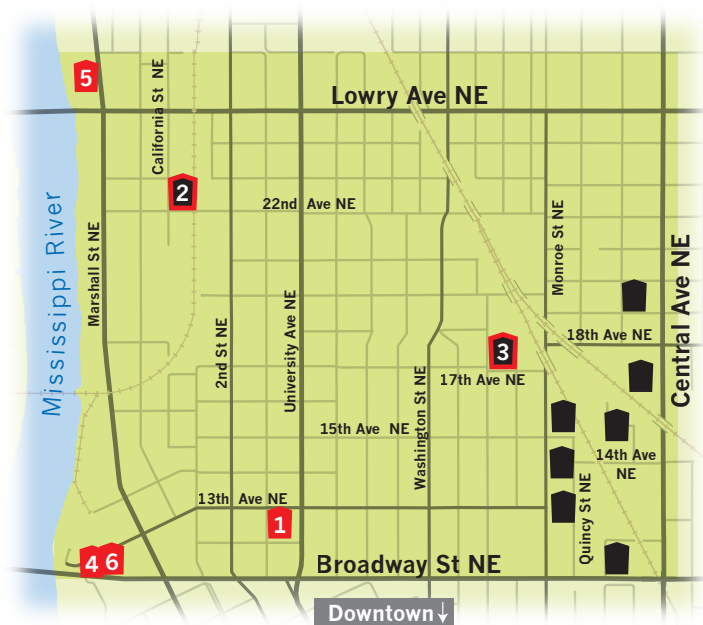




# arts INSIGHTS

A page about artists and The Arts at Work by the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District in collaboration with the Northeaster.



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# Art to Change the World event "See. Say. Do." is October 5-14



Craig Harris performing, at left. Photo by Candy Kuehn ©2017.

Barbara Bridges shows her sculpture to a friend.

More about Art to Change the World artists in our next Northeast Arts Insights.



**by Nick Cocchiarella**  
See. Say. Do. – What’s Your Issue? A group of artists, many from Northeast Minneapolis, will be sharing their works at Art to Change The World’s fall event, “See. Say. Do.”

The event will be held at Squirrel Haus Arts in South Minneapolis on October 5-14, 2018, and will include performances, workshops and an art exhibit. Each artist and their team will present works covering a wide variety of social and environmental justice themes, from mental health awareness and cultural diversity to climate change and economic reform.

Here are the details on two of the presenting artists:

**Craig Harris: The Importance of Humanity**

Craig Harris is a multimedia artist who creates interactive performances and sculptural environments. He is heavily involved in the theater and dance scene as a composer and writer.

Harris’ performance, Sensibility, is a multimedia dramatic work containing sights, sounds, and experiences of people living under sustained occupation in the Palestinian territories. The goal, he writes, is to raise awareness for Continuous Traumatic Stress Disorder (CTSD), a multigenerational mental health condition common in this population.

Harris’s inspiration lies in the intersection between individual freedom and community responsibility. His connection to the art, however, is much more personal, having heard the stories of family members struggling with the Pogroms and being lost to the Holocaust. Harris became familiar with CTSD only last year while helping various family mem-

bers raise money for their refugee camp in Bethlehem. “Through many conversations with them and others there I have been hearing how things have evolved through the generations,” Harris writes. “This has been illuminating for me in understanding their experiences, and also in better understanding the experiences and challenges of disenfranchised communities here in the United States.”

Humanity, Harris writes, is the most important thing to learn from this performance. “It is important that we step outside of political biases and broad media representations to experience the reality of their experience, and to draw connections with things that are happening in our own society today.”

**Barbara Bridges: Open Every Door**

From her beginnings as an East Coast girl collecting shells on the beach outside her house to a scholar and professor at Bemidji State University, Barbara Bridges has spent her life putting old things together and giving them a new story.

Her See. Say. Do. topic, recovery, reflects that mentality, as it focuses not on the negatives of any situation, but on the hope that it can, and will, get better. Her work – a large, wood contraption of drawers containing varying types of totems – is entitled “Today, I’m Alright.” Having experienced trauma and recovery in her personal and professional life, Bridges had a lot of time to contemplate different healing strategies. “Because I’ve learned so much about this topic, I really feel as though I have an ethical responsibility to share what I know,” she says. “Everything in this sculpture is

a practical solution for someone who is suffering from trauma, or trying to recover from trauma.”

