

2011

2017



**northern  
spark**





# Northern Spark 2011–2017

Northern Spark is the only all-night arts festival in the Midwest—a free, multidisciplinary, multi-venue, multiple partner, dusk-to-dawn event. In early June, tens of thousands of people gather throughout the Twin Cities to explore the city’s great cultural institutions and neighborhoods, play in temporary installations in the streets, and enjoy experimental performances in green spaces and under bridges.

Over the past seven years Northern Spark has become an eagerly anticipated event that contributes powerfully to the image of the Twin Cities as an active, vibrant community; a place that attracts and retains young talent; a region that loves participatory outdoor and cultural activities.

In 2017, Northern Spark continued to explore the interconnected, long-term consequences of climate change, focusing on communities along the Metro Transit’s Green Line between Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The artists of Climate Chaos | People Rising and our partners inspired attendees to turn a sense of overwhelm into concrete actions anchored in a realistic and hopeful map for the future.

## Northern Spark 2017 Major Supporters



ARTS, CULTURE AND  
THE CREATIVE ECONOMY  
City Coordinator



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support and Arts Access grants, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.





MINN\_LAB, ORBACLES DH



Northern Spark is produced and presented by Northern Lights.mn

The mission of Northern Lights.mn is to support artists in the creation and presentation of art in the public sphere, focusing on innovative uses of technology to imagine new interactions between audience, artwork and place and explore expanded possibilities for civic engagement.

<http://northern.lights.mn>

#### Northern Lights.mn Supporters



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support and Arts Access grants, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

THE  
MCKNIGHT  
FOUNDATION

JEROME  
FOUNDATION  
Celebrating the  
creative spirit of  
emerging artists 50  
YEARS



## Northern Spark 2011 – 2017 By the Numbers

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Artist Projects	600
Venues	127
Attendees	272,000
Artists	1,917
Organizational Partners	149
Sponsors	200
Media Impressions	253 million
Website visits	535,927
Unique website visitors	370,346
Website page views	1,355,433
Facebook page impressions	3,998,067
Print brochures	110,000

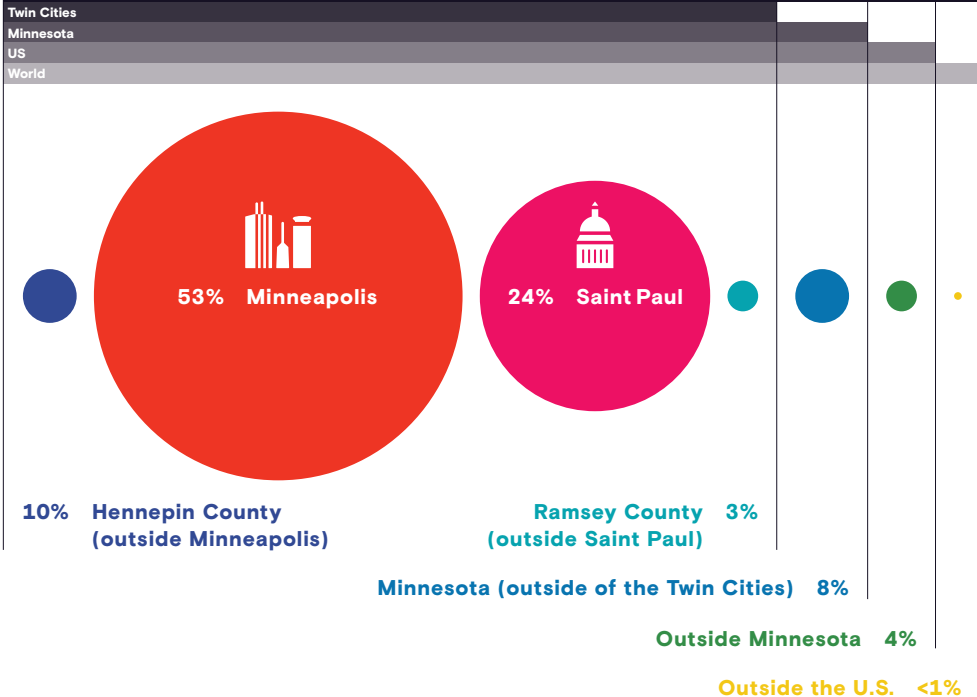
## In 2017

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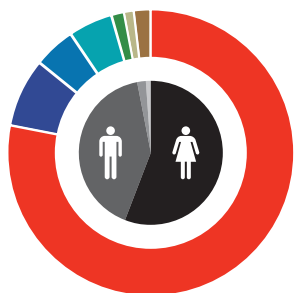
Artist Projects	63
Attendees	50,000
Website page views	201,161
Media impressions	11 million

