

Artists comment on NKB's pending sale

by **Josh Blanc, President, Northeast Minneapolis Arts District Board of Directors**

Rumors have been floating about that the Northrup King Building (NKB), 1500 Jackson St. NE was to be sold, after Jim Stanton of Shamrock Properties died June 17, 2017. Stanton's daughter Debbie Woodward, has been the longtime building manager of the NKB. Woodward was in general very tight-lipped about the situation but had said that there was a process underway.

On Friday Sept. 13 Artspace announced they have a purchase agreement with the NKB. It was a bombshell for most of the community who feared any sale was going to seriously change the dynamic of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District. A building with more than 300 artists changing hands is a big deal for any community. I reached out to many artists that work in the NKB to find out what they are thinking. Here are some comments they expressed.

Glass Artist Dan Mather

"We've known about this for at least 10 months, so it was no surprise. Glad to have it, and probably the best-case buyer (Artspace)."

We've been assured that this will not affect the current artists' rental wing. I've been heading up the NKB Marketing Cooperative for the last six months, and I'm hoping the new owners will be supporting our promotional marketing efforts (I believe they will be), and will help improve interior and exterior signage and add an additional passenger elevator. I also hope we can make a handicapped access for the south lot entrance.

I also hope they develop the un/underused West building into artists' live/work space, as well as develop the six-story section into condos. (I would buy one in a heartbeat.) We also hope to have a coffee shop/café and a wine bar added.

I think there will be a lot of changes, and all of them for the better. The ability to have access to a variety of disciplines in the building. I've made use of welders and other

metal and woodworkers for larger projects, and I've been called in when other artisans needed glass components to their projects. We get good weekend and event traffic, and since running radio ads we've seen better weekday traffic too. It's also nice, as a self-employed artisan, to have an active community in the building so I never feel isolated as I did in our old space.

Sculptor Daphne Koop

My raw thoughts are cautiously optimistic. We of course are in a wait-and-see mode, but I think the choice of purchaser is appropriate, and so far I have not heard anything that makes me too nervous.

Changes I am hoping for are more open studio/galleries, with more regular hours. I believe that in order to have a viable Arts District, we need to have more artists available and open so that if visitors come looking, they will find something to see. I think a café or coffee shop on the property would be wonderful and provide an additional draw. I personally would love to see a NKB gallery on the main floor, run by gallery professionals that would showcase work by all of the artists in the building and that would employ professional sales staff.

As for making and selling out of NKB, I love the vibe, energy and creativity of the place, as well as the quality of the art and artists there. The building is big enough to at-

tract people to it, and I certainly appreciate that, however, as every artist knows, that is no guarantee of sales. Still, I make art not to sell, but because I have to, and having a studio in NKB is a wonderful luxury!

Kolman/Pryor Gallery, Anita Sue Kolman

I have very much enjoyed working with Debbie Woodward to promote the arts in Northeast Minneapolis generally and the NKB specifically. For that reason, I am a little sad to see a change in the NKB management. On the other hand, I am looking forward, I have every reason to believe that Artspace, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting the arts, will continue to build on what has already been accomplished with NKB and even provide more opportunities for enhancing artistic activity in NKB and Northeast.

My expectations for the future of NKB is that the positive aspects will continue or even increase and that some of the few deficiencies will be addressed. At the top of my list are initiatives to increase the number of people visiting NKB, especially likely buyers. Enhancing events such as Art Attack and Northrup King Nights and even Art-A-Whirl® would be great. Adding more events to encourage potential customers would be even better. Of course, I would also like to see improvements in some areas, such as resurfacing

the parking lot, which will make the building more welcoming.

I have been asked at various times to consider a stand-alone location for my art gallery rather than NKB. The overwhelming advantage of NKB is that the size of the facility stimulates traffic and encourages relationships with other members of the artistic community. While isolation might suit other galleries, I prefer the activity level of 1500 Jackson Street NE. I'm looking forward to even more activity.

Fiber Artist Kelly Marshall

"First off, I'm very grateful that Debbie took the time and energy to find a buyer who was interested in the arts and artists. She could have just gone with the highest bidder. I am hoping that the rent will not increase, but who knows.

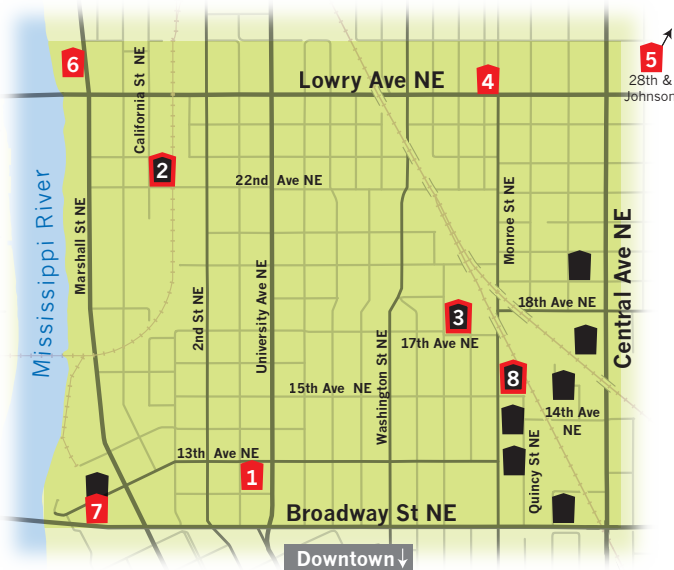
Debbie did so much to promote the artists and events. I'm sure there will be some changes, maybe the renters will have to take over more of that work. Debbie is incredible how she has supported the artists all these years where I'm sure there were easier and more profitable routes she could have taken.

