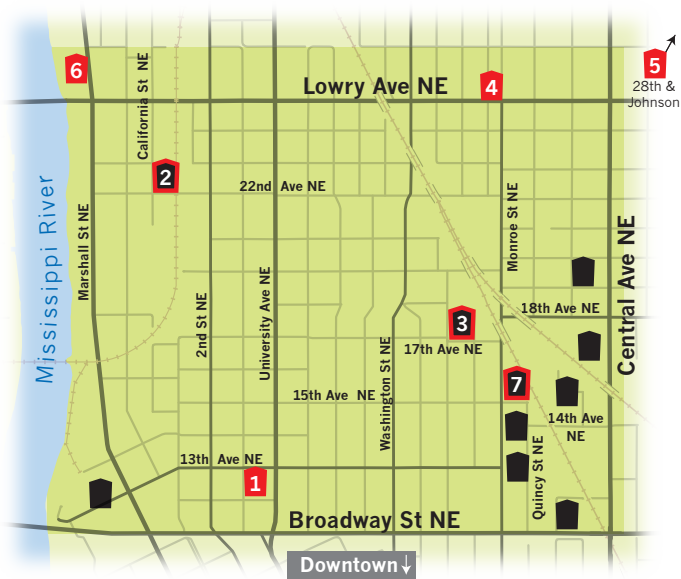




# arts INSIGHTS

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



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## Creative Feed: Co-op will trade food for art, pay for supplies

Eastside Food Co-op introduces Creative Feed, a new way to bring even more local art to Central Avenue and to support the community of artists who call Northeast Minneapolis home. Eastside Food Co-op is opening windows, walls, and walkways to the artists of Northeast.

Proposals are requested from Minneapolis visual artists for temporary, two-dimensional public artwork centered on themes of food, healing, nature, justice, community and solidarity. Proposals can include murals, window painting, sidewalk art, and more. Artists at any stage in their career can apply. Preference will be given to artists who live or work in Northeast Minneapolis. Eastside Food Co-op is committed to diversity and inclusion. BI-POC, women, and queer artists are strongly encouraged to apply.

According to the application, linked at [northeastminneapolisartsdistrict.org](http://northeastminneapolisartsdistrict.org), or [eastsidefood.coop](http://eastsidefood.coop), compensation will be relative to project scale, ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 in store credit, with a separate materials stipend of \$250 to \$1,000. Selected artists will be responsible for production, delivery, installation of artwork under the supervision of Eastside Food Co-op representatives, and pickup of art at the end of the exhibition period.



The Co-op is also looking for new board members. More information on both opportunities, on [eastsidefood.coop](http://eastsidefood.coop).

**Image: Charles Lyon, Corn, one of the first pieces of art selected for the co-op years ago.**

# Artists respond to Floyd's murder, systemic racism

Compiled by Josh Blanc

The murder of George Floyd has marked a new consciousness in Minneapolis and beyond. Artists from the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District with different vantage points and who have been working on issues of equality and justice for many years, are engaging on the front lines in this transformative moment.

Using the hashtag #creativesaftercurfew, **Leslie Barlow** and about two dozen other predominantly Black/indigenous/people of color artists are part of a crew painting murals on boarded-up businesses.

Barlow, featured in the Star Tribune June 8, "has emerged as a leading artist in the work to speak to the pain of George Floyd's murder and the strengths and a way forward for Black people." With a studio in the Northrup King Building and a 2016 Master of Fine Arts from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, this rising star is primarily an oil painter, sharing stories through figural relationships that explore the politics of representation, identity, otherness, and racial constructs.

Minneapolis native, **Peyton Scott Russell**, better known as Peyton, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, has been a professional artist and arts instructor for over three decades. "Creating street art is the best way to reach people," he said. "I wanted to use the most effective tool I have – my art – to contribute." His "George Floyd: Icon of an American Revolution" mural was picked up by the New York Times as an image of the 38th and Chicago memorial, and has gone viral all over the world.

"The original intent was a guerilla action to support the people and install at night in a drop and run mission. However, the installations became more public because of the size and weight and the need to respect the sacred space." Installation required a crew which included John Hock, founder of Franconia Sculpture Park and artistic director of NE Sculpture, and Ben Janssens, of Solid Metal Arts and SignMinds. They, and Peyton, are all based in Northeast at Casket Arts. Andrew MacGuffie built the plywood canvases.

