

SPENCER MUSEUM'S EXHIBITION 'KANSAS FARMERS' EXPLORES CONTEMPORARY AGRICULTURE¹

Fri, 08/24/2018



LAWRENCE — Fifty photographs of Kansas agriculture are now on view at the Spencer Museum of Art in the exhibition "Larry Schwarm: Kansas Farmers." The images created by Greensburg native and University of Kansas alumnus Larry Schwarm explore the contemporary realities of farm life in Kansas. A [book²](#) of the same title published by University Press of Kansas and edited by Spencer Curator Kate Meyer accompanies the exhibition.

Schwarm created the photographs from 2010 to 2015 as part of the Kansas-based National Science Foundation research project "Biofuels and Climate Change: Farmer's Land Use Decisions." During his time with the project, Schwarm turned his lens toward the agricultural landscapes of Kansas and toward its inhabitants to focus on how farmers represent themselves.



"When this research project was first designed, the Spencer Museum's Director Saralyn Reece Hardy advocated for project leader Dietrich Earnhart to include an artist on his interdisciplinary research team," Meyer said. "That conversation planted the seed that led to this stunning exhibition and book."

Schwarm, a distinguished professor of photography at Wichita State University, depicts the stark horizon of a Kansas skyline, the monotony of monocultures that appear deceptively flat, and the sparseness of rural populations to tell stories about Kansas. These depicted stories are part of the larger research effort conducted by scientists working at Kansas universities, and the exhibition seeks to illuminate that collaboration.

"Schwarm's photographs contain the uniquely local qualities of specific characters, places, economies and practices that reveal the ecological spirit of this region," Meyer said.

["Larry Schwarm: Kansas Farmers"](#)³ will be on view through Jan. 6, 2019.

Related Programming

Sunday, Aug. 26

Up Close: Kansas Farmers

2-3 p.m. / Spencer Museum of Art

Consider the contemporary realities of farm life, from water issues to the monotony of monocultures, through a discussion of the exhibition "Larry Schwarm: Kansas Farmers" led by Curator Kate Meyer.

Sept. 7

Coffee and Conversation with Larry Schwarm

2-3 p.m. / Spencer Museum of Art

Students are invited to get to know visiting artist Larry Schwarm and the ideas explored in his photographs in the exhibition "Kansas Farmers."

Sept. 13

Senior Session: Watching Water in Larry Schwarm: Kansas Farmer

10:15-11:15 a.m. / Spencer Museum of Art

Curator Kate Meyer discusses the role of water in Kansas farming as depicted in Larry Schwarm's photographs in the exhibition "Kansas Farmers." Senior sessions are designed for senior citizens but open to everyone.

Sept. 26

Sounds of the Plains

6:30-7:30 p.m. / Spencer Museum of Art

Vocal ensemble the Meadowlark Project presents a recital of new music exploring ideas of nature and climate and their impact in the American Midwest against the backdrop of Larry Schwarm's photographs in the exhibition "Kansas Farmers." This recital is sponsored by Reach Out Kansas Inc.

Top image: Larry Schwarm, "Weighting tarp with old tires, Brookover Ranch Feed Yard, May 2012," courtesy of the artist.

Right image: Larry Schwarm, "Wheat stubble about three miles west of Colby, Kansas, 2012," courtesy of the artist.

The University of Kansas is a major comprehensive research and teaching university. The university's mission is to lift students and society by educating leaders, building healthy communities and making discoveries that change the world. The KU News Service is the central public relations office for the Lawrence campus.

kunews@ku.edu⁴ | 1450 Jayhawk Blvd., Suite 37, Lawrence, KS 66045

Links on this page:

1. <https://news.ku.edu/2018/08/24/spencer-museum%E2%80%99s-exhibition-kansas-farmers-explores-contemporary-agriculture>
2. <https://kansaspress.ku.edu/978-0-7006-2655-7.html>
3. <https://spencerart.ku.edu/exhibition/larry-schwarm-kansas-farmers>
4. kunews@ku.edu

Contact The University of Kansas

785-864-2700
1450 Jayhawk Blvd.
Lawrence, KS 66045
785-864-2700

All social media at KU »