

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

An Ag and ART EVENT is happening at the Pix Theatre and Gallery 194 this Sunday, January 25th at 3pm. The event includes a lineup of large oil canvases boasting Michigan farms, an agricultural film, artist/farmer talk and a reception serving up local farmers' harvests rolled into delicious hors d'oeuvres created by local eateries around town.

Degrees of Separation: Confronting Our Imprint of the Planet is the exhibit at Gallery 194 which inspired this collaboration featuring the artwork of Jason Cornish. "From small family farms in tune with the land and natural resources to large scale industrial farms, these paintings depict the realities of 21st century farming in America. ...These paintings depict my deep respect for the seemingly impossible amount of human ingenuity and work that must be done to keep an industrialized nation fed," Cornish explains. Cornish, who studied art at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and architecture at Lawrence Technological University among other places, is excited to interact with the agricultural community in Lapeer County.

Cornish will join a local farmer or two on stage for a "talk back" after Sunday's public viewing of award winning film: *Asparagus stalking the American Life*. The film, created by Anne de Mare and Kirsten Kelly, tells the story of Oceana County, Michigan, whose spear-struck residents built their identity and economic survival on asparagus, but now find themselves taking on the U.S. War on Drugs, Free Trade, and the Fast Food Nation, all to save their beloved "roots". *Asparagus! Stalking the American Life* journeys to the heart of Asparagus Country to discover why one little vegetable matters so much. New York Magazine called the film "Oddly Brilliant," and the Kansas City Star heralded the film "A Charmer!"

The Ag and Art Event is sponsored by Lapeer County Farm Bureau, Lapeer Center for the Arts Council, Pix Arts Council, City of Lapeer Downtown Development Authority and the County Press. "We partner at Gallery 194 every chance we get for a variety of reasons. Of course, we get more when we pool our dollars for special events. Given traditional stereotypes, art and agriculture might seem an unlikely union at first glance. However, in Lapeer County it's a fit!" explains Gallery 194/DDA Director Carolyn McCarter. Kelly Lewis, local horticulturalist and Farm Bureau board member, shares that most Michigan residents are three generations removed from direct farm production agriculture. "This idea of separation is at the core of what Cornish expresses in his artwork and what the film artists report in their documentary...where our food comes from and how its production impacts our quality of life and economy in Michigan." "This idea is also a primary part of the Lapeer County Farm Bureau's need to educate a broader audience, which they can access at an event pairing art and agriculture!" McCarter adds.

Jason Cornish also teaches oil painting to youth and adults at Gallery 194. Donations for the event support Lapeer County youth art and agricultural education through Gallery 194 as well as Farm Bureau's Young Farmers and Project RED. The Pix Theatre and Gallery 194 are located on the corner of Court and Nepeessing Streets in downtown Lapeer. Log onto www.gallery194.com for more information or call 810.667.1495.