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Art festival in Cumbria



FLOATING ART: A giant feather will be taken to Tarn Hows.



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RUGGED fells, shimmering lakes and sun-drenched fields will provide the backdrop for Europe's biggest outdoor art festival which will take place in Cumbria from Friday, September 26 to October 12.

Now in its fifth year, FRED is an annual art invasion across Cumbria.

Thirty projects in 40 locations by 45 artists will bring the region's landscape alive with a variety of different events.

This year's highlights will include an entire farm wrapped as hay bales, a 12 foot giant feather, a poetry petrol station, and sounds generated from a lost underwater city.

A programme of guided walks, talks, film screenings and participation events means that there is something for everyone to choose from.

Artist and festival director, Steve Messam, said: "FRED is a countryside response to the London-centric art world and aims to raise the profile of the rural landscape as a venue for contemporary art.

"All FRED projects will be accessible by public transport and some require short, but scenic walks to get to. We want FRED to reach as many audiences as possible – from tourists to locals to art critics – to demonstrate Cumbria's rich arts and culture scene. The FRED projects compliment the region's amazing landscape perfectly and it is our mission to draw the public away from the towns and cities and explore the stunning surroundings."

Artists from as far afield as Southern China will be taking part in this year's FRED. A group from a young architecture company from Shenzhen have produced an interactive light sculpture which will hover eerily in Big Wood, near Tarn Hows, Coniston. Seven thousand soft fibre optic lights will float, illuminating the

secluded woodland every night during FRED.

Tarn Hows will also feature another sculpture when Cumbrian artist, Caroline Dalton, floats her 12 foot feather on the lake. The giant feather will appear as if it has fallen upon the water and will float along in the breeze.

A farmhouse in the Eden Valley will demonstrate the plight of hill farming by being 'wrapped up' in plastic and bailer twine like a haystack. Local farmers will be lending a hand by getting involved in the wrapping.

More information can be found at www.fredsblog.co.uk where is possible to sign up for FRED e-alerts, text alerts, and the Facebook site. The FRED guide will also be found at tourist information centres and other locations across Cumbria.

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