

2011

2018



**northern
spark**

Northern Spark 2011–2018

Northern Spark is known as an all-night arts festival in Minnesota—a free, multidisciplinary, multi-venue, multiple partner, nighttime 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 eight 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 2018, Northern Spark tried something new: a two-night festival beginning at sunset and ending at 2 am each night. For two nights, under the theme “commonality,” artists explored what we have common in our time of increased social division. In three contemporary commons—an outdoor green space, a street and a public library—audiences shared dreams, songs, empathy, compliments and collective history towards a diverse, common future.

Equity and Inclusion

In 2017, Northern Lights.mn introduced a Program Council of artists of color who championed the cultural neighborhoods where Northern Spark 2017 took place. To reflect our commitment to increasing the diversity of artists, partners and audience in our programming, we have made the Program Council an ongoing effort in our work. This rotating group works with Northern Lights.mn to address racial inequities present within our organization and, along with our Community Partners, advocates for procedural and pragmatic changes to increase equity and participation at Northern Spark and other Northern Lights.mn programming.

Northern Spark 2018 Major Supporters



ARTS, CULTURE AND
THE CREATIVE ECONOMY
City Coordinator





Wakemup Productions, *Smart Wars: Mni Wiconi Alliance* ^{SS}

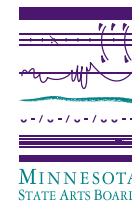


Northern Spark is produced and presented by Northern Lights.mn

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 2011–2018 By the Numbers

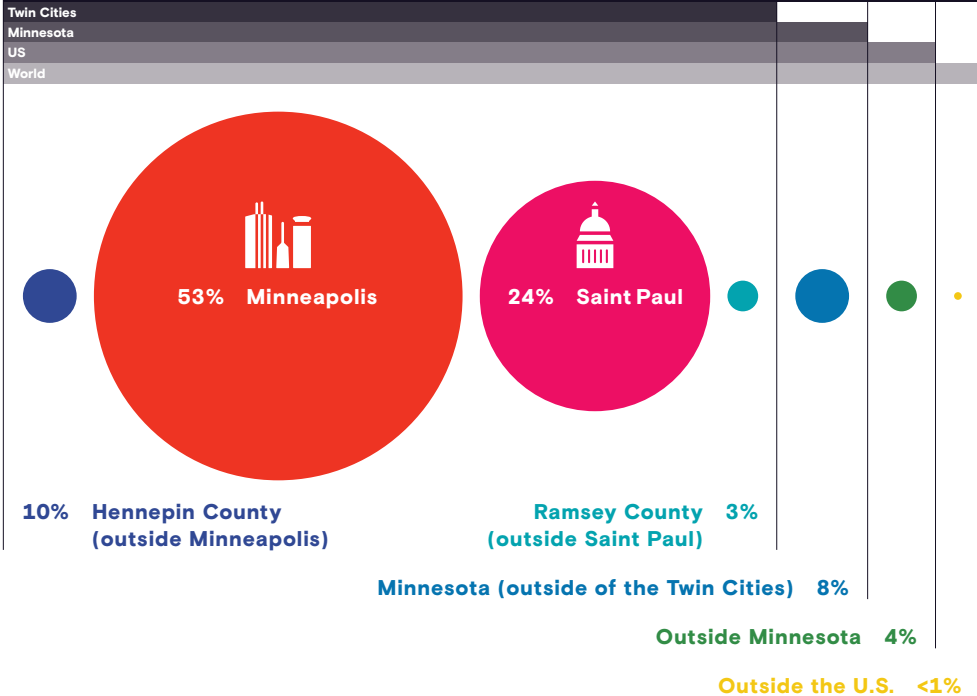
Artist Projects	629
Venues	130
Attendees	304,000
Artists	2,154
Organizational Partners	313
Sponsors	216
Media Impressions	260 million
Website visits	584,527
Unique website visitors	403,501
Website page views	1,487,382
Facebook page impressions	4,027,218
Print brochures	115,000

In 2018

Artist Projects	29
Artists	237
Attendees	32,208
Website views	48,600
Media impressions	7 million

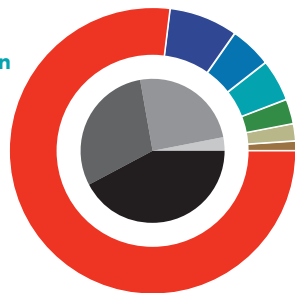
Northern Spark 2011–2018 Attendee Demographics

Where do you live?



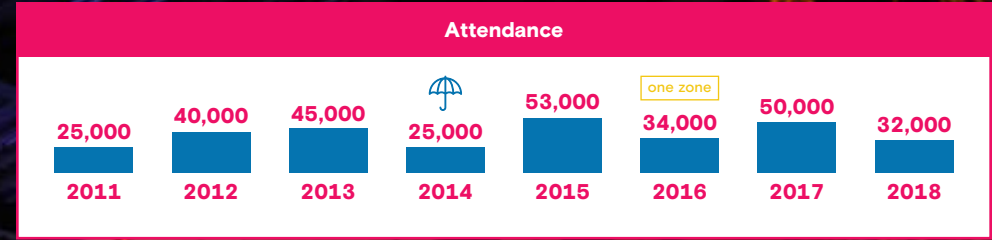
With which group