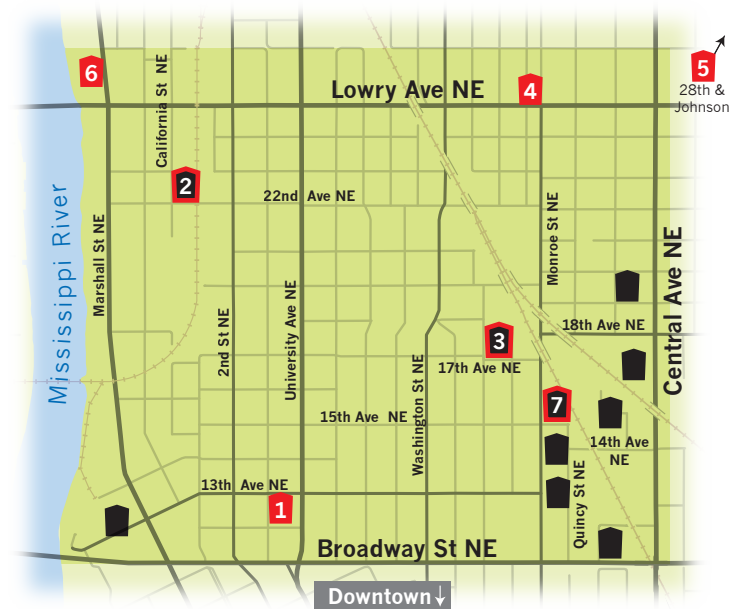


# Northeast Minneapolis Arts District

## 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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# Call for Art: The Huxley commissions 224 works

by Barbara Bridges

Art to Change the World (ACW) has issued a call for art, and needs objects, coupons or other contributions from Northeast businesses, restaurants, organizations and banks. The non-profit ACW is organizing a neighborhood networking project to welcome more than 100 new neighbors at The Huxley apartments. It's named "Arts District Palette: Where Artists and Neighbors Mix" (ADP:WANM).

The Huxley, at 657 22nd Ave. NE, is under construction. (Above, the railroad viaduct over 22nd Avenue near Jefferson Street is at left just beyond the photo - Photo by Margo Ashmore) When finished, the J-Row sculpture trail will run between it and the Hook and Ladder Apartments on Washington. A sculpture, XOXO, by Karl Unnasch, will grace its front, connecting to the 22nd Avenue sculpture trail. Info: [www.huxleympls.com](http://www.huxleympls.com)

Developer Robb Miller is also



commissioning small works from 20 artists, each making 11 or 12 pieces. Each new resident will choose two and receive a welcome bag from businesses and organizations with an invitation to an outdoor pop-up event later this year where new residents can meet the artists.

These new neighbors may be our next generation of collectors! People want to move to Northeast because of the art and artists here; with Arts District Palette: Where Artists and Neighbors Mix, they have the opportunity to

meet those artists.

Art to Change the World's goal with this project is to preserve the vibe and spirit of the neighborhood, raise our voices to try and influence and shape the change that high density brings. Keeping the lines of communication open is one strategy for ensuring the artists will not be driven out of Northeast because of free-market economics.

**Apply to be one of the commissioned artists by February 15, 2021.** Promote your business! Join us! Visit here to learn more about the project: <https://www.arttochangetheworld.org/touchstone-for-people>.

Project partners so far include: NE-MAA (Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association), The Northeast Minneapolis Arts District, Northeast newspaper, The Huxley residential building, and Sociable Cider Werks. Contact ACW Director, Barbara Bridges, for more details at [info@arttochangetheworld.org](mailto:info@arttochangetheworld.org).

# Artist behind the legend: David Felker's arts, confidence

by Mark Peterson

When his friends were asked for a word to describe David Felker, "visionary" came up more than once. Felker, who died December 31 in Washington State following an earlier stroke and COVID-19, played a pivotal role in the creation of Art-A-Whirl® and the resultant flowering of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District in the 1990s.

California Building president John Kremer noted, "As an outsider, he had a perspective about the Northeast area that locals were too close to see. He ignored the limitations. He saw how special the area was, and he focused on 'fine art and quality.' He was also a lone wolf, and someone who stood to gain nothing personally by his efforts."

Artist Dean Trisko said, "Felker had rallied 30 local artists to meet at his space on a cold winter night where he proposed having an open studio tour event in Northeast Minneapolis. His confident and bold claim was that the same could and should happen in Northeast because we had more (and better) artists."

