

# Northeast Arts Insights



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## Flowers: More than meets the eye



**Lisa Elias' latest: Morning Glory & Moonflower**

Lisa Elias installed “Morning Glory and Moonflower,” about 20 feet wide by 18 feet tall in painted steel, for the City of St. Louis Park at 4800 Excelsior Blvd., contracted through Forecast Public Art. The installation creates a wall relief that incorporates lighting and bike racks for a new development where the new Fresh Thyme Farmer’s Market is.

“Over 300 morning glory leaves have been cut, formed, forged and welded in my Northeast studio,” Elias said. “There is LED lighting along the back side where at dusk, the light shines and turns the piece into moonflowers.”

In nature, bright-colored morning glories which bloom during the day, and white moonflowers which bloom at night, are often planted together as they have similar cultural needs. They thrive in poor soil as long as it can drain, and with a little guidance they’ll grow up trellises as the sculpture shows.

Elias, who works from her stand-alone studio at 1129 Van Buren Street where she has worked for more than 20 years, has a public art resume of more than 20 years as well. Her first commission was for the Bakken Museum’s medicinal garden, and most recently she integrated art into public streetscapes in Saint Paul.

Her work can also be found in Minneapolis City Hall, along the Central Corridor Green Line, and Loring Bikeway, and elsewhere in Minnesota.

**Amy Rice installation at Augsburg University**

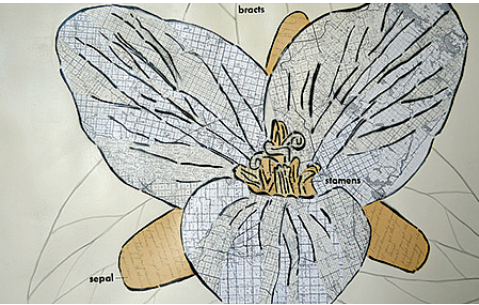
Amy Rice, an artist in the California Building, has created a body of six large pieces of mixed media artworks on paper installed for Augsburg University. The work from a distance looks like botanical textbook illustrations but as viewers get closer they will discover text from antique letters from early Minnesotans, topographical maps of parts of Minnesota, and students’ homework.

Rice, an Augsburg alumni, grew up on a Wisconsin dairy farm and was going to be a farmer again. To her surprise, her paintings of the farming process sold better at her first farmers market than did her vegetables. “That was the beginning

of what is now my art career,” she said.

“The picking of the Minnesota wildflowers... has an element of stewardship and taking care of the land that you live on.” Augsburg’s commitment to the art-seeking process, she said, “[was] just the beginning point to ask the larger community to have input about what goes on the wall. It’s not just my voice...but the community’s voice.”

Rice was one of many artists whose work was integrated into and affected the design of the new Hagfors Center for Science, Business, and Religion. The structure’s two arms reach out, engaging alumni, faculty, students and public. A series of video interviews with the artists is available on YouTube. Look for Art & Identity.



## Home to art, and so many more assets

Within Logan Park neighborhood’s boundaries lies about one-fourth the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District’s land, a half-dozen of its major buildings and many more influences.

Michael Tolan, in a project of Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, compiled these assets and many interview stories into a map and website which will be linked to this story in “news” on MyNortheast.com.

He tells of Mat Somlai’s “Block Studios” modeled on Little Free Libraries, but for art creations and supplies.

Tolan discovered that the General Mills plant

at 1201 Jackson Street, while down from 36 employees 34 years ago, to 13 today, is still operating. It produces the oat flour for Cheerios, and has developed such tight separation from other products as to be labeled gluten free.

We will look at the changes coming to the Quincy Street corridor for a future article, through Tolan’s work.

The project’s site was created in partnership with CGIS at the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. <http://umn.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Shortlist/index.html?appid=6405b696e-1494523ba7f0d94b506745c>



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Images courtesy of the artists:  
At left, Morning Glory and Moonflower in daytime, for scale, and at night. Works of painted steel, by Lisa Elias.  
At right, details from Six Minnesota Wildflowers to Meet and Know, by Amy Rice. Works of Enamel, Acrylic, Ink and Antique Paper. Larger image is Spatterdock. The fish are upside down or sideways print from books and the reeds are composed of sheet music. The smaller image is detail from Snow Trillium, where the flower petals are made of maps.