

Medina 2026 Triennial All That Sustains Us

Key Commissions, Sites, and Curatorial Framework Announced for the Inaugural Edition of the Medina Triennial.

The free, village-wide triennial *All That Sustains Us* will present new commissions by artists including Tania Candiani, Futurefarmers, Ash Arder, and Asad Raza, approaching maintenance as a civic and ecological practice.

Medina, NY, March 16, 2025—The Medina Triennial, a new contemporary art triennial centered in the Western New York Village of **Medina** along the Erie Canal, is pleased to announce key artist commissions, sites, and the theme for its inaugural edition taking place **June 6–September 7, 2026**. **Co-Artistic Directors Kari Conte and Karin Laansoo** have invited artists from across five continents to present site-responsive installations and public programs.

Titled *All That Sustains Us*, this ambitious, free, village-wide exhibition features **more than 100 artworks by 35 artists and collectives**. It marks the first recurring exhibition of this scale to take place in a U.S. community of this size, positioning small-town geographies as vital sites of cultural and critical imagination. Grounded in place and shaped through deep community engagement, the Triennial features new commissions alongside recent and historical works across 12 indoor and outdoor sites.

The curatorial framework of the Triennial sits at the intersection of art, ecology, architecture, and rural contexts and considers **maintenance** not only as a physical act of upkeep, but also as a social, political, and environmental process shaped by fragility and resilience. The Triennial brings together artistic practices that examine how civic and ecological systems are structured by labor, regulation, extraction, and repair. **At its core, the Triennial asks: What essential efforts and commitments are required to sustain life in our fractured world?**

Commissioned artworks include **Ash Arder's** *INT. HOME(S)* (2023/2026), an expanded sculptural installation made from parts of a 1987 Cadillac Sedan de Ville—her family's childhood car—salvaged from a local junkyard and wrapped in gold. Reconstructed as an interactive vessel and a domestic space, the work features a new multi-channel video that traces the artist's Detroit childhood and her relationship with the automobile, which served many roles as home, guardian, and safe space in a factory town. **Tania Candiani's** *Two Waters* (2026), a large-scale filmed performance created with

composer Rogelio Sosa and hundreds of local volunteers, inspired by Medina’s aqueduct, where the Erie Canal crosses above Oak Orchard Creek—two waters that never touch.

Futurefarmers (Amy Franceschini, Michael Swaine, and FS Bässibét) present **48 Collections from the Erie Canal** (2026), a three-part installation that begins with a local legend and expands outward through collective memory. Working with residents, the artists gathered oral histories and archival fragments, translating them into sound and video works, as well as a series of glass sculptures that encase canal sediment.

Matt Kenyon’s *The TELL* (2026) reimagines a champagne tower using glass, Medina sandstone, and roses of Jericho—plants that revive with just a drop of water. A custom atmospheric water generator suspended above the tower draws moisture from the air and releases it unpredictably, creating a fragile, living system in which renewal is never guaranteed. **Asad Raza** imagines a site-specific new work, ***Reflection*** (2026), redirecting the Erie Canal’s water into the Medina Triennial Hub. By physically rerouting water that once powered extraction and trade, the work confronts the canal’s histories of labor and environmental transformation. The installation foregrounds the canal as a living system shaped by human intervention, repurposing its infrastructure for the play of bodies and light. **Kärt Ojavee** collaborates with local farmers on ***Between Blossom and Core*** (2026), an installation exploring scent extraction from Honeycrisp apple blossoms and scent-mapping of Medina’s orchards, soils, and industrial sites.

Triennial sites range from post-industrial buildings to public spaces and locations on the Erie Canal. The **Medina Triennial Hub**, located in a former sandstone hotel overlooking the canal, will serve as a welcome center as well as the home of the Triennial’s residency and education programs. The main exhibition site is 25,000 square feet of the historic **Medina High School** building, which has been closed to students and the public for more than three decades and recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. Artist’s works will be presented at the **Medina Railroad Museum** grounds, **Medina Memorial Hospital**, **Rotary Park**, **State Street Park**, and **Sacred Heart Church**, as well as installations directly on the **Erie Canal**.

“Thinking with artists through a small town like Medina gives us a sharp lens for considering how our shared futures are built and carried forward, and shows why places often seen as peripheral are, in fact, central to responding to the crises shaping our world today,” said **Co-Artistic Directors Kari Conte and Karin Laansoo**. “By bringing artists from across the globe into dialogue with the Erie Canal and Medina’s post-industrial histories, the Triennial fosters new artistic gestures and shared work with local partners. The Triennial invites neighbors and visitors to come together and reflect through art on a time shaped by ecological breakdown and social division—while holding space for hope.”

The Medina Triennial, initiated with major support provided by the **New York Power Authority** and the **New York State Canal Corporation**, was conceived as part of a broader strategy to showcase the Erie Canal as active civic infrastructure.

For more information on the Triennial and to sign up for the official newsletter, please visit medinatriennial.org.