David Felker was born in Spokane, WA, July 6, 1940. After graduating from North Central High School in

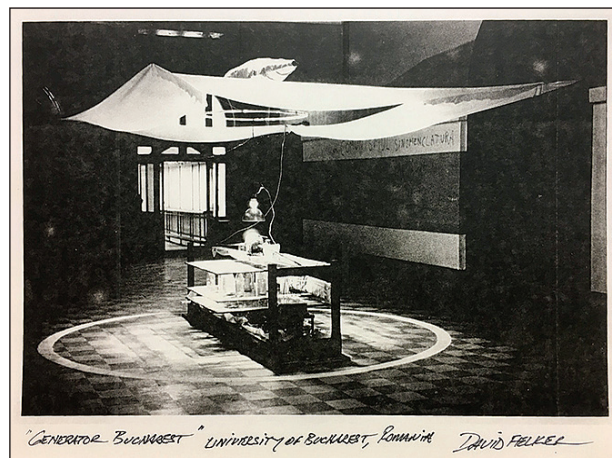
1958, he worked as a salesman for a sporting goods store, bartender, roustabout for Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey's Circus, and as a draftsman for Kaiser Shipbuilding Company. A Vietnam war vet, he used the GI Bill to pursue his studies in art, earning BA degrees in Art History and Fine Art from Eastern Washington University in 1975, and an MFA degree in Sculpture from Washington State University in 1978.

Throughout the 1980s, Felker worked as a sculptor and as an instructor/assistant professor for Alaska Pacific University, Chapman College R.E.C. Remote Program, and the University of Alaska in Anchorage. During that time he was also Director and Curator for International Gallery of Contemporary Art (IGCA) in Anchorage, and the Director of Sculpture and Artist in Residence at the Visual Arts Center of Alaska. Felker received more than a dozen grants and fellowships and had exhibitions of his work almost yearly from 1990 to 2014. "As an artist and master craftsman, he was a creator of esoteric and enigmat-

ic installations inspired by anything from alchemy to electric generators, from salt to space and time. His work was frequently, if not entirely, constructed from found and foraged materials," said ex-wife Lois Zabel Felker.

Current IGCA President Don Mohr said, "Felker was an important artist, but he left that behind when he talked to people; he was a generous guy who always wanted to know how he could help you."

While their time in the Twin Cities was relatively brief, the Felkers had an outsized effect on the budding art scene in Northeast Minneapolis. Trisko said years later, Felker was quick to credit the local artists for keeping the idea going. "Dave really was only involved in year one....but he helped us realize the potential that was here around us. "Dave had an anything-is-possible



attitude. He was a bit of a joker, sarcastic, irascible at times, but always ready with ideas and opinions - a quintessential artist type. Dave also had that hunger to try and do new things, keep pushing the boundaries."

Lois Felker wrote, "David was widely known as an incredibly kind and sweet man....Nothing was impos-

sible, no matter who you were. In recent years, he recommitted himself to appreciating nature. He had a profound love for trees, animals, and birds and he would walk five miles a day, hugging trees, walking dogs, collecting rocks and feathers....and friends. David is hugely missed by so many people around the globe, not just because of his life commitments, achievements and work as an artist, but by the deep love and friendship he afforded to anyone and everyone he met. One the last things he said to me was, 'I just wanted to make a difference.' Besides Lois, he is survived by his three children Natasha, Sean, and Matthieu, his brother Terry, sister-in-law Dee, their children Jeff and Joanne and her son Dylan.

# NE Mpls Arts District exhibits at MSP Airport

by Margo Ashmore

Travelers spending time at Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport will enjoy viewing art by hundreds of Northeast Minneapolis Arts District-based artists.

Part of the Airport Foundation's Arts@MSP program, the exhibit "Passages" includes a slide show of images by 182 artists and a history of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District as well as works by 21 artists in the Thomson Reuters Airport Mall Gallery in Terminal 1.

"The Art of Abstraction," a second exhibit featuring 13 artists, appears near Gate H10 in Terminal 2.

Because the exhibits are only accessible to those with a boarding pass or who have business in the terminal,

organizers have also put together website equivalents for the general public to view at their convenience.

These are linked at: <https://northeastminneapolisartsdistrict.org/mpl/>.

This project is funded by Mike Vennewitz in honor and memory of State Representative Diane Loeffler. Comments from Denise Tennen, project manager, and Josh Blanc, Northeast Minneapolis Arts District board chair can be found at [northeastminneapolisartsdistrict.org](http://northeastminneapolisartsdistrict.org).

"Arts@MSP is delighted to showcase the wide variety of talented artists that live and work in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District through these exhibits at MSP Airport. We've chosen our star gallery spaces to share the district's development into

one of the premier arts destinations in the Upper Midwest, encouraging MSP guests to return to see, experience, and participate in Northeast Minneapolis' arts and culture economy," said Ben Owen, Director, Arts@MSP.

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**Christopheraaron Deanes places Aldo Moroni's piece in the Passages exhibit.**

(Photo by Sam Fuentes)

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