# Northern Spark 2011–2017 Attendee Demographics

## Where do you live?

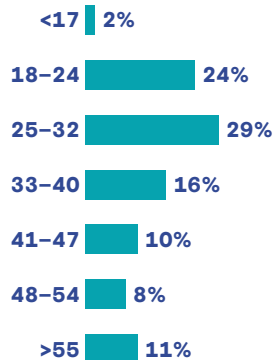


## With which group(s) do you self identify?



**81% White**  
**8% African American**  
**5% Latino**  
**5% Native American**  
**<1% Southeast Asian**  
**2% Other**  
**58% Female**  
**41% Male**  
**1% Transgender**

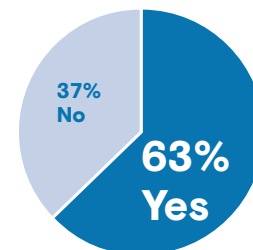
## Your age ... ?



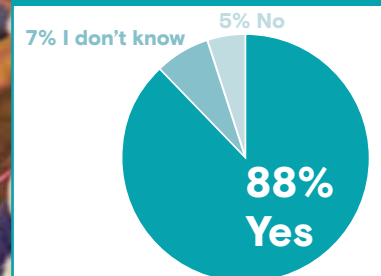
## Attendance



## Have you attended Northern Spark before?



## Are you planning to attend Northern Spark next year?





## Program Council and Neighborhood Partners

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For Northern Spark 2017 we engaged neighborhoods and cultural communities directly to bring artistic voices together to change the culture around climate change. The result was the largest Northern Spark to date with 63 projects in seven neighborhoods along the METRO Green Line.

To forge these connections, we worked with several Neighborhood Partners whose expertise and generosity made the festival possible:

- African Economic Development Solutions
- Asian Economic Development Association
- Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Twin Cities LISC
- West Bank Business Association

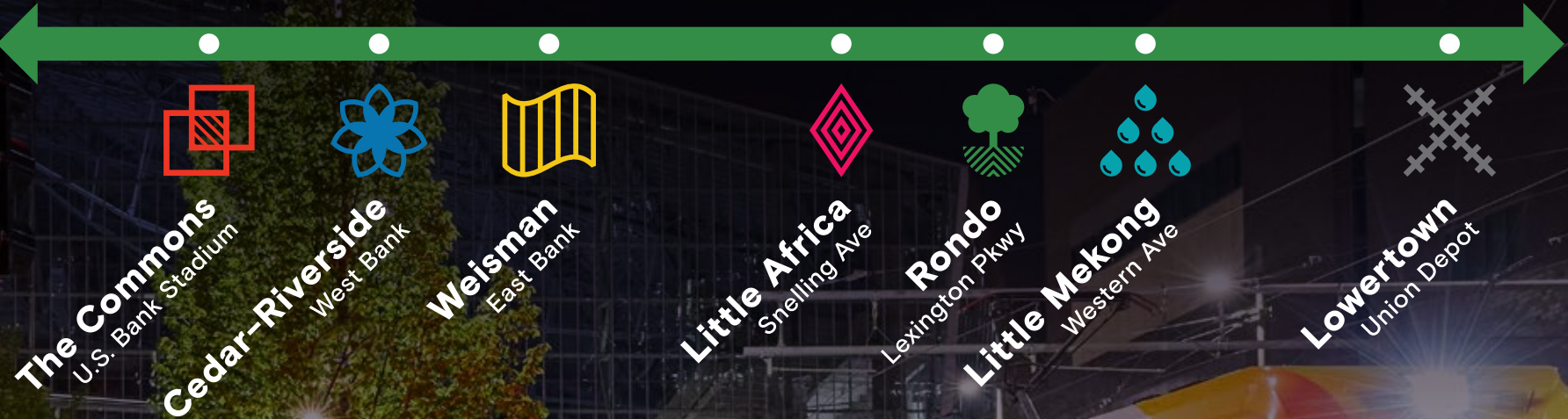
We also assembled the first-ever Northern Spark Program Council, a leadership group of artists who worked with us to inspire participation from artists and residents in cultural communities along the METRO Green Line.

**Program Council Members:**

Adan Dirie, Sara Endalew, Graci Horne, Filsan Ibrahim, Pa Na Lor, Brittany Lynch, Sagirah Shahid, Aki Shibata and Ahmed Yusuf.

