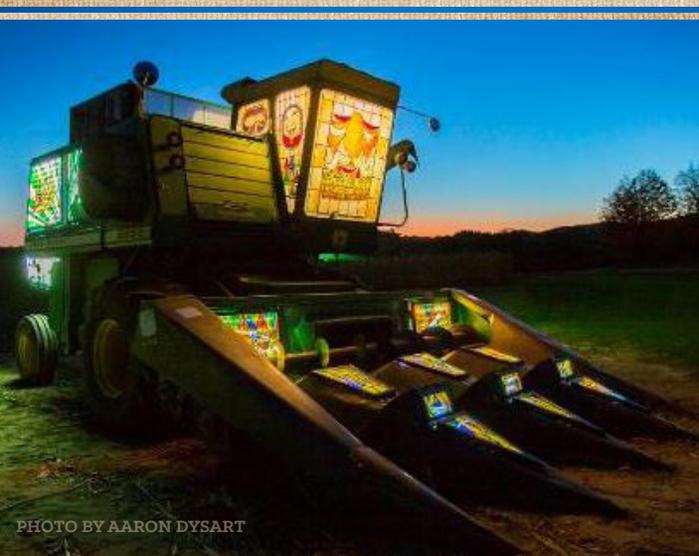
# RUMINANT

## THE GRAND MASTICATOR

Harvest Park of downtown Reedsburg, Wisconsin is home to a one-of-a-kind piece of artwork: *Ruminant* (The Grand Masticator), a harvesting combine clad in 34 agriculturally themed, backlit stained glass panels. Americans for the Arts selected *Ruminant* as one of the most compelling public art pieces for 2013.

A tribute to agriculture, farming and food, *Ruminant* is also an anthropomorphic beacon of contemplation and an intricate play on words and concepts. Its creator, artist Karl Unnasch explains: "Just as food goes through several chewings and other processes as it is picked and broken down by cattle, so does the harvest as it is gathered and processed by a combine, or art as it is pondered and enjoyed by its viewer. We are ruminants of visual language in the same manner as a cow is of its feed or a combine of its crop."

Originally a temporary installation along the annual Fermentation Fest's Farm/Art DTour in 2013, *Ruminant* resonated so strongly that a group of locals organized to acquire the piece for the City. A vacant lot was selected as a site and converted into what is now known as Harvest Park. *Ruminant* was publicly dedicated to the City in October 2014 and became an instant landmark.



### PANEL ARTWORK

### PANEL NARRATIVE



**1. Batman and Robin in the Victory Garden** During World Wars I and II, "Victory Gardens" were planted at private residences and public parks. They were viewed as a morale booster and played a significant role in the war effort. The cover of World's Finest No. 11 comic book in 1943 depicted Superman, Batman and Robin as "Victory Gardeners!"

**2. Corn-Husk Doll** A memorial to the days when toys were simple and lovingly crafted from castoffs at hand on the farm.

**3. Mustached Corn-Chomper** The "face" of the combine, a close-up of a mustached man chomping with gusto a cob of corn.

**4. Chew** Comic book character Tony Chu is a police detective who is also a "cibopath": he has special empathic powers that are activated by chewing.

**5. Raw Food Humor** The rear chaff ejection casing is a billboard for "raw" food humor in simplified form. Agricultural puns and riddles based on light hearted farm, garden, and fermentation silliness here take the form of a set of cartoons in the mode of wordplay. One panel is a cartoon tribute to America's most famous farm-themed painting.

**6. PacMan** In the classic video game, the yellow PacMan chomp-chomps his way across the screen. This panel pays homage to a creative re-imagining of that game by painter Travis Pitts in a genre of visual art inspired by video games, both past and present.

**7. Homage to Benton** During the Great Depression, the "Works Progress Administration," a federal program, was created to ensure that artists would survive the tough economic climate. This panel pays homage to a WPA work by Midwestern artist Thomas Hart Benton.

**8. Termite** The ultimate chewer.

**9. The Crayon Kid** An affectionate reference to oral fixations in childhood.

**10. Sloane's Tool Set** The corn-head showcases a series of traditional hand-tools used by pioneers to carve out the wilderness of the Midwest, as illustrated by Eric Sloane in *A Museum of Early American Tools*.