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

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.
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.
## Northern Spark 2011–2017
### By the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artist Projects</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venues</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendees</td>
<td>272,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists</td>
<td>1,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Partners</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsors</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Impressions</td>
<td>253 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website visits</td>
<td>535,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique website visitors</td>
<td>370,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website page views</td>
<td>1,355,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook page impressions</td>
<td>3,998,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print brochures</td>
<td>110,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### In 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artist Projects</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendees</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website page views</td>
<td>201,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media impressions</td>
<td>11 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Northern Spark 2011–2017 Attendee Demographics

### Where do you live?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennepin County (outside Minneapolis)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey County (outside Saint Paul)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota (outside of the Twin Cities)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Minnesota</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the U.S.</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African–American</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asian</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Your age . . . ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;17</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–24</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–32</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33–40</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–47</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48–54</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;55</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Have you attended Northern Spark before?

- Yes: 63%
- No: 37%
- I don't know: 7%

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

- Yes: 88%
- No: 5%
- I don't know: 7%
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:

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.”
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 liked this year's focus on how climate change affects various global populations, especially those with diaspora communities in Minnesota.”
The best thing about Northern Spark for me is just being among a crowd of people experiencing our city in a new way together.”
“[Northern Spark is . . .] A free open art installation event in your neighborhood! An amazing, inclusive, culturally diverse night of fun!”
Roots of Rondo: collaborative artist projects that showcase the rich stories of Rondo's past, present and future
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.
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.”
[Northern Spark is . . . ] An excellent reminder of the beautiful culture and people this community has to offer.
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!
[My favorite project/experience was] Being part of a laid back sea of people feasting on unique, creative installments.”
The emotions that brought everyone together were beautiful. When they released the glowing balloons during the Cloud Cult show — I was in heaven!"
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
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
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 2011–2017

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
Gallery 13
Gamut Gallery
Gilitch
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
Loflof Literacy 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
mnartists.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
Summar 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
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City Coordinator

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ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

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SAINT PAUL STAR PROGRAM
THE PRIVATE CLIENT RESERVE
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CLEAR CHANNEL
Outdoor
89.3 THE CURRENT
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COFFEE CO.

red stag
dogwood

artspace
Borsig
BRASA

PRAIRIE ORGANIC SPIRITS

THE BACHELOR FARMER
Aria
Als Breakfast
**2017 Video Highlights**

- 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

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- northern.lights.mn
- neighborhoodclimatechange.tumblr.com

Newsletter online at northernspark.org & northern.lights.mn
2017 Staff

Steve Dietz  
Artistic Director, Co-Director

Sarah Peters  
Co-Director, Director of Public Engagement

Ady Olson  
Projects Manager

Teeko Yang  
Partnership and Outreach Coordinator

Elle Thoni  
Assistant Curator

Leslie Barlow  
Administrative Assistant

Matthew Rezac  
Design Director

Tyler Stefanich  
Web Development

Molly Balcom Raleigh  
Development Director

Amy Danielson  
Press Relations Coordinator

Sara Shives  
Producer

Jeremiah Zortman  
Assistant Producer

Kristy Haupt  
Technical Director

Phillip O’Toole  
Production Coordinator

Kim Peterson  
Volunteer Coordinator

Emily Janisch  
Launch Party Producer

Crystal Yam  
Festival Intern

Megan Hemmila  
Content Volunteer

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
BB: Bethany Birnie
JH: Jayme Halbritter
IH: Ian Hanson
MH: Max Haynes
DH: Dusty Hoskovec
Ot: Olga Ivanova
PK: Patrick Kelley
NL: Nicole Larson
KL: Kory Lidstrom
DN: Dan Norman
SO: Shawn Orton
IP: Ian Plant
BR: Bobby Rogers
WS: Wendy Schreier
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