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NORTHEAST MINNEAPOLIS ARTS DISTRICT ANNOUNCES 2017 VISION AWARDS WINNERS

Minneapolis, MN, April 17, 2017—The 2nd Bi-Annual Vision Awards, honoring those who have provided Leadership and Commitment in the Service of Arts, Artists, and Culture were awarded to Aldo Moroni, James Brenner and Dougie Padilla by Josh Blanc, Chair of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District Board of Directors, during a vibrant and heavily-attended celebration held on April 12, 2017 at Chowgirls by Solar Arts, Solar Arts Building, Minneapolis.

Moroni has been in the NE Arts District since before its inception in 2003. An artist and activist, his sculptures are actively collected worldwide, as well as being integrated into Twin Cities neighborhoods—most notably the “6th Avenue Gateway Sculpture” walk through Minneapolis’ Marcy-Holmes neighborhood. He is best known for his hand-sculpted buildings—sometimes tiny, sometimes huge, sometimes complete civilizations—and recently completed (and destroyed) “Trumptopia” at the ChinDian Gallery on East Hennepin. Moroni finds joy and honor being “just one link in a chain of artists through time”. His studio resides in the A Mill Lofts where he generously advises a new generation of artists and continues to produce large- and small-scale pieces.

Brenner’s work includes large-scale, interactive steel sculptures, collaborative, public art projects, and synergistic iron casting events around the United States. A major contributor to the public art experience in Northeast, his work around Edison High School in NE Minneapolis is just one of many examples where his urban, cast iron and glass public sculptures bring artwork into everyday lives. Other public art sculptures are featured in the Chicagoland area as well as throughout Minnesota. Brenner mentioned “Northeast embraces art as a part of what defines it as a community, leading people who come to visit from Switzerland, Seattle, Chicago and New York to relocate here to become a part of this movement.” More information on www.JamesBrenner.com

Padilla, along with Moroni, is a contributing founder of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District. It was his dogged commitment to create a supportive community for artists (after being priced out of numerous neighborhoods) that helped guide the Minneapolis City Council to define the District’s boundaries. A lifetime of extraordinary experiences informs his work which ranges from painting to sculptures to music. Exhibited worldwide, he continues to create at both Dougieland Studios in Pepin, WI and Northeast. He is an avid mentor, often exhibiting with Grupo Soap del Corazón, an artist cooperative he helped form. Padilla describes the District as “entering middle age, having grown from the gangly youngster it was when started.” More information on www.dougiepadilla.com

The evening’s program also included speakers and Northeast Minneapolis residents, Olga Viso, Executive Director of the Walker Art Center, and Cameron Keith Gainer, Conceptual Artist and Publisher of “The Third Rail”. The resources and wide variety of artists in Northeast were key in making their choice in where to settle, along with the availability of funding and the support for non-profits that serve the creative forces.

The night concluded with bouts of applause and a plea for continued community involvement in the District via supporting its “Arts Insights” feature page in the Northeast paper, signing up for a call-to-action committee, and/or writing local representatives to increase support for the resources that working artists need: affordable studio space conducive to a wide range of artistic expression, accommodating zoning, and support for art events.

ABOUT THE VISION AWARDS: These bi-annual awards say “thank you!” to those who paved the path to create the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District, and those who continue working to support artists and sustain their livelihoods. It acknowledges the artists and business owners who came together, many who had been gentrified out of other Minneapolis neighborhoods, to work with politicians and city leaders, stressing the economic and philanthropic values that a thriving, creative sector provides. The Vision Awards celebrate The Northeast Minneapolis Arts District’s uniqueness, its history and its future.

ABOUT THE NORTHEAST MINNEAPOLIS ARTS DISTRICT—Mission: To support artists, arts and culture in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District by encouraging artistic inspiration and creativity, as well as incubating arts related projects while encouraging thoughtful economic growth, tourism, worldwide cultural artistic exchanges, political effectiveness and community connectivity

Formed by The City of Minneapolis in 2003, the geographic boundaries of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District are the Mississippi River on the West, 26th Avenue on the North, Central Avenue on the East and Broadway on the South in the city of Minneapolis, MN. The district contains a diverse mix of businesses, restaurants, parks, art galleries and studios as well as industrial and residential property. Warehouses and rail yards are interspersed with homes, churches and family-run businesses. Artists populate many of the historic and formerly industrial buildings, which have been re-purposed and renovated into studios, galleries and performance spaces. <http://www.northeastminneapolisartsdistrict.org>

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