# 2017

“ I think it was genius to do Northern Spark on the Green Line. It provided an opportunity for people who might want to engage more with cultural neighborhoods, but aren't sure how. The art is a vehicle for seeing things in new ways.”



# The Commons

U.S. Bank Stadium





“ [Northern Spark is . . . ] A free, fun, excuse to be outdoors in the city, and see some wild stuff. It’s like being a kid again.”



*I Am a Water Protector* mural installed on 7th Street in Saint Paul

# Cedar-Riverside

West Bank



“ I liked this year’s focus on how climate change affects various global populations, especially those with diaspora communities in Minnesota.”



# Weisman Art Museum

East Bank



2017

Weisman Art Museum

“ The best thing about Northern Spark for me is just being among a crowd of people experiencing our city in a new way together.”



# Little Africa

Snelling Ave



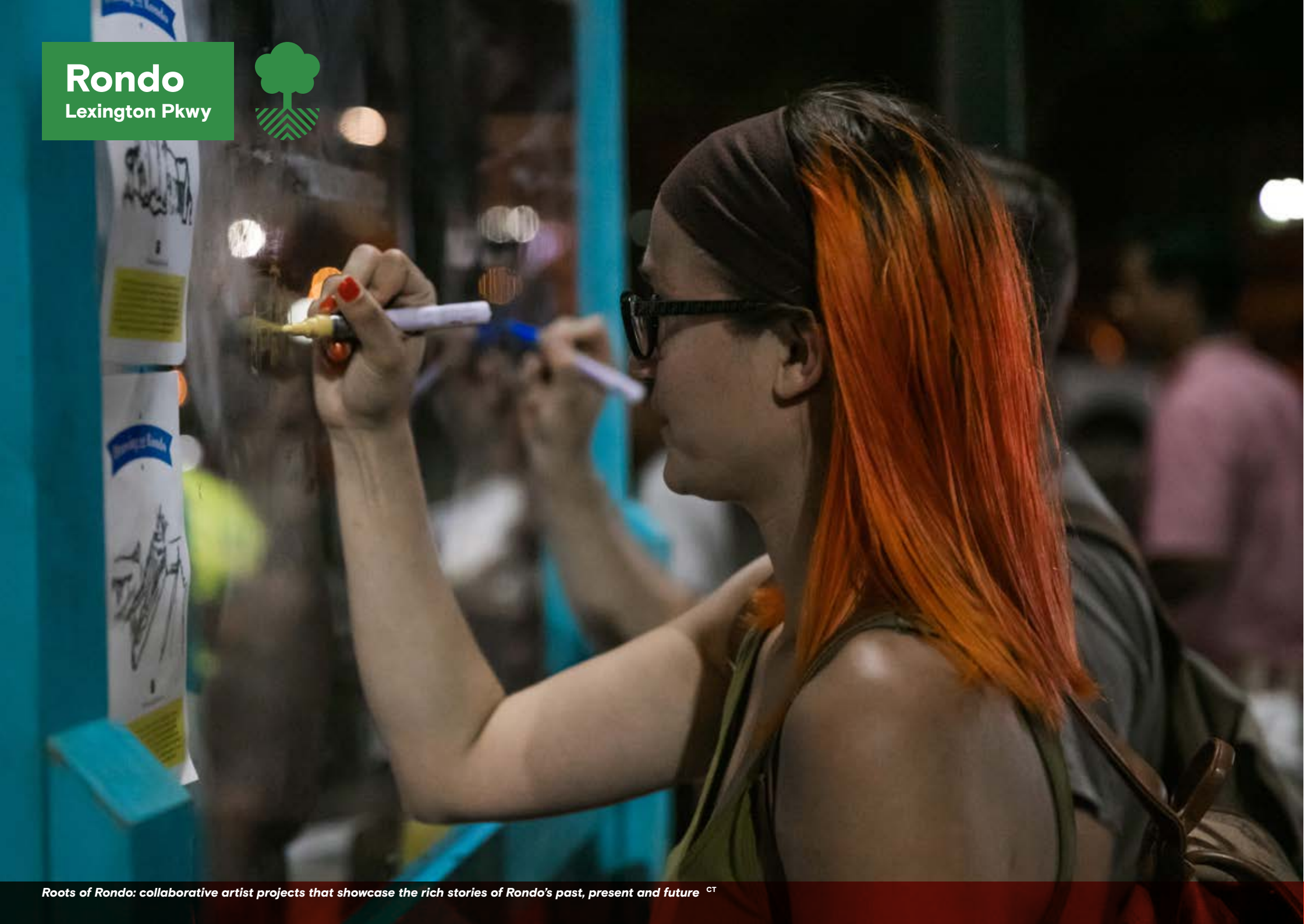
2017

Little Africa

“ [Northern Spark is . . . ] A free open art installation event in your neighborhood! An amazing, inclusive, culturally diverse night of fun! ”



**Rondo**  
Lexington Pkwy





“ We have a lot of power to change things with our choices. Climate change is not just a concern of the middle-class white population. Culture and environmental protection are one and the same. Northern Spark made me more aware of the intersections between climate change and race.”