I appreciate how well she has managed the building, had a security guard here in the evenings and kept the building clean and well maintained. Her diligence and extra effort made our events successful."



arts INSIGHTS

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



SPONSORS

- 1 The Anchor Fish & Chips
- 2 California Building
- 3 Casket Arts Buildings
- 4 Clay Squared to Infinity

- 5 Davis Law Office
- 6 Siwek Lumber & Millwork
- 7 Sip Coffee Bar and Straightline Dance Fitness
- 8 Solar Arts

Eleanor McGough's vanishing insects hit you in the heart

by **Margo Ashmore**

Eleanor McGough has always been interested in insects, "their intricacies, their otherness, the aliens among us. How they ride air currents." Her early sense of wonder turned, in the last seven years, to fear, in what so many describe as "the existential crisis of climate concerns."

Work exhibited at Rosalux Gallery in September included a pile of pastel blue cut paper insects on a pastel blue table titled, "The Sky Has Fallen;" the "gone" installation shown here; and paintings of vanishing landscapes.

In her artist statement, McGough says Shifting Baseline Syndrome (also the title of the exhibit) describes "the shifting threshold for our willingness to accept increasing levels of environmental degradation as normal. Recent studies show rapid insect population decline. Once thought ubiquitous, flying insect populations now appear to be dwindling dramatically. This has broad implications for the delicate balance of the food chain, and the health of our planet."

Lauding various artists and activists well-versed in the scientific statistics, McGough said, "My strength is more poetic emotion, trying to hit somebody in the heart."

By contrast, the process of doing her art is "incredibly soft, meditative, and simple." She folds and cuts paper with a pair of scissors without drawing anything beforehand. Though she's observed bugs in many books and collections, the forms are not deliberately accurate representations.

McGough lives in Northeast near the Holland Arts Building, has a studio at Northrup King Building and is a member of Rosalux on Van Buren Street NE. "I feel pretty connected. I'm often not open on First Thursdays because I want to visit other artists. In the Arts District, and even in Northrup King, the sheer variety of mediums is



amazing."

Here since about 2005, McGough previously rented from Artspace in St. Paul for 13 years and said she has no concerns about NKB's intended new owner. "I'm more curious what they will do with the unused space. Northrup King has offered me the most stability as an artist. I hadn't seen anything like it."

DANCE BARRE
Straightline
Kids Classes start 10/1
www.straightlinedancefitness.com

SUPER FOODTHIES!
SIP coffeebar
IN THE KEG HOUSE OF THE GRAIN BELT COMPLEX
34 13TH AVENUE NORTHEAST
SIPCOFFEEBAR.COM

The Anchor
302 13th Ave NE
(612) 676-1300
Open Tue-Th 4 - 10pm
Fri 4 - 11pm
Sat* 10am - 11pm
Sun* 10am - 10pm
Closed Mondays
Fish & Chips
*Breakfast only Sat & Sun from 10am - Noon

Studios open Nov. 1-2-3

"Thorp Warp" at the Thorp Building, 1618 and 1620 Central Ave. NE is the most recent addition to a weekend of open studio events, each with their own vibe, November 1, 2, and 3. Events include Art Attack at NKB, Art This Way at Solar Arts, California Dreamin' at the California Building and Open Casket at Casket Arts.

For more info, watch the October 16 and 30 Northeasters or visit northeastminneapolisartsdistrict.org.

DAVIS LAW OFFICE
Now located at
2825 Johnson St. NE!
612-293-9308
davismeansbusiness.com

Talks on arts' healing power

For its next PechaKucha Night, Tuesday, Oct. 15, 6-8 pm, the HATCH committee of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District presents "The Healing Powers of the Arts," at Wyndris Apartments, 929 2nd St. NE, in the Club Room.

Five artists will share their experiences in the style of PechaKucha, narrating while their images move in rapid succession with 20 slides

each shown for 20 seconds. They are: Ruth Lais, Kevin Komadina, Laurie Salmela, Emily Donovan and a representative of Art Force.

Following the presentations, there will be refreshments and a discussion facilitated by Northeast publisher Margo Ashmore. Space is limited. Reservations: 612-277-2902 or ducas@catholiceldercare.org.

Clay Squared to Infinity
Kitchens • Bathrooms • Fireplaces
claysquared.com
612-781-6409

SIWEK LUMBER & MILLWORK
2536 Marshall St. NE
NE Minneapolis 612-781-3333
siweklumber.com

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'
OPEN STUDIOS & SALE
NOVEMBER 1st - 3rd
FRI 5 - 10
SAT 12 - 8
SUN 12 - 5
6 FLOORS OF ART IN THE HISTORIC CALIFORNIA BUILDING
2205 CALIFORNIA ST NE. MPLS
casketArts presents
OPEN CASKET
Fri, Nov 1st 5-10pm
Sat, Nov 2nd 12-8pm
Sun, Nov 3rd 12-5pm
681 17th Ave NE casketArts.com