Northern Spark is the only all-night arts festival in the Midwest—a free, multidisciplinary, multi-venue, multiple partner, dusk-to-dawn event. On the 2nd Saturday of June, tens of thousands of people gather throughout the Twin Cities to explore the city’s great cultural institutions, play in temporary installations in the streets, and enjoy experimental performances in green spaces and under bridges.

Over the past six 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.

Northern Spark inspires connection and belonging. Northern Spark connects and mobilizes artists and communities around big ideas. In 2017, Northern Spark continues to explore the interconnected, long-term consequences of climate change, focusing on communities along the light rail Green Line between Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

The artists of Climate Chaos | Climate Rising and our partners inspire attendees to turn a sense of overwhelm into concrete actions anchored in a realistic and hopeful map for the future.

Northern Spark 2011–2016

Robin Garwood, Wishing Well

Northern Spark 2017 Sponsors To-Date

THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

Bush Foundation

Coulson Foundation

Saint Paul 3 STAR Program
Northern Lights.mn

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.

Keri Pickett, Jason Takahashi, and Charlie Thayer, *Against the Grain* (left)
Joshua McGarvey and Heckadecimal, *Ice Fall—Feel The Change* (right)

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

Jerome Foundation
Celebrating the creative spirit of emerging artists
Northern Spark 2011–2016
By the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artist Projects</td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venues</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendees</td>
<td>222,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists</td>
<td>1,502</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Partners</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsors</td>
<td>171</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Impressions</td>
<td>242 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website visits</td>
<td>460,844</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unique website visitors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facebook page impressions</td>
<td>3,468,752</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile site access</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Print brochures</td>
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In 2016

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<th>Counts</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Website page views</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media impressions</td>
<td>29 million</td>
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<td>Zones</td>
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U of M students from the Making Sense of Climate Change: Art, Science and Agency class, Surrender: What are We Willing to Lose?
Northern Spark 2011–2016
Demographics

Where do you live?

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>63,000</td>
<td>34,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
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<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

54% Minneapolis
24% Saint Paul
10% Hennepin County (outside Minneapolis)
3% Ramsey County (outside Saint Paul)
7% Minnesota (outside of the Twin Cities)
4% Outside Minnesota
4% Outside the U.S.
<1%

With which group(s) do you self identify?

83% White
6% Asian
4% Latino
3% African-American
1.5% Native American
<1% African
<1% Southeast Asian
2.5% Other

58% Female
41% Male
2% Gender non-conforming
1% Transgender

Your age . . . ?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;17</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>18–24</td>
<td>23%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–32</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>33–40</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<td>41–47</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>48–54</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;55</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Have you attended Northern Spark before?

34% No
66% Yes

Are you planning to attend Northern Spark next year?

89% Yes
6% I don’t know
5% No

Aniccha Arts, Census
This is one of Mpls' most unique events that feature bikes and pedestrians! Wonderful Hollidazzle in summer!
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.”
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!
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.”

Osama Esid, Still/Life/Syria
“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
Bottom: Chris Pennington, Rob Clapp, John Grider, and David Pitman, Tron Human Foosball
Kathy McTavish, mill city requiem: for solo instrument & distance
Niko Kubota, Jon Reynolds, and Micah Roth, mini_polis
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
MakeSh!t, Public Acts of Drawing

Arcade Backpack designed by UCLA GameLab's Tyler Stefanich
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 to experience not only the glow of the successful reincarnation, but the warmth of feeling like our world was in tune with the night.”
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.”
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.
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.”
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.”
“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
Debora Miller, MURMUR

Janaki Ranpura, Egg & Sperm Ride :: Hide & Seek

The Notion Collective, Station Identification

Michael Murnane and Andrew Saboe, Landmark in a River City
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 2011–2016

4 Seasons Dance Studio
airsweetair gallery
Alchemy Architects
All My Relations Arts
Alley Cat Cycles
American Composers Forum
American Craft Council
American Swedish Institute
Ananya Dance Theater
Art Institutes International MN
Art Shanty Projects
Arts, Culture and Creative Economy Program of the City of Minneapolis
Artspace
AZ Gallery
Baaken Museum
Bedlam Theater
Bell Museum of Natural History
Big Table Studio
Black Dog Cafe
Brave New Workshop
Burnet Gallery
Can Can Wonderland
Center for Hmong Art and Talent
Center for Spirituality and Healing
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
Guthrie Theater
Hack Factory
HECUA
Hennepin County Library
Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC)
Hennepin Theater Trust
HiFi Hair and Records
Highpoint Center for Printmaking
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 and Light
Minnesota Museum of American Art
Minnesota Sacred Harp Singers
Mississippi Park Connection
Mizna
MN Orchestra
MN Planetarium Society
mnartists.org
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
Orndway Center for Performing Arts
Palace Theater
Public Art St. Paul
PUNY
Rain Taxi Review of Books
Regis Center for the Arts
Revolver
Saint Paul City Ballet
Schubert Club
Science Museum of Minnesota
Screenprinting on the Cheap
Soo Visual Arts Center
Springboard for the Arts
St. Cloud St. University
St. Paul Neighborhood Network
Students for Design Activism
Studio Sendero
Sumunar Indonesian Music and Dance
Sundance Institute
The Loft Literary Center
The Museum of Russian Art
The Soap Factory
The UpTake
tpt Twin Cities Public Television
Twin Cities Maker / The Hack Factory
University of Minnesota Department of Art / Beijing Film Academy
Upstream Arts
VidTiger
Vine Arts Center
W Minneapolis – The Foshay
Walker Art Center
Weisman Art Museum
Whittier Artists in Storefronts
Works Progress
Zeitgeist
Select Sponsors 2011–2016

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.
Video Highlights

Christopher Lutter, et al., *Wolf and Moose, Creative City Challenge 2016*
https://vimeo.com/177322136

Northern Spark in one word
https://vimeo.com/94802082

Chris Larson, *Celebration/Love/Loss, Northern Spark 2013*
https://vimeo.com/73868234

Opening Ceremonies, *Northern Spark 2012*
https://vimeo.com/46663966

More videos: http://vimeo.com/northernspark
All photos: http://nspk.mn/photos
Photo highlights: http://nspk.mn/topphotos

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Videos from the 2011–2016 Northern Spark festivals are available for viewing online at vimeo.com/northernspark

northern.lights.mn
neighborhoodclimatechange.tumblr.com

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2017 STAFF
CO-DIRECTORS
Steve Dietz & Sarah Peters

PROJECTS MANAGER
Ady Olson

PARTNERSHIP AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR
Teeko Yang

ASSISTANT CURATOR
Elle Toni

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Leslie Barlow

EMAIL INQUIRIES
SPONSORSHIPS
sponsor@northernspark@northern.lights.mn

VOLUNTEERS
volunteers@northernspark.org

Food Trucks
foodtrucks@northernspark.org

PARTNERS
partnership@northernspark.org

PRESS
press@northernspark.org

REPORT CREDITS
DESIGN
Matthew Rezac

PHOTOGRAPHY
JH: Jayme Halbritter
IH: Ian Hanson
MH: Max Haynes
DH: Dusty Hoskovec
OL: Olga Ivanova
PK: Patrick Kelley
NL: Nicole Larson
KL: Kory Lidstrom
SO: Shawn Orton
IP: Ian Plant
WS: Wendy Schreier
CW/WAC: Cameron Wittig / Walker Art Center


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Photo highlights: http://nspk.mn/topphotos