

Arts District wants to work with elected officials to leverage the geography

by Josh Blanc

The Arts District forum held on October 18 was an excellent civic exercise for the arts community. The major candidates from Ward 1 and 3 participated. The discourse was cordial and meaningful. While there were many statements made about how all the candidates love and support the arts, this forum was meant to tease out the nuances of the candidates' positions and how they see and want to engage with the arts community they want to serve in Northeast.

It was clear that some candidates have a strong grasp of the needs and challenges of the arts district's relevancy to the community. Some had a more citywide approach and did not necessarily express that the potential collaboration with the established arts organizations would be a way to leverage their own agendas. By the time people read this, many will have voted and the results may even be known.

The issue for the Arts District is that there has never been a historical center or organized concentration of 1200 artists in Minneapolis as strong as the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District, and we think preserving it is a service to the city that created it.

The Northeast arts organizations have worked to clarify and express the artists' needs and wants to help city officials plan better throughout the city. Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association, Art to Change the World, NE Sculpture | Gallery Factory, Studio 400 and its offshoots, the Ritz Theater, 18 art buildings and the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District have created numerous tools for the city officials to access, allowing leverage for the greater good of each ward and the city as a whole.

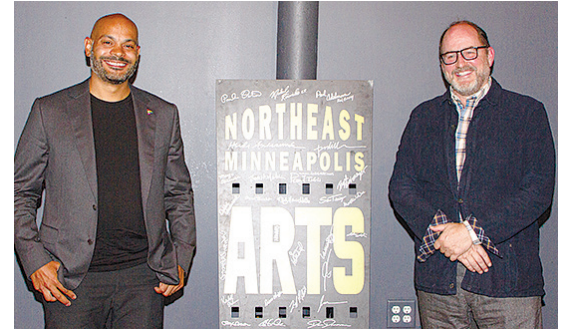
A city council member who does not understand this could miss out on opportunities and make uninformed choices causing unintended setbacks and never realize it until it is too late.

The study done through Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, at the University of Minnesota, by graduate student Kenneth Niemeyer was hot off the press and distributed to all who were able to come to the forum. All the candidates were given links to the study, "The Industrial Land Use and Zoning Report in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District," a couple days before the event for them to read. This report found that industrial land use in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District has decreased since 1984, from 24% of all land use in the Arts District to 11% in 2016.

Industrial land use in the Arts District was found to have a slower estimated total value growth rate than other land uses, especially when accounting for industrial land that changed use between 1984 and 2016. Slower estimated value growth rates could be an incentive for developers to buy industrial land with the intent of developing it for nonindustrial uses. This was the reason for the study in the first place, to clarify what we believed was happening and to what extent there is a threat to the future growth of the city designated arts district.

It is alarming how much maker space is actually disappearing citywide. If trends continue of rezoning industrial space for housing it will take away the opportunities

available to the city of Minneapolis for higher paying jobs, entrepreneurship and the crafting of future identity of the city. Housing is not what creates identity, though it is a necessity and is imperative for a healthy city. Thoughtful use of resources is intensely needed in a timely manner. It is a priority to create a holistic approach to city life. With only 3% of land in the entire city left as industrial, it is imperative that what little is left is harnessed to its best possible outcome for the health of the entire city.



Above, First Ward candidates participating: Elliott Payne and Kevin Reich. Below, Third Ward Candidates Steve Fletcher, Merv Moorhead and Michael Rainville. (Photos by Natalie McGuire)



We hope whoever is elected is willing to work with the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District to help achieve better results for everyone.

The big takeaway for the audience is that we need to understand who believes in what the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District community has to offer the city and how they can fully engage with our community for the benefit of all involved. While there are some big issues the city is grappling with issues of police and housing, those two issues have proven divisive and will be in need of healing people's feelings, pride and egos to be able to move forward.

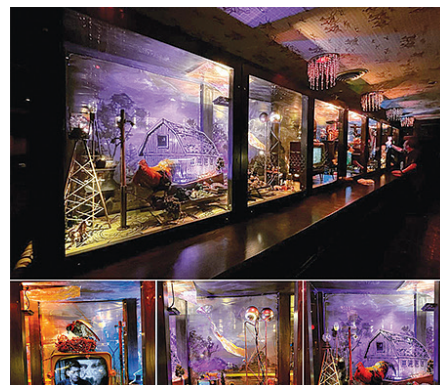
The arts have proven all around the world they are one of the best healing mechanisms any community can have. Whoever is elected must tap in and effectively engage instead of seeing the arts as ancillary to the office. We're here to collaborate; use us.