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Press Kit

Press Contacts

For press enquiries, interviews and image requests, please contact:

Cultural Counsel

Stacey Streshinsky, Account Executive
stacey@culturalcounsel.com

Maya Mathur, Account Coordinator
maya@culturalcounsel.com

Artists' Biographies

Ash Arder (b. 1988, Flint, MI; lives and works in Waawiyatanong/Detroit, MI) is a transdisciplinary artist whose research-based practice exposes, deconstructs, and reconfigures physical and conceptual systems—particularly those at the intersection of ecology and industry. Working across installation, sculpture, sound, drawing, electronics, and performance, she manipulates physical and virtual environments to complicate dynamics of power between humans, machines, and the lands they occupy. Arder is a 2025 Knight Foundation Arts + Tech Fellow and a 2023 Joan Mitchell Fellow. Recent exhibitions include the Whitney Biennial 2026, a solo show at Cranbrook Art Museum and group presentations at the Swiss Institute, California African American Museum, and Amant.

Tania Candiani (b. 1974, Mexico City; lives and works in Mexico City) explores translation across visual, sonic, textual, and symbolic languages through installations, performances, and research-based projects. She investigates sound and the politics of listening, engaging histories, ecologies, and technologies of communication through community-based and embodied methods. Candiani often juxtaposes ancestral techniques with contemporary tools, foregrounding craft, fabrication, and oral transmission in interdisciplinary collaborations. She represented Mexico at the 56th Venice Biennale and has produced commissions for major biennials, including Shanghai (2025), Helsinki (2025), and PAAD/Public Art Abu Dhabi (2024). Her work is in collections including Kadist, Tate, SFMOMA, and LACMA.

Futurefarmers (founded 1995, San Francisco) is a collaborative platform of artists, anthropologists, writers, designers, architects, and farmers creating participatory projects rooted in specific places and moments. Their work opens spaces where familiar logics dissolve, inviting encounters that broaden perspectives and unsettle certainty. Through playful entry points, they have reimagined and “disassembled” systems such as food networks, public transportation, and rural farming to reveal how they function—and how communities can change them. Often beginning as temporary public art, their projects can evolve into durable programs that influence public policy and city design. They have exhibited at the Guggenheim, MoMA, the Whitney Biennial, Sharjah Biennial, Taipei Biennial, and the Walker Art Center.

Matt Kenyon (b. 1977, Baton Rouge, LA; lives and works in Buffalo, NY) works across sculpture, software, electronics, and experimental materials to make hidden systems visible and tangible. Recent projects employ atmospheric water generation and hydrophobic treatments applied to stone and glass, using condensation, evaporation, and repulsion as expressive tools. His work has been exhibited internationally at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, MoMA, Science Gallery Dublin, and Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona. Kenyon is a TED Fellow and MacDowell Fellow.

Kärt Ojavee (b. 1982, Estonia; lives and works in Tallinn) is an artist and designer who combines new technologies with traditional craft. She is interested in the transformation of materials over time, and the ways in which materials are in symbiosis with their environment. Ojavee creates experimental materials and has recently been working with various surplus materials, seaweed biomass, minerals and materialities of scent, focusing on the value of matter. She is a professor at the Estonian Academy of Arts' textile department and head of the Craft Studies MA programme together with Juss Heinsalu.

Asad Raza (b. 1974, Buffalo, NY; lives and works in Berlin) creates living situations rather than fixed objects. Moving between installation, film, writing, and collective action, his practice explores how we inhabit ecological, social, and atmospheric systems. Soil, wind, water, light, plants, and bodies recur as collaborators—materials he hosts, listens to, and cares for. Working with scientists, gardeners, musicians, and others, Raza positions the artist as a convener rather than a sole author. His projects have been commissioned by institutions including Mori Art Museum, the Whitney Museum, the Venice Biennale, Gropius Bau, Serpentine Galleries, Guggenheim Bilbao, and Kaldor Public Art Projects.

About the Medina Triennial

The Medina Triennial is a new contemporary art triennial centered in the Western New York Village of Medina along the Erie Canal, which will debut its inaugural edition from June 6–September 7, 2026. Helmed by Co-Artistic Directors Kari Conte and Karin Laansoo, the Triennial aims to become a cultural touchstone for Western New York, offering a dynamic platform for supporting and advancing the contemporary art landscape in the region and drawing an expected 50,000 visitors every three years. Initiated by the New York Power Authority and the New York State Canal Corporation as part of a broader effort to revitalize the canal and highlight its contemporary significance, the ambitious Triennial will feature new commissions by local, national, and international artists and collectives to create a free, village-wide exhibition.

About New York Power Authority

NYPA is the largest state public power organization in the nation, operating 17 generating facilities and more than 1,550 circuit-miles of transmission lines. More than 80 percent of the electricity NYPA produces is clean renewable hydropower.

About New York State Canal Corporation

New York's Canal system includes four canals: the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga–Seneca. Spanning 524 miles, the waterway links the Hudson River with the Great Lakes, the Finger Lakes, and Lake Champlain. The canals connect hundreds of unique communities within the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. The New York State Canal Corporation is a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority.