



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **ALFONS GALLERY “CHALLENGES” WISCONSIN VISUAL ARTISTS**

*September/October online exhibition, open to WVA members, focuses on ecotherapy*

**Milwaukee, WI, September 3, 2020** – While Alfons Gallery has temporarily suspended its regular hours of operation for in-person visits as a public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Gallery has launched online exhibitions that are available to anyone with an internet connection.

For the Gallery’s new exhibition, “Ecotherapy: A Challenge,” Valerie J. Christell, the Gallery’s director and curator, has created a “challenge” for members of Wisconsin Visual Artists. Artists were asked to create a new work that expresses the benefit of immersing themselves in the natural environment while we are in the midst of the coronavirus outbreak.

Ecotherapy—also called nature therapy or “green” therapy—is a practice that asserts human beings are part of their environment and can benefit from being immersed in it.

“This creative challenge is born out of this time of global social, physical, and mental upheaval,” Christell said. “By offering Wisconsin artists’ unique views on nature and their existence in it during the trying times of this global pandemic, the exhibition will reflect how people are spending more time in nature rather than inside buildings, and the benefits of that immersion.”

Christell said the creative submissions have been laid out within the virtual website space as an exhibition of a variety of artists’ works, but with something extra.

“The individual artist’s work is placed into a template that presents it along with an artist statement about the immersion that inspired the artwork,” she said. “We’re also including a link to the artist’s website, if available, to encourage viewers to search out more works by each artist.”

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Below are two examples of the individual templates demonstrate artists' varied responses to their immersion in nature. They include Tori Tasch's *Wall Necklace*, a handmade paper wall piece created with Garlic Mustard; and Martin Keey's *Soothing Sounds*, an image reflecting the artist's immersion in the sounds of nature.

### ***Wall Necklace***

Tori Tasch



Handmade Paper with Garlic Mustard, 4.5' x 6'

Every year students from Merton pull garlic mustard along the Bugline Path on Arbor Day, but not this year. So I started harvesting it, cooking the fibers for handmade paper to create a wall necklace.

toritasch.com

### ***Soothing Sounds***

Martin Keey



Photograph, 12" x 18"

When the stress of the day gets too much, I frequently explore a local park which has a creek running thru it. I love to sit and immerse myself in the sounds of the water.

"Ecotherapy: A Challenge" is now on view and continues through October on the gallery's website: [www.alfonsgallery.org](http://www.alfonsgallery.org)

#### **About Alfons Gallery**

Alfons Gallery is located at St. Joseph Center, 1501 S. Layton Blvd. (27th Street and Greenfield Avenue) in Milwaukee. The gallery's mission reflects the local and global work of the School Sisters of St. Francis. Exhibitions explore cultures and advocate for social justice, peace, and the environment through the artistic vision. Special forms of outreach aim to both educate and inspire viewers about our world and the impact every individual makes in it.

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**About Wisconsin Visual Artists**

Wisconsin Visual Artists, a not-for-profit organization, is the oldest and largest professional arts organization in Wisconsin. Its mission is to promote, develop, and encourage the creative visual arts in Wisconsin. It is run by a State Board that oversees general aspects relevant to all Chapters: Southeast (Milwaukee area), South Central (Madison area), and Northeast (Appleton/Green Bay area). Learn more at [www.wisconsinvisualartists.org](http://www.wisconsinvisualartists.org).

**About the School Sisters of St. Francis**

The School Sisters of St. Francis are an international community of Catholic sisters who unite with others to build a just and peaceful world. Founded in 1874, they now have sisters, associates, staff, donors and volunteers actively working to address the needs of those who are poor and marginalized by society. Their mission is thriving throughout the United States, Europe, Latin America, India, and Tanzania. For more information about the School Sisters of St. Francis, please visit [www.sssf.org](http://www.sssf.org).

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