Prominent totems in the sculpture are sculpted objects of different shapes and sizes that Bridges calls “doorknobs,” which she says are a satirical nod to twelve-step programs labeling higher powers as doorknobs. People have the option to take a doorknob home if they wish. “I ended up really liking these little doorknob sculptures; it’s gonna be hard to let them go,” she says.

All doorknobs aside, the one thing Bridges says people should take from her art is hope. Recovery, she says, is an involved transformation that takes time, patience, and a willingness to change.

Bridges said, “Recovery is way more complicated than Just Say ‘No.’”

**Russ White: The ironies of coins and currency**

“I chose money because it’s a funny thing. It has value but also asserts the moral values of a culture with bold statements, such as “Liberty,” Russ White said, of his latest series of work, Local Currencies, which was on display through August at the University of Minnesota in the Coffman Art Gallery. A similar show, Loose Change, appeared at the Hopkins Center for the Arts earlier.

“Liberty is an ironic slogan for the nation with the highest incarceration rate in the world. I wanted to do work that makes us think about our values, about what actually makes us rich.”

White started in 2014 using ink and watercolor to draw still lives of paper money, crumpled. He found coins to be more simple and Spartan. “There’s a magic to them, like time-stamped history.” The brain is attracted to shiny metal objects, but there’s a humility in the denominations, “you see a coin on the ground, maybe it’s not worth picking up.”

In a June 30 talk at Clare Housing arranged by Brendozone, he talked about his process, starting with images of people found online, graduating to photographing friends. He would do digital mockups in Photoshop, projecting reference marks to be made in charcoal and then connecting the dots. The current work is in colored pencil. He always starts with the nose; it has the brightest highlights and darkest shadows. The subject’s birth year becomes the date on the coin.

He deliberately sought images of people whose bodily signifiers would be different from the white men on our coins. “Think of it, we’re carrying around tiny portraits of slave owners in our pockets... There is a lot in our nation’s history that shouldn’t be celebrated, but reckoned with.”

The “Liberty” image that won a second place in the NEMAA Fall Fine Arts Show 2016 is of a black woman.

“Our true values don’t come through in our speeches or slogans, they do come through in our policies and our budgets.”

White, himself a white man, said he was “self-conscious about not wanting to tokenize anyone,” and



Top: “Liberty,” colored pencil on paper, 39x26”

Bottom: “Liberty (Cuffs),” colored pencil on painted panel, 24 x 20”

Images courtesy of Russ White

during Q&A further explored the topic of “virtue signaling,” using other people’s identities to show how liberal you are. “Two-thirds of the way through the project, I realized every person was from the Minneapolis arts scene. It’s a partial portrait of my community.”

by Margo Ashmore

**Many Northeast-based artists show at the State Fair**



Leslie Barlow’s “Stephen, Jeffrey and Twins” won three awards at the Minnesota State Fair, including purchase by the Minnesota Museum of American Art, White Bear Center for the Arts and Metropolitan Regional Arts Council awards.

We’ll take a closer look at this Northrup King Building artist’s work and philosophy, along with listing other Northeast area artists whose work appeared and/or placed at the fair, in our October 3 edition Northeast Arts Insights page.

Photos by Margo Ashmore

**Architectural elements to be explored at Pecha Kucha**

Sunday September 30, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Rogue Buddha Gallery, 357 13th Ave. NE, is the next NE Pecha Kucha 20 x 20.

Ten local artists will be showing images on the screen, with conversation following the short display. The theme this time is artists who create work that could be used as architectural elements. The public is invited to attend, with special invitation to developers to encourage them to use local artists in the projects they are planning in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District.

The following artists are presenting: David Baer, Brian Billadeau, Josh Blanc, Lisa Elias, Reggie LeFlore, Jeff Lohaus, Dan Mather, Aldo Moroni, Sheryl Tuorila, and Peter Vanni.

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