**Inside look at the art and business of sculpture**

by Margo Ashmore and Josh Blanc

It’s rare to find sculptures “talking to each other across a landscape,” with the various elements serving functions other than decoration. One such place is in Northeast Minneapolis, the “Green Campus” of Edison High School and Jackson Square Park along 22nd Avenue between Jackson Street and Monroe Street, where James Brenner’s latest creation celebrates the hydrologic (water) cycle amid its representation of clouds outside the Edison gym building.

Chains, 830 of them, look like rain chains, like rain even when there’s no water flowing. The sculpture is plumbed and has pumps to recirculate water. It will be operated on special occasions. The corner is covered in steel into which a rendition of the Mississippi River is cut and lit. Grasses planted last year represent the “Ear.”

A recent international conference on public art toured the area, and a curator from China “saw the cohesion,” Brenner said. She shared that she is putting together a series of light sculptures and found his work inspiring.

In fact, several entities have caught Brenner’s enthusiasm and vision, seeing fit to fund different parts of the evolution since Brenner, then in Chicago, first started working with the Holland neighborhood about a decade ago. He moved here, his studio is in part of the flexible Casket “Factory” space shared with other public artists, welders and metal workers.

Brenner’s signature materials are corten which weather into a rusty but stable patina, and hand-sculpted glass fibit from behind or within with LEDs. He points out that the difference in price when one can purchase a glassed one in corten, Brenner’s signature materials

The sculpture business employs a talented crew of four associate artists, all of whom have master’s degrees, in various fabrication and project management roles. Like any business, they’re mindful of completing jobs to make rent and payroll on time.

“Lucky and blessed,” Brenner said, “but still scrapping.”

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**Galleries surge and new art buildings emerge**

To an audience of about 120, double the previous attendance record for an Arts DistrictHatch Pechakucha, 11 presenters talked about their different reasons and models for art spaces or art buildings July 23 at the Ritz Theater. (See page 8, July 31, 2019 Northeaster.)

It was a celebration of variety. Some artists went into the gallery business because they couldn’t get shown in other galleries. All have a desire to see artists succeed and get paid. Many have cooperative time-sharing models, or find other ways to not take huge commission percentages. Some subsidize the percentages. Some subsidize the artist’s time-sharing models, or find other ways to not take huge commission percentages. Some subsidize the percentages. Some subsidize the artist’s time-sharing models, or find other ways to not take huge commission percentages.

The Anchor Fish & Chips

**Arts District’s new website and 365 program**

When the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District’s “District 365” program is underway, we hope visitors (from out of town or local) won’t be able to say “I went to your buildings but didn’t find anything open.”

That’s because they’ll be directed to one featured working artist’s studio any day between noon and 5 p.m. The time frame emphasizes what’s unique about this arts district—the fact that primarily, it’s a place where artists work.

It’s up to the featured artist whether they simply allow visitors to browse their process or give demonstrations at specific times. It’s even been suggested that this is an opportunity to have special guests or groups come in for art-related discussions, or “office hours” for anyone looking for public interaction.

Meet Minneapolis, folks who staff the Visitors Center downtown, and the Northeaster newspaper will be engaged to promote the newly-redesigned website, www.neartsdistrict.org, where featured artists will be highlighted in an easy to use calendar format, accessible from the moment they’re posted, so that out-of-town visitors or even local groups programming programs far ahead can see who’s doing what when.

District 365 will launch an Open District weekend, November 1, 2 and 3, assuming the calendar fills up sufficiently. Artists will be receiving promotional materials explaining the effort soon.

For occasions that don’t fit the “working artist” model of District 365, the calendar is available for listing events so that visitors don’t have to consult several sites to figure out what’s going on.

Arts and interested public alike, for more info on the calendar and District 365, can visit the website. www.neartsdistrict.org.

—Margo Ashmore and Nicholas Harper District 365 planning committee