

Karen Kopacz is an artist, writer, and designer living in the Twin Cities of Minnesota. She is currently working on an art and storytelling project that elevates stories about nature and our relationships with land and each other. The series *New Midwestern Nature Stories* features ink drawings that pair with stories about the ecological importance of natural areas. Over several years, Karen travelled throughout the Midwest to visit the places that inspired these drawings. These road trips cultivated a deeper connection to each place and provided context for learning about impacts and events that shape land, water, and public protections. Select prints are available at KarenKopacz.com. An artist-designed book featuring prints, stories, and personal narrative is forthcoming.

As a graphic designer and brand developer, Karen works with artists and forward-thinking organization leaders to bring goals into alignment with visuals and storyline throughout creative initiatives. Her business, [Design for the Arts](#), has provided creative support, strategic planning, and brand stewardship since 2000. Since 2017, she has been the designer for *Hand Papermaking*, a nonprofit print publication that advances the art and practice of hand papermaking and has been in publication for over 35 years. From 2000 to 2008, Karen collaborated monthly with writers throughout the U.S. to publish the arts & lit online magazine *Mental Contagion* featuring a national and global community of arts and culture creators. She was invited to be a panel member of *Fostering New Culture on the Internet* at the SXSW 2005 Interactive Festival. As a graduate of Columbia College in Chicago with a background in fine art and creative writing, her approach to art, writing, and design have focused on layering genres and approaches, collaborative work, small publication, and curated collections or stories. Therefore, her own art and writing are imbued with these same qualities.

Karen held a solo residency at the [New York Mills Arts Retreat](#) in 2014 to deepen her work in developing a series of stories and short films. The purpose of the *Public Field Guide* series was to bring to light how culture is changing through the lens of individual stories, with stories about people rethinking how they live and work.

In 2020, Karen acquired six acres of woodland adjacent to a Wild and Scenic River with a vision to install a small art studio. This in-the-making creative workspace follows a slow and mindful approach to understanding human impact and partnership within an ecosystem. The guiding philosophy of Karen's work embraces craft, story, organic process, and idea-sharing, often in context with nature and ecosystems. She completed the Big Woods, Big River program for Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteers in 2022 and, in 2021, she co-presented

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BIO

with David Kopacz, MD on *Shifting Into a Relational Mindset with Nature* at the online event *Toward a New Way of Being With Plants*, keynote speaker Suzanne Simard, author of *Finding the Mother Tree*.

Her writing has been published in *The Fringed Gentian* (via Friends of the Wildflower Garden), *MN Artists*, and *MinnPost*.