The image is based on a photo "used as a symbol and reminder that Black Lives Matter; injustice for one = injustice for all; the beginning of a revolution; and the desperate need for law enforcement reform. The mural's imagery also represents everything wrong with a system that leads us to this point. Mr. Floyd's face ... represent[s] a strong Black American face and experiences that are repeated generation after generation. My hope is that we will see real change, understanding, and a restructuring of a system that allows equality and equity for all as the true ideal of this country," said Peyton.

**Reggie LeFlore**, whose studio is in the Northrup King Building, appeared in a panel discussion of Black artists, "Black Art in the Era of Protest: A Virtual Conversation" on June 18; it's available online, search for the title. For background: In the wake of the 1968 Detroit rebellion, collectives like AfriCOBRA movement (African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists) gave birth to the concept of art making as a radical action. They discussed commodification of Black art, art as a political weapon through radical self-expression, the history of communication through street art, and where these important murals should end up.

**Mark Wojahn**, documentary filmmaker and curator of Casket Cinema since 2008, grew up in South Minneapolis. Tuesday, May 26th was the first night of protests following Floyd's murder. When Wojahn first went to see the situation Wednesday morning, he said police did not have any control; he'd never felt anarchy and chaos before. He saw Target being looted and started to film. A guy from a passing car yelled, "Turn off your camera, white man." Wojahn yelled back, "It is my neighborhood too." The driver responded "F\_\_\_ you."



**Top: Peyton's George Floyd mural, photo by Urban Camper, candlelight vigil photo by Mark Wojahn.**

Wojahn said "99.5% of protesters were peaceful. People want change. They want our city law enforcement to change." He noted that the protesters have been strategic in going to the mayor's residence, taking down Columbus statues and choosing how to fight this battle. Wojahn is hoping for a wider acceptance of street art, which he has been documenting. "Our city has not been accepting. It is a very populist vein of art."

**Barbara Rogers Bridges**, artist and teacher/college professor for over 40 years and creates social practice art from rescued "power objects" with the purpose of provoking reflection and action on a wide variety of social topics. She invites people with different viewpoints to come together and let go of the idea that there is one valid TRUTH. Bridges is also the Founder of the non-profit Art To Change The World (ACW, [www.arttochangetheworld.org](http://www.arttochangetheworld.org)). She believes in inviting ACW members to identify a project and then "leave them alone to lead. The results will be astonishing."

Bridges believes the murder of George Floyd has sparked a sea change. She is three years into her current Trauma and Healing series and has discovered that "Creating art and ideas together leads to healing." She strives with ACW for all voices to be heard and to participate. She said, "I am done with silos and echo chambers of thinking." At the end of the day, week, year, life, it's all about relationships; interpersonal trust is most important.

## Northeaster readers embrace arts

by Margo Ashmore

According to 250 community members who responded to the Northeaster online survey conducted May 6 to June 15, local arts ranked high among things to do.

The most popular entertainment venues visited in the previous 12 months were movie theaters (74%), bars and clubs (65%) for Northeaster readers surveyed, followed closely by live performing arts and

art museums (64% each). More than half (54%) reported visiting one or more art studios. A variety of other activities were offered, including attending charity events, which scored 47%.

Asked what they intend to do Post-COVID-19 in the next 12 months, all percentages were off at least slightly, with many pointing out that COVID-19 might still be around in 12 months. Bars, clubs, movie theaters, charity

events and live music saw the biggest decreases in intent to attend.

The survey asked "what do you value most about the presence of visual art and artists in your community?" "Art provokes thought" at 68% and "Visual beauty" at 67% were the top two answers, followed by "Art to bridge cultures" at 50% and "Art as tool of communication" at 45%. "Art to facilitate other learning" came in at 40%. Economic

impact and learning about artists' process scored 24.5% each.

Prompted by ads in the Northeaster, Facebook postings, and flyers distributed to randomly-selected blocks in all Northeast neighborhoods, Columbia Heights, and St. Anthony, respondents were predominantly female (77%). That is typical for the format, according to the Circulation Verification Council which hosted the survey.

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