# Little Mekong

Western Ave

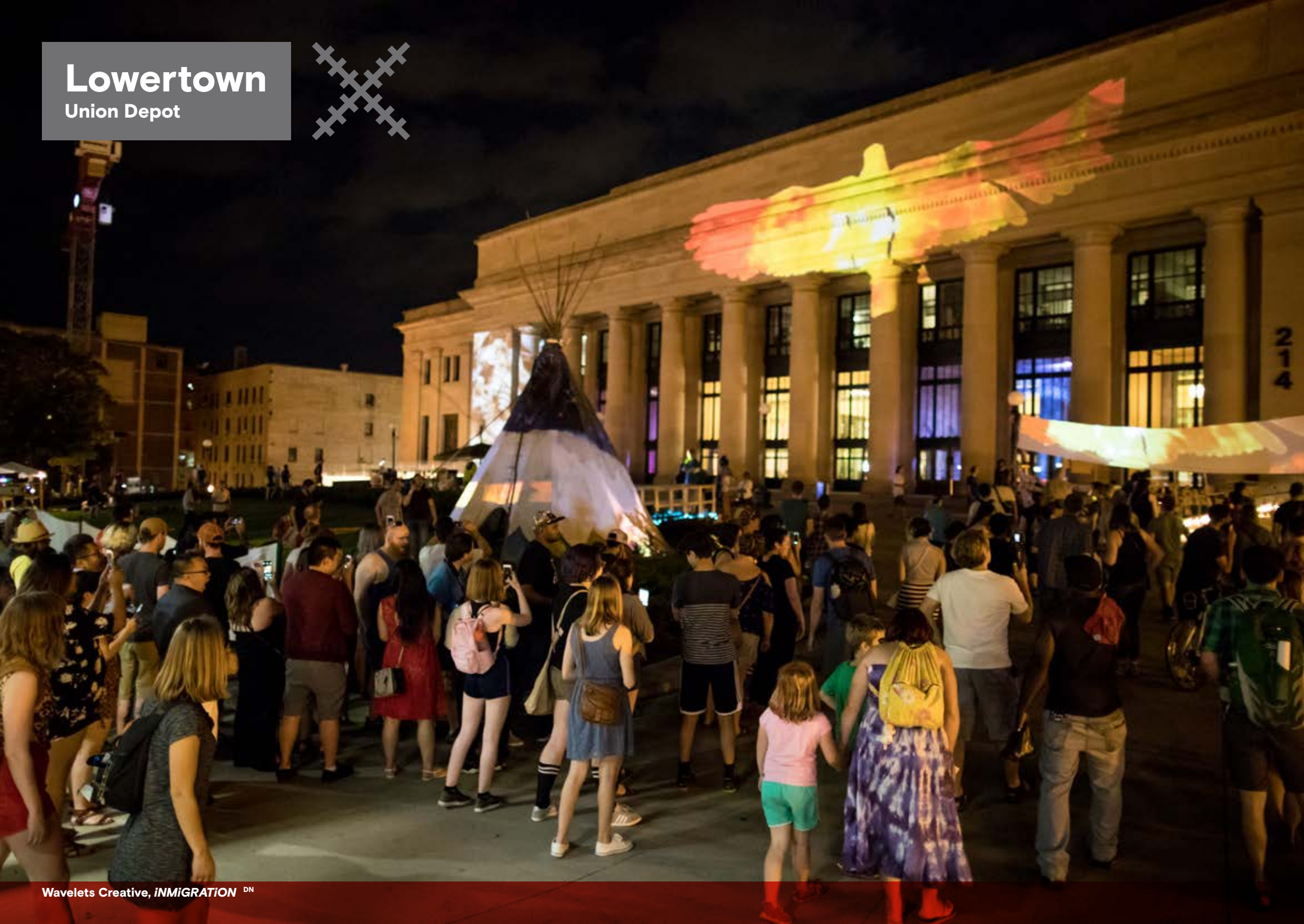


“ Climate change is not an incomprehensible and sublime force, but a material, knowable, and fightable phenomenon. Art can help transition one’s understanding of it from the former to the latter.”



