Airport Commissions NE Artisans

by Josh Blanc and Karen Wilcox

Mercury Mosaics (mercurymosaics.com), Sightline Tile (www.sightlinetile.com), and Sheryl Tuorila Fine Art Tile (sheryltuorila.com) were recently awarded commissions by The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) to create tile and glass murals for the Minneapolis – St. Paul International Airport restrooms as part of a $12 million, three-year airport renovation project.

Minnesota, and specifically the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District, is home to one of the largest concentrations of handmade tile and mosaics artisans in the country (Handmade Tile Association, LLC).

With “Minnesota Landscape” as the concept and local talent as the resource, MAC expanded its plan to welcome travelers to Minnesota and showcase the Minnesota experience with local food, music, and art. For more info: http://airportfoundation.org/programs-services/arts-cultural-commissioned-artwork/restrooms.

The Northeast Arts District artists, each create bold and colorful glass and tile work in a unique style with personal interpretations of local and statewide iconography.

Amy Baur and Brian Boldon of Sightline Tile are designing a mural with area photographs fused to glass featuring Northeast Minneapolis. Sheryl Tuorila has traveled throughout Minnesota to research the beauty of our natural landscape. She has created a body of handmade tile work for her mural.

The Mercury Mosaics mural was installed in the airport mall in March. Mercedes Austin says that her team Carol Bell and Satori Tii, “built a design focusing on the active Minneapolis lifestyle with biking, canoeing and the lakes.”

Sheryl Tuorila Fine Art Tile, Sightline Tile, and Mercury Mosaics will be open to the public during First Thursdays open studios and Art-A-Whirl. Stop by, talk to the artists, and see their work in progress.

“First impressions are important. That’s why art is a major part of MSP Airport’s restrooms facelift,” states the Airport Foundation website. Over 300 restrooms (each restroom gets used an estimated 7,000 times a day, according to MSP) will be refurbished as “state of the art ‘welcome’ centers, introducing travelers to our state and its vibrant, eclectic arts community.”

Art-A-Whirl needs volunteers

NEMAA is looking for volunteers to assist during Art-A-Whirl, the annual open studio art tour, in Northeast Minneapolis May 20-22 and prior to the event. More than 100 volunteers will be needed for Art-A-Whirl and the Art-A-Whirl Silent Auction Fundraiser.

A fun way to participate in this beloved event, volunteer shifts take place from April 30 to May 23. Tasks include distributing the Artist Directory & Guide, helping with the Silent Auction, greeting on the trolleys, greeting at the Art-A-Whirl information booths and Silent Auction. There will be one-hour volunteer orientation sessions with free Art-A-Whirl T-shirts and refreshments at Betty Danger’s Country Club in May.

For more detail and to sign up, go to www.NEMAA.org/art-a-whirl/volunteer.