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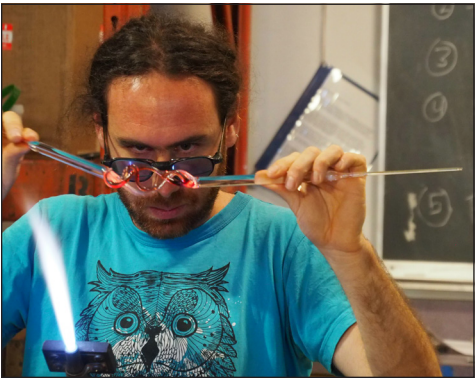
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du monde: Master glass class transcends

by Margo Ashmore

Students' minds and hands seemed to flex and stretch as much as the hot glass they manipulated, as William Geffroy guided them through making the flowing tentacles, bulbous head and curious eyes of an octopus at Potekglass Studio in the California Building on June 11. From France, Geffroy is a glass artist in "monde & objet de curiosite" (world and object of curiosity).

"Turn, turn, turn" Geffroy commanded, holding a stick of color to the hot edge of a clear rod as he turned it in the torch flame, "push" to gather mass. And later, "notice how he gathers a little color on the punty so it doesn't leave a clear spot," said studio owner and glass artist Malcom Potek.



William Geffroy lets gravity shape a glass tentacle.

A punty is the rod connected to the glass that is being worked in the flame. Building the octopus, working the second set of four tentacles relied on a punty attached to one of the previous four.

Class members found out first-

hand what happens if the punty contact is not at a point of balance. Hot glass starts to collapse toward a right angle and has to be realigned with some quick back and forth turns for even heat. Sometimes, a tentacle has to be sacrificed and another teased out from a better contact point. Heat and gravity create flowing tentacles if the initial pull was too straight.

"Difficile," Geffroy smiled. "Especially when you're shaking," laughed a student after a harrowing save.

In this Visiting Artist master class at Potekglass Studio in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District, eight students ranging in aptitude from beginner to teacher kept up pretty well. Geffroy stepped in to help as appropriate, and while a

translator friend was standing by, demonstration, gesture, and a few English commands usually sufficed. It was Geffroy's first master class. He explained that in France, he teaches "one student, not eight."

On the first of the two days, the class learned to make sea horses, turtles, dolphins, fish and jellyfish.

"As an artist it is invaluable to be able to share ideas and techniques from diverse backgrounds," Potek reflected. "It is amazing to me how folks from different backgrounds and approaches often work toward the same goals."

Foci - Minnesota Center for Glass Arts (2010 E. Hennepin Ave.) organized the French American Glass Exchange, and Potekglass partnered. The French artists working in different aspects of glass showed and sold their work at the Stone Arch Festival June 16-18.

Arts history: Winter wheat and geography

by Brenda Kayzar, PhD

Although not generally linked to arts, winter wheat and geography played an important role in shaping Minneapolis' creative economy. Early in the 20th century the region eschewed heavy industry to favor food production, an option afforded by a bounty of winter wheat. High levels of production and processing mechanization and the shift from bulk to packaged goods meant a preponderance of labor was needed in logistics, design and marketing.

Processed foods needed to 'arrive' at stores nationwide and to 'catch the eye' of consumers. The need for skilled creative labor fueled opportunities for generations

of graduates from area universities, and fostered numerous creative sub-economies in photography, film, music and design. The geography of winter wheat production also prompted self-sufficiency. Located outside Chicago's sphere of influence, remoteness ensured deeper development of arts organizations and activity. An educated workforce that desired an arts milieu established the funding and organizational institutions necessary to support the arts, and populated this realm as well.

Northeast Minneapolis housed other manufacturers, but by the mid-20th century job losses to mechanization and off-shoring left

empty buildings threaded throughout the community. Unlike the hulking heavy industry edifices found in Detroit however, these smaller spaces held the potential for adaptive reuse. When smaller manufacturers failed to rematerialize the industriousness of property owners, artists and makers coalesced to adapt spaces to the needs of the still growing creative economy.

The legacy of winter wheat and geography remains relevant. The region is still embedded in food production, and skilled labor needs endure. The region is dependent on producing and attracting creative labor, and creatives continue to seek unique work spaces.

The sustainability discussion is more relevant than ever, since the revitalization narrative suggests creatives invest sweat equity in trans-

forming moribund spaces, but are pushed out along with long-time residents as demand and property values increase.

Maintaining and expanding smaller-scale, flexible spaces such as those found in the studio buildings and other underutilized industrial and commercial buildings in Northeast however, would ensure the tenure of a necessary creative skilled labor force, and the continued growth of the creative economy.

So I offer the region's history, entrenched in winter wheat and geography, for its insight into how Minneapolis once wrote its own unique industrialization narrative. Consider winter wheat and geography as an example then, of the possibility that this city and region might once again write its own revitalization narrative; one with a better conclusion.

Jim Stanton, of NK Building

by Margo Ashmore

Jim Stanton has passed away at age 81.

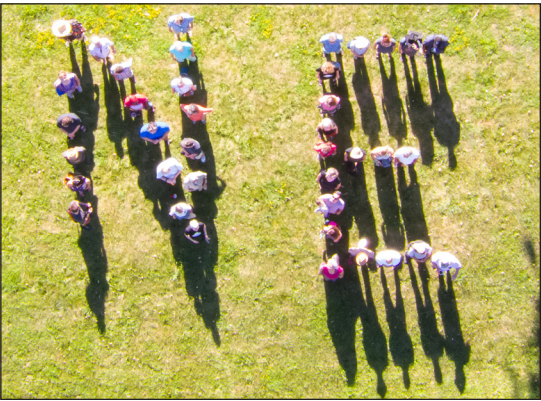
In a 2014 video commemorating his induction to the Minnesota Real Estate Hall of Fame, he talked about how Keith Harstad asked "what would you do if we could buy 780,000 square feet for \$2 million?" The project, the Northrup King Building, Stanton said, was "the only project I ever had that had no mortgage on it and still lost money. Subsequently, my daughter Debbie runs that."

Debbie Woodward has managed and expanded the improved space

in the building, promoted events with hundreds of artists, art-related businesses, entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations.

She went beyond, getting involved in the neighborhood and the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District. She was a driving force and huge backer of the organization's website, signage and other efforts in the formative days.

In the video interview Stanton reflected on the work ethic and business ethics his own father instilled in him, and it's clear he did the same for the next generation. Thank you, Jim and Debbie.



Artists at the first "Northeast Influential" potluck picnic June 21 at Gluek Park. A chance to relate, without boundaries or agenda, except for the wranglers with their drone. (Photo by Noah Wolf, Inc.)

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