# Lowertown

Union Depot



“ [Northern Spark is . . . ] An excellent reminder of the beautiful culture and people this community has to offer.



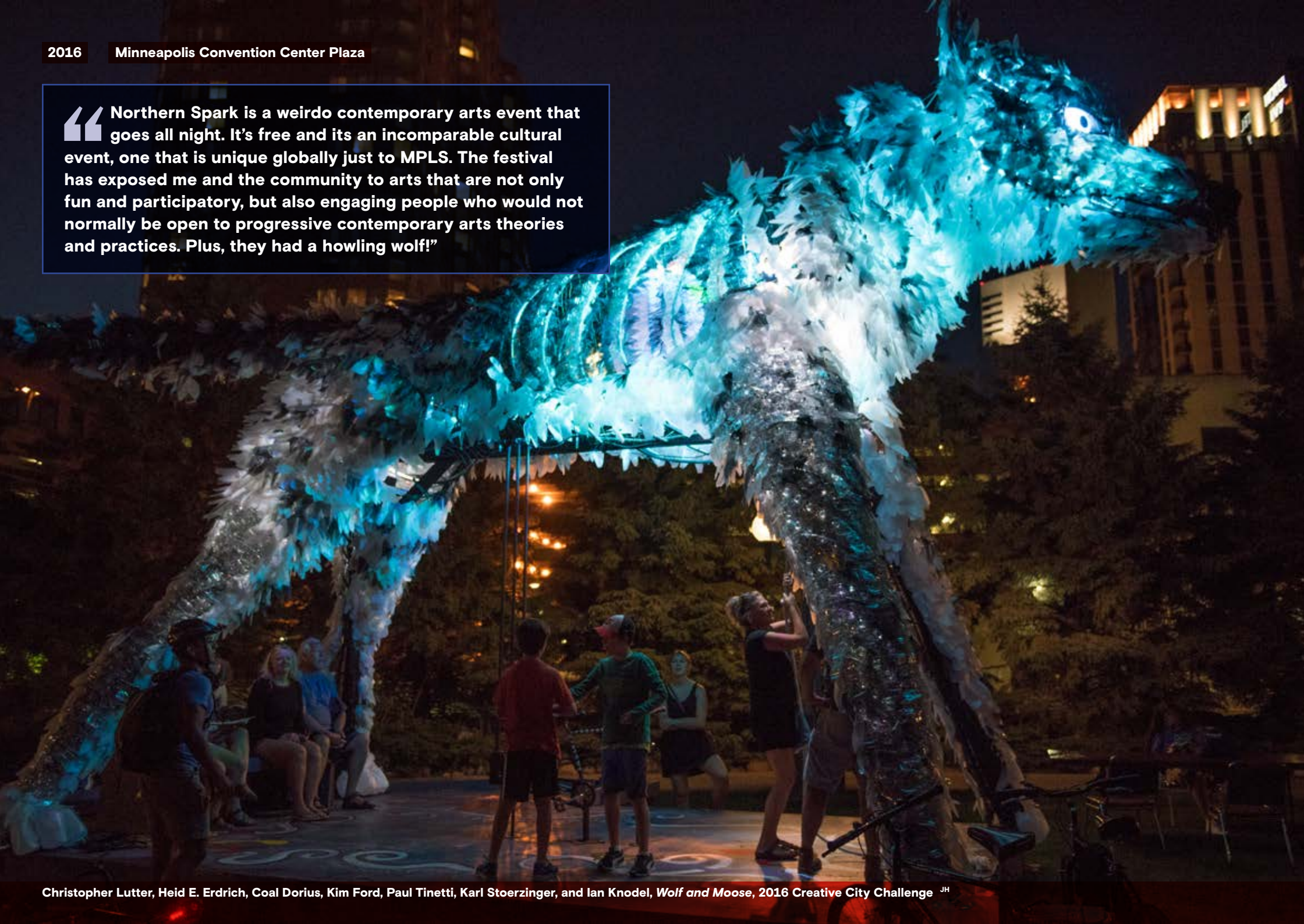
# 2016

“ I thought having a theme knit the night together beautifully, and I loved experiencing many different projects and moments as variations on a theme that, taken together, helped me think more deeply about it. Northern Spark this year provoked far and away more reflecting and connecting than it has in past years for me. I also think that there is significant potential for art to powerfully impact the way that people think about climate change, and that this year’s festival was a beautiful example of that.”

