

# Northeast Arts Insights



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## Wintertide: A review

by Jay Gabler



Emme Glidden: Arboreal

Wintertide, the biennial juried art exhibit of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association, collects 29 pieces that represent the diverse techniques and interests of the artists working in the area. The show is open Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, Noon - 6 p.m. with extended evening hours on Friday, Feb. 10, 7 to 11 p.m., closing Feb. 11. Some of the pieces that hit hardest, understandably, have political resonance. Most fascinating, and chilling, is Brian Boldon's sculpture *American Feral*. Two white porcelain pig faces with mud-spattered snouts flank a third that's

been bashed in, revealing that behind its dark inner lining it's simply hollow. The Animal Farm association is unmistakable, and Marjorie Fedy-syn's *Bound Leather II* lurks around a corner as a haunting companion piece. There, black leather is sewn tightly around another wall-mounted shape that might or might not be a human head. More poignant is Amro Sallam's *Ezbe Abu Qarn*. A delicately painted but chaotic Cairo roofscape is seen from over the shoulders of two young children — one of whom perches precariously on a beam, surveying the dense and haphazardly developed city where he or she will find a future. It finds an echo in Dan Marshall's photograph *Wide Open*, in which two children huddle together on a rock that breaks through the darkening surface of Lake Superior; they're seemingly uncertain as to whether they want to jump in. Other artists impress with technique. Awarded Best in Show, CL Martin's *Actor IV* is a haunting mixed-media black-and-white portrait, the high-cheekboned subject agape at something just beyond our view. Eric Cornett's *Reeds, Reflected* is a delicate painting of mirrored aquatic foliage that seems to float in a grey void. Photographer John Rodman uses a carbon-

based printing system to achieve striking contrast and rich gradation in *Cemetery — Native American School, SD*. The show's more whimsical pieces are generally less successful. Sometimes an Indian goat in a sweater is just...well, an Indian goat in a sweater, as with Donna Meyer's oil painting of that title. Kat Corrigan's painting *Screen Door Surveillance* puts a desperate-looking dog in your face at large scale; it's unsettling, and not in a good way. Carolyn Kleinberger's oil painting *Together in the Mudbath* is full of soupy bonhomie, but leaves the viewer wondering what more might have been accomplished with this visually interesting subject. The show's most intriguing Rorschach test might be Emme Glidden's oil painting *Arboreal*. A woman stands before rolling green hills, white branches growing upwards from her bare shoulders; one shoulder holds a living bird, the other a dead bird. In a statement, the artist writes that the figure is in a moment of "transformation" within "the full circle of life and death." Seasons change, and in this particular season this personification of nature looks deeply annoyed. Can you blame her?

Reviewer Jay Gabler is a writer and editor living in Minneapolis, a digital producer at Minnesota Public Radio, editing and writing for the websites of *The Current* and *YourClassical*. He is also a co-founder of *The Tangential*, and has authored or co-authored seven books. He is the principal theater critic at *City Pages*, and contributes to *Artforum.com* as well as other publications.

## Hex House: Crisis housing prototype planned in NE

by Josh Blanc and Karen Wilcox

Disaster strikes. A hurricane, earthquake, tsunami, terror attack, war: hundreds of people flee for their lives. They lose everything except what they can carry. Natural and human-made calamities affect hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. The average stay in a refugee camp is seventeen years, according to Northeast architect Amro Sallam. Think about that. Sallam, executive director of the nonprofit Architects for Society and his twelve-member team have devised an affordable and exceptional solution: Hex House. The Hex House is designed to solve some of the challenges of constructing transitional and long term housing in critical situations. Awarded "Best of the Best" by the German Design Council for visionary architecture, the first Hex House prototype is planned for construction in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District in time for Art-A-Whirl. Sallam is intent on utilizing NE community resources, including locally-sourced materials and art. He is currently seeking space to build the prototype; and a fundraising campaign for the project has been set up on Indiegogo. Sallam is a recent transplant to the Arts District



A video about the Hex House can be found at: <https://youtu.be/IK12vkvxUwA>

from Switzerland where he worked at the world-famous architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron (Walker Art Center). He was born in Cairo, Egypt and traveled around the world. He has lived in Illinois, California and Mankato, Minnesota where his father was a professor. He went to school in Los Angeles at SCI-Arc (Southern California Institute of Architecture). We asked him why he set up shop in NE Minneapolis. Sallam explained that he wanted to be immersed the arts community; as a fellow artist, it seemed like a perfect fit for Architects for Society to construct the first Hex House. A major goal for the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District is to attract artists from all over the world: to draw substantial talent, bring forward challenging ideas and continue to build the profile of a sustainable creative community. We look forward to seeing the world's first Hex House to be built in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District.

## NE Mpls Arts District Board Update

by Karen Wilcox

Our 10-member Board of Directors welcomes new member Damian Kussian. Damian, a professional filmmaker who specializes in documentary film, is a Minneapolis native and has called Northeast Minneapolis home for the last fourteen years. He has created films on a large variety of subjects, such as: NFL Sports Fans, Newly Naturalized US Citizens, WWII Aviators, Seeds, The Rise of Comedy in Asia, and Art-A-Whirl. Damian has received three Regional Emmy awards, including one for a short video he and his crew at Flyover Films created during 2015 Art-A-Whirl. He has documented the stories of many local artists, community leaders, various local events and working on collaborative projects with other creatives in the community. Damian is currently working on many projects, including a documentary about the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District. Board Member Tom Dunnwald has been invited to participate in the Minneapolis 2040 planning for a unified vision about investment in the built, natural, and economic environment. The Northeast Minneapolis Arts District Board of Directors wishes to extend a warm thank you to Mary Cassidy of Maeve's for her service as a Board Member since its formation in 2014. She'll continue working with the Board in an Advisory role.



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