Animal-theme social comment

"We Beasties: Explorations of the Intersections Between Humans and Animals" solo show featuring the sculptures of Northeast Minneapolis artist Kyle Fokken is at Metro State University in the Gordon Parks Gallery through Dec. 2. Formally inspired by antique toys and folk art, the centerpiece is a backwards flying pig that projects a cosmic collection of colored lights onto the gallery walls. Miniature shopping carts support the animal as it hurtles through space. This work satirically points to Jeff Bezos and the rise of Blue Origin. Ironically, the artist purchased the little shopping carts that make up the base of the sculpture on Amazon, contributing to the tumultuous financial and cultural problems associated with consumer culture.

Gallery hours are 1-7 p.m., Monday to Thursday on the third floor of Metro State's Library and Learning Center, 645 East Seventh Street.

Dystopia: Inside the building at Lowry Avenue and Marshall Street NE (the one with the Ferris wheel), photographer Shelly Mosman and others have curated and created a political diorama described as "dystopian,"



Photos courtesy Shelly Mosman

in light of the venue's re-branding as Betty Danger's Animal Farm, a reference to the satirical allegorical novella about seeking a free, equal and happy society, by George Orwell, first published in England in 1945.

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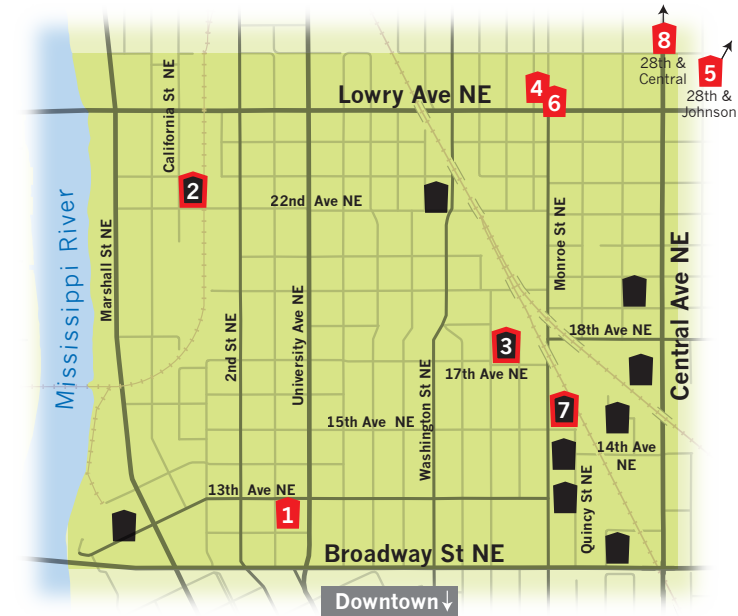
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NORTHEAST MINNEAPOLIS ARTS DISTRICT

arts INSIGHTS

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

Program manager

wanted for airport show

The Northeast Minneapolis Arts District seeks a program manager for our next visual arts exhibit at the Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport. Position begins early November 2021, the exhibit installs June 2022 and deinstalls December 2022. Stipend \$2,500. The Arts at MSP Program has approved the theme Chroma: A Spectrum of Beauty from the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District for an exhibit in the five large cases in the Thomson Reuters Gallery in Concourse C. See northeastminneapolisartsdistrict.org for details. Individuals from underserved or underrepresented communities are strongly encouraged to apply. Letter of interest and resume to Leslie Palmer-Ross at Lesliepr63@gmail.com by Friday November 5, 2021. Phone/virtual interviews will happen the following week.

Give to the Max Day

Thursday, Nov. 18 is Give to the Max Day, when many Minnesota causes and organizations vie for

your charitable and civic contributions. Northeast Minneapolis Arts District will be participating at <https://www.givemn.org/organization/Northeast-Minneapolis-Arts-District>

The Arts District's mission is to catalyze the innovative spirit of artists through generative community arts development.

Donations to this federally-recognized 501 (c) (3) organization help to serve artists and community directly, through the airport shows, and indirectly, by holding forums and working on perpetual affordability of maker space.

Fall open studio events first weekend in Nov.

It's time for Art Attack, Art This Way, Open Casket, Thorp Warp, California Dreamin', ArtBlok Fall Sale, Fall In Q.Arma, Holland Days and more. For information on open studio events on the first weekend in November, see the ads on this page, or go to www.NEMAA.org for information and links to the various social media for the buildings.

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