2016

Minneapolis Convention Center Plaza

“Northern Spark is a weirdo contemporary arts event that goes all night. It’s free and its an incomparable cultural event, one that is unique globally just to MPLS. The festival has exposed me and the community to arts that are not only fun and participatory, but also engaging people who would not normally be open to progressive contemporary arts theories and practices. Plus, they had a howling wolf!”



2016

Mill Ruins Park

“ Beautiful, absolutely stunning, the surroundings of the river, high arches of brick, the various light sources, all came together as one masterpiece to create the archaic, but very romantic feel. It was just dazzling, especially the sailboat and white flags. Awesome job mother nature!”





# 2015



“ [My favorite project/experience was] Being part of a laid back sea of people feasting on unique, creative installments.”



2015



“ The emotions that brought everyone together we’re beautiful. When they released the glowing balloons during the Cloud Cult show — I was in heaven!”



Top: The Lowertown Line: Cloud Cult <sup>KL</sup>  
Bottom: Chris Pennington, Rob Clapp, John Grider, and David Pitman, *Tron Human Foosball* <sup>SO</sup>



Kathy McTavish, *mill city requiem: for solo instrument & distance* <sup>IP</sup>



Niko Kubota, Jon Reynolds, and Micah Roth, *mini\_polis* <sup>KL</sup>

# 2014

“ Each year it becomes more and more obvious that Northern Spark is essential in our social, cultural life. It’s renewing connections, building pathways, opening spaces and revitalizing our collective self. And the magic happens only through, and out of tremendous work, energy and time devoted to it by everyone involved.”  
— Piotr Szyhalski, Northern Spark artist, 2014



“ I have memories of wild melding of all the performances under the Hennepin Ave bridge, which was so magical, and without the rain that grouping would not have happened. I'm in awe of the storms, the audiences who were so eager and the artists who made it work in what ever manner necessary.”  
— Soozin Hirschmugl, Northern Spark artist, 2014



2014



West River Parkway <sup>IH</sup>



MakeSh!t, Public Acts of Drawing <sup>WS</sup>



Arcade Backpack designed by UCLA GameLab's Tyler Stefanich <sup>JH</sup>

# 2013

Welcome to Union Depot  
June 9, 2013  
7:30 PM

“ For me, a lot of the magic of this evening was getting to see the spaces I see every day transformed into an exuberant playground of creativity, joy, community, and celebration. I will carry those happy images and memories with me every day now when I am in Lowertown. 4th Street is no longer just the path I walk down to get to my office, it's a giant board game! . . . as an artist myself, it was so uplifting to see so many people in one place making art, enjoying art, participating in art, interacting with art, and being art. . . .”



“ The anticipation of Chris Larson’s event was immense. I was one among a growing crowd of thousands, waiting for a flame and for a friend to show up. I wanted to experience this with someone close to me, someone who knew the story behind the burning of the house. Suddenly, without any prior cell phone communication, my friend emerged from the crowd in front of me. Five minutes later, we got we got to experience not only the glow of the successful reincarnation, but the warmth of feeling like our world was in tune with the night.”



Chris Larson, *Celebration/Love/Loss* <sup>01</sup>



Chris Larson, *Celebration/Love/Loss*, artist's studio COURTESY THE ARTIST




Chris Larson, *Celebration/Love/Loss* <sup>DH</sup>





2013



The more you practice the longer  
you will be able to keep the hoop up.

“ Whether you’re at a dance party or a river meditation at this festival, you have to let go of your self-conscious apprehensions about engaging in life and in art while in public. It’s a welcome and important reinvention of public space.”



Christian Jankowski, *Rooftop Routine* <sup>01</sup>



Piotr Szyhalski, *Permanent Labor* <sup>JH</sup>



Hamza Salim, Dunya Alwan, Islam Shabana, and Hend Kheera, *Underpass of the Eyes of Freedom* <sup>01</sup>

# 2012

“ The point of this evening is really for us to see things that are familiar and beautiful and striking but different. Looking at ourselves and our place in a unique way.”  
— Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak



“ You feel like you own the city. It feels like this is all of us imagining together. Happy people everywhere, the good will is fantastic.”



