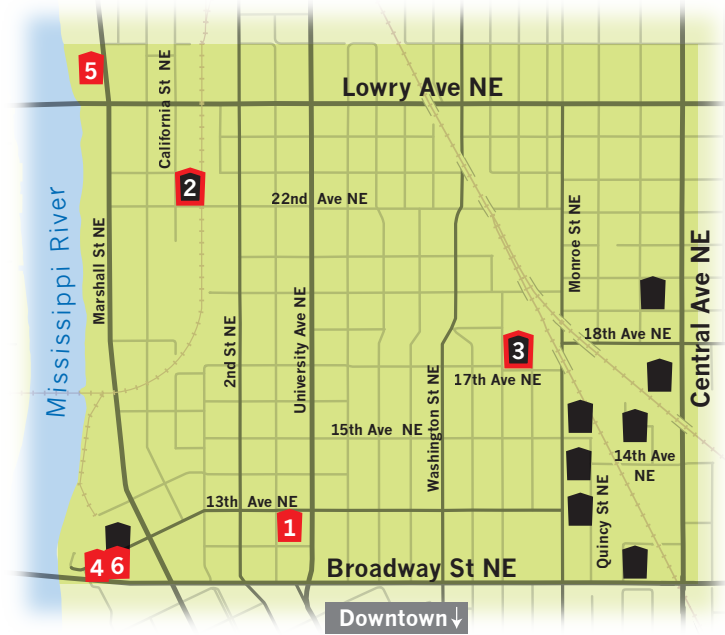




# arts INSIGHTS

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



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## Make a “device monster” or listen to your heart

by Nick Cocchiarella

When Layl McDill’s daughter was in high school, she confiscated her phone, then decided to make art.

A sculptor who has presented at multiple art shows and fairs around the world, McDill’s topic for Art to Change the World is “persuasive devices.” She explores the way technological devices and apps are designed to draw their users in, often causing addiction. Her work, which she has dubbed “the device monster,” is a clay creature with its head perpetually bent towards the screen of its phone.

Unlike some of her other projects, McDill says this has required a fair amount of research, yet it’s a part of our everyday life. “It’s so easy for people to discuss it; anytime I go anywhere, it comes up all the time,” she says.



McDill plans to host a two-hour long workshop discussing the pros and cons of persuasive devices, teaching basic sculpting techniques, and giving participants the opportunity to walk away with their very own miniature device monster.

“I’ve never taught a class with

that kind of a specific viewpoint, so we will all see how that evolves.” It is open to all audiences, but McDill encourages parents to make an appearance, as she hopes to foster awareness of what technology is capable of doing.

“I think a lot of parents thought, ‘Oh, that’s cute!’ at first, and ‘Oh, look, they can figure it out!’ but that’s because they designed them that way so kids don’t ever want to stop. Technology is a blessing and a curse; making that distinction is up to us.”

The workshop will be at Art to Change The World’s fall event, “See. Say. Do. What’s Your Issue?” at Squirrel Haus Arts in South Minneapolis on October 5-14. For a full schedule of performances, workshops and art exhibit hours, go to [arttochangetheworld.org](http://arttochangetheworld.org). There are many social and environmental justice themes, from mental health awareness and cultural diversity to climate change and economic reform.

Another Northeast artist participating is Anne Kleinhenz. An artist, social activist, lover of archaeology, she’s traveled to places ranging from Alaska and the Pacific Northwest, to Tirana and the Egyptian pyramids.

Kleinhenz’s work is centered around the concept of “heart listening” with an emphasis on “soul activism,” the idea that our intentions and motives come from the heart.

Her installation art will include two ladders – one hanging horizontally on the wall, the other lying vertically on the floor – with pictures related to angelic themes and the divine feminine images between the rungs; a contained “contemplation cove” with relevant pictures, messages, and a



place to think in relative solitude.

Kleinhenz says rather than focusing on the big picture of social justice topics, her art focuses where it all starts. “Change comes from within, and that is reflected out in the world.” Kleinhenz’s art is always a work in progress. “It doesn’t really get put together until all the elements are on site, and then I almost have to in some ways start over.” Kleinhenz hopes to encourage us to shine our own individual light onto the world. “Listen to our small still voice within to make a stand for other human voices in every corner on our beloved planet,” she writes. “WE are not separate. WE are all ONE.”

### Jamie Schumacher book release on history of Altered Aesthetics Gallery

“It’s Never Going To Work” by Minneapolis arts advocate Jamie Schumacher shines a spotlight on the Northeast arts community, community nonprofits, and Altered Esthetics gallery. The book features origins of Altered Esthetics gallery, founded in 2004, and its role in the growing Twin Cities art scene. The release event will be held at Eat My Words Bookstore, 214 13th Ave. NE, on Tuesday, Oct. 9, 7-8 p.m., including a curated pop-up exhibit featuring past Altered Esthetics artists. Both Schumacher and illustrator Athena Currier will be present. Info: [jamie-schumacher.com](http://jamie-schumacher.com).



## Exploring race and identity

by Margo Ashmore

Leslie Barlow’s next project will be about her grandmothers, “not only because I find them fascinating people, but...I want to tell the history of race relations through their eyes. How we in America create our identities, how narratives placed upon us affect those identities, and how what we think we know can shift depending on who we meet or where we move.”

Her work, which is due at a show in Winona in March 2019, is funded by a Minnesota State Arts Board grant, and is in its research phase.

As the oldest of her parents’ children, she was the first mixed race grandchild, and hers is the only mixed-race family for both sides. “Some people have their built-in prejudices, then once it becomes personal, they might think ‘I shouldn’t think that way’ but there are residues,” Barlow said. “There’s no one story (of growing up mixed race). There are lots of complexities. There are not a lot of books that tell you what to do. It IS getting better because there are folks trying to change the narrative.”

Much of her earliest work, circa 2011, was about identity and as part of that, race. Even in the “Loving” series exhibited in 2017, Barlow would leave areas of a painting unfinished as a way of indicating identity as fluid, evolving, and intersectional; a story with parts left to be written.



Barlow paints life-size, and found that while she loves painting on large panels, those are difficult to pack and expensive to ship to galleries for shows. Especially since she has started to incorporate textiles sewn onto her canvases, she has found ways to display them anchored with grommets and pins, and to be able to roll them up for transport. She was delighted to find out that one of her idols, Kerry James Marshall, uses grommets to hang his work.

Was he a mentor? No, she laughed, “I hope to meet him someday! But I’ve had lots of mentors,” professors at Minneapolis College of Art and Design. “And now I mentor, and I’ve had interns.”

In a critique with her peers, there was positive feedback on the incorporation of, and the choice of, the textiles. “It is visually intriguing. They felt I am on the cusp of something



and they suggested making my own textiles.”

So she will likely be learning to replicate fabric patterns depicted in thousands of family photos she’s combing through as she learns about her grandmothers from interviewing them and her own parents.

Barlow teaches at Juxtaposition Arts and the University of Minnesota, is on the leadership team of MidWest Mixed and the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association board. “I get fed from teaching and the other spaces I am in,” she said. “It can get lonely in the studio and can start to feel like work, so it’s nice to be in community and inspired by the other creatives in this city.”

Photos courtesy of the artist: Leslie Barlow with her grandmothers, and “C-3PO Leslie Authentic Self Portrait”

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