

Proposal from
SchoolSculptures with Kevin Reese
For the La Crosse Center, LaCrosse, Wisconsin
December 3, 2019

Proposal Summary:

SchoolSculptures with Kevin Reese proposes to design, fabricate, and install a kinetic art installation for The LaCrosse Center that is collaboratively created with the community. This high-flying installation of multiple mobiles would transform the lobby of the La Crosse Center into a gallery of color and movement, as well as a source of civic connection and pride.

Project Description:

“Mobilizing Our Community” is Kevin Reese’s distinctive artist residency that brings together hundreds of individuals of every age, background, and ability to create a collaborative work of kinetic public art. Kevin’s 40+ years of expertise in creating suspended moving sculptures (mobiles) coupled with his equal experience as a teaching artist-in-residence ensures an enriching, memorable process for the participants and an outstanding artistic product for the entire community to enjoy. Kevin begins by working in school classrooms with students to introduce kinetic sculpture through the making of small models of mobiles. Inspired by the students’ creations, Kevin designs scale models of larger mobiles that, in turn, provide the inspiration for the making of hundreds of colorful shapes by students, seniors, and more in an on-site workshop space. Under Kevin’s guidance, participants connect and balance the pieces into a spectacular installation of moving sculptures. After being celebrated and enjoyed in the public space of the La Crosse Center, the mobiles will then be given back to the community—reinstalled in the schools, businesses, and organizations that have supported the project, each now with a sign for their door that states: “We’ve been mobilized!” This final step provides the greater community with joyful, tangible reminders of how the many parts of La Crosse came together to make an inspiring new whole. [Video link](#)

Project Plan:

Mobilizing Our Community is comprised of three phases:

- Phase One: Maquette Making
- Phase Two: Mobile Creation and Installation
- Phase Three: Re-installation.

The schedule proposed below is for Phase One to happen in the Spring of 2020 and Phase Two in the Fall. Alternatively, both can be in the Spring of 2020 or both in the Fall. Phase Three (reinstallation) happens at a time appropriate to the conclusion of the public exhibition of the installation at the La Crosse Center. The dates listed in the plan are one alternative; I can also do all phases in either the Spring or Fall of 2020.

- **Phase One: Maquette Making**
One week, Spring, 2020

I spend one week working with students on maquette (small model) making. Up to 10 workshops, of 50 students or less at each workshop, grades 3 and up, can be scheduled. I can divide my time between two schools per day to reach a maximum of ten schools. Or I can work with more students at fewer schools; the choice is yours. Each student makes their own maquette, which I photograph to use as inspiration for my master models for Phase Two. The maquettes can be saved for display as part of the public art installation at the La Crosse Center.



This week can also be used to connect with local businesses and community leaders to generate interest in and excitement about supporting the project.

- **Phase Two: Mobile Creation and Installation**
Two weeks, Fall, 2020

I work in one space, where students and other project participants come to me. I can offer two 90-minute sessions per day with up to 25 participants. I will take them through the entire process of creating a mobile: they will draw and cut out pieces and craft their edges preparing to connect them to wires with epoxy. They will paint pieces that others have cut out and they will balance a mobile from pieces that other have painted. We can schedule up to 3 additional workshops during the evening or weekends for seniors, community groups, and/or the public. It is possible to take one step of the process (piece making or balancing) out into the community. Past sites have included senior centers, board meetings, and breweries.



On the final Friday of Week Two, we will install the mobiles in the lobby with a celebratory community reception to follow either Friday evening or Saturday day.

- **Phase Three: Re-installation**
Two days, time TBD

At the conclusion of the public exhibition of the installation in the lobby, I will return to re-install the mobiles in the businesses and schools that have supported the project. Each will get a sticker for their door that says: “We’ve been Mobilized!”



Project Budget:

\$35,000 Fee includes all materials, transportation and housing.

Artist Biography:



Kevin Reese is a designer and visual artist with over forty years experience working with communities as an artist-in-residence. In 2001, Kevin founded SchoolSculptures, a residency program during which he works with communities to create large permanent moving sculptures at schools, community and art centers inspired by the participants’ designs. Kevin’s work has been supported by grants from local businesses, city, county and state arts councils across the US and by the National Endowment for the Arts. In 2013, he was selected as the Resident Teaching Artist at the National Gallery of Art. As SchoolSculptures he has created over 190 installations in 30 US states as well as an

installation at the Public Library in Taipei, Taiwan. Whether he involves 100 or 1000 people, each participant discovers not only what it is like to look up and say “that’s my piece” but also to see how that piece has become a part of something so much larger. For entire communities, the mobiles become a metaphor for how we can come together to connect many parts into a balanced and beautiful whole.

Testimonials and Work Samples:



“In thirty years of running an arts center, this ranks as one of the finest experiences our community has had. Kevin is a passionate teacher that brings great wisdom and skill to the creative process he uses with your community. Do yourself a favor: invite him to your town. Not only will his work change your community; it will change you.”

Steve Duchrow, Director of Performing Arts
Elgin Community College Arts Center, Elgin, IL

“This program was TRANSFORMATIVE! We watched as various groups of kids...small children, high schoolers, home-schooled, public, parochial and alternative schools...all had the same kind of experience: owning the Moment of Discovery when you Create SOMETHING that has never been there before. In each of the 90-minute sessions, we saw participants who came in looking disinterested and went out glowing with the knowledge that they engineered and crafted something so amazingly cool.”

Tina Salamone, Director
Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts
Bloomington, IL



“We knew Mobilizing Our Community was going to be an amazing artist residency, but it transcended all our expectations. It really brought the community together.”

Kathy Rogers, Executive Director
Piedmont Arts Center, Martinsville, VA

“Kevin was both an incredible artist and a delightful partner in this process. His advice on how to make the residency even more affective was brilliant.”

David Marty, Executive Director,
Reif Center, Grand Rapids, MN