2012



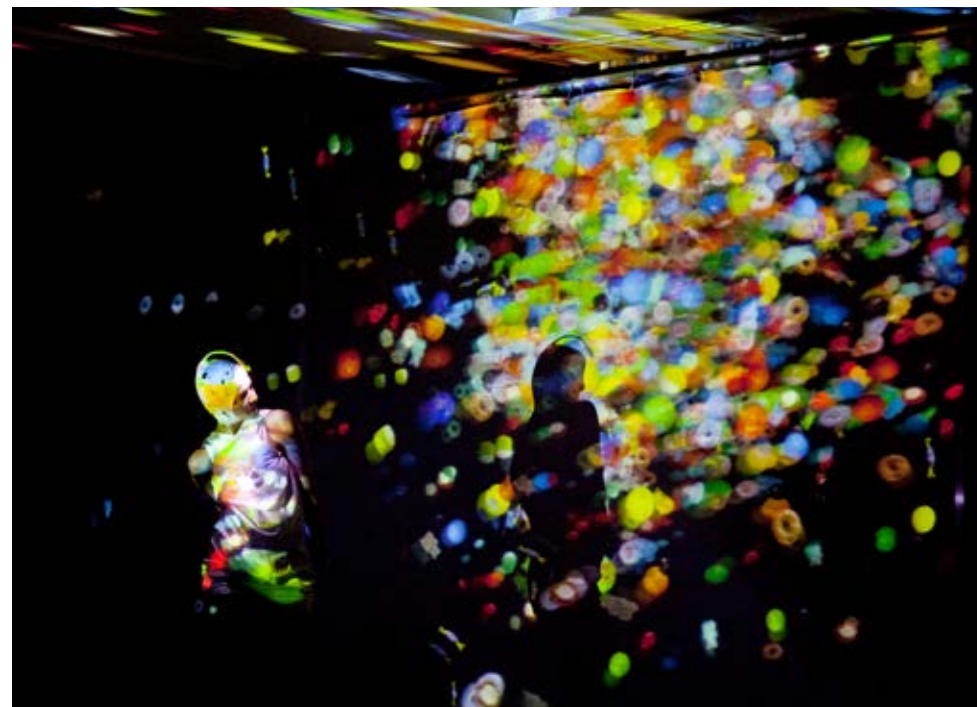
“ Northern Spark transformed the city of Minneapolis into an all night art playground . . . my favorite parts were swinging in synchrony with 20 strangers in a skyway, playing Capture the flag at midnight in neon face paint, and dancing with strangers in the streets.”



Keetra Dean Dixon, *Swing Hall, Swing All* TOP: JH BOTTOM: DH



David Goldes and Jonathan Bruce Williams, *THE Northern Spark* PK



Eunsu Kang, Diana Garcia-Snyder, and Donald Craig, *Shin'm Piñata* DH

# 2011

“ At the end of my white night, I was exhausted but exhilarated, and not just by the art. I realized that the importance of Northern Spark went well beyond what was on show. Our first Nuit Blanche brought people out of the comfortable confines of their homes at an odd hour for an illuminating experience of togetherness.”



2011

Upper Landing



“This event has tremendous opportunity to become a signature summer event for Minneapolis, much like the White Nights in St. Petersburg, *Nuit Blanche* in Paris or *Fete des Lumieres* in Lyon. There was fantastic energy on the Stone Arch Bridge — you could tell people were loving the strolling and being outside on such a beautiful night and craving artistic inspiration.”

— Tristan Pollock, *The Line*

2011



The Notion Collective, *Station Identification* <sup>PK</sup>



Top: Debora Miller, *MURMUR* <sup>NL</sup>  
Bottom: Janaki Ranpura, *Egg & Sperm Ride :: Hide & Seek* <sup>PK</sup>



Michael Murnane and Andrew Saboe, *Landmark in a River City* <sup>DH</sup>

“ Northern Spark opened up my eyes to more of the arts in the Twin Cities. For once the places that I want to go to collaborated, stayed open and I was able to see what they were all about. Its a great chance to check things out!”





## Partners 2011–2017

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4 Seasons Dance Studio  
African Economic Development Solutions  
airsweetair gallery  
Alchemy Architects  
All My Relations Arts  
Alley Cat Cycles  
Altered Esthetics  
American Composers Forum  
American Craft Council  
American Swedish Institute  
Ananya Dance Theater  
Annicha Arts  
Art Institutes International MN  
Art Shanty Projects  
Arts, Culture and Creative Economy  
Program of the City of Minneapolis  
Artspace  
Asian Economic Development Association  
Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood  
Development Corporation  
AZ Gallery  
Baaken Museum  
Bauhaus  
Bedlam Theater  
Bell Museum of Natural History  
Big Table Studio  
Black Dog Cafe  
Brave New Workshop  
Burnet Gallery  
Can Can Wonderland  
Center for Energy and Environment (CEE)  
Center for Hmong Art and Talent  
Center for Spirituality and Healing  
Climate Generation  
Conservation MN  
Deborah Elias Danza Espanola  
Emily Johnson / Catalyst  
Eyeo Festival  
Forecast Public Art  
Forever Young  
Franklin Art Works  
Gallery13  
Gamut Gallery  
Glitch  
Gorilla Yogis  
Grand Challenges Curriculum,  
University of Minnesota  
Green Minneapolis and The Commons  
Guthrie Theater  
Hack Factory  
HECUA  
Hennepin County Library  
Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC)  
Hennepin Theater Trust  
HiFi Hair and Records  
High School for Recording Arts  
Highpoint Center for Printmaking  
Hmong Museum  
innova  
Institute for Advanced Study,  
University of Minnesota  
Intermedia Arts  
Juxtaposition Arts  
Key 4/4 Kids  
Landmark Center and Plaza  
Leav  
Loft Literary Center  
Lowertown Bike Shop  
Lunalux  
MacPhail Center for Performing Arts  
Make It. MSP.  
McNally Smith College of Music  
Meet Minneapolis  
Midtown Greenway Coalition  
Mill City Museum  
MINN Lab  
Minneapolis Bike Coalition  
Minneapolis College of Art and Design

Minneapolis Convention Center  
Minneapolis Downtown Improvement  
District  
Minneapolis Institute of Arts  
Minneapolis Photography Center  
Minnesota Center for Book Arts  
Minnesota Children's Museum  
Minnesota History Center  
Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light  
Minnesota Museum of American Art  
Minnesota Museum of American Art  
Minnesota Sacred Harp Singers  
Mississippi Park Connection  
Mizna  
MN Orchestra  
MN Original and Twin Cities PBS  
MN Planetarium Society  
MN350.org  
mnavartists.org  
Motion Poems  
Mpls Parks Foundation  
MSP Film Society  
Musicant Group  
Nash Gallery  
Nautilus Music Theater  
Northern Clay Center  
Northern Voices Festival  
Northrop Auditorium  
On Being  
Open Book  
Open Eye Figure Theater  
Ordway Center for Performing Arts  
Palace Theater  
Printland Press  
Public Art Saint Paul  
PUNY  
Rain Taxi Review of Books  
Regis Center for the Arts  
Revolver  
Saint Paul City Ballet  
Saint Paul Public Library  
Saint Paul Saints  
Schubert Club  
Science Museum of Minnesota  
Screenprinting on the Cheap  
Somali Museum of Minnesota  
Soo Visual Arts Center  
Springboard for the Arts  
St. Cloud State University Art Dept  
St. Paul Neighborhood Network  
Students for Design Activism  
Studio Sendero  
Sumunar Indonesian Music and Dance  
Sundance Institute  
Take Action Minnesota  
The Loft Literary Center  
The Museum of Russian Art  
The Soap Factory  
The Southern Theater  
The Textile Center  
The UpTake  
Twin Cities Maker / The Hack Factory  
University of Minnesota Department  
of Art / Beijing Film Academy  
University of Wisconsin-Stout School  
of Art and Design  
Upstream Arts  
VidTiger  
Vine Arts Center  
W Minneapolis - The Foshay  
Walker Art Center  
Water Bar + Public Studio  
Weaver's Guild of Minnesota  
Weisman Art Museum  
West Bank Business Association  
Whittier Artists in Storefronts  
Works Progress  
Zeitgeist

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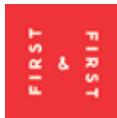
NORDSTROM



SAMSUNG



Askov Finlayson



RESTAURANT  
ALMA



artspace



MARIN



PRAIRIE  
- ORGANIC -  
SPIRITS



sparks

WISE ACRE  
/ EATERY /



Olé Breakfast

## 2017 Video Highlights

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**Northern Spark 2017**  
<https://vimeo.com/233936253>



**Cedar-Riverside**  
<https://vimeo.com/233923315>



**Little Mekong**  
<https://vimeo.com/233924093>



**Little Africa**  
<https://vimeo.com/233924178>

**More videos:** <http://vimeo.com/northernspark>

**All photos:** <http://nspk.mn/photos>

**Photo highlights:** <http://nspk.mn/topphotos>

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[neighborhoodclimatechange.tumblr.com](http://neighborhoodclimatechange.tumblr.com)



Newsletter online at [northernspark.org](http://northernspark.org) & [northern.lights.mn](http://northern.lights.mn)

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Sara Fowler, Ben Moren and Tyler Stefanich, *Collective Action!* <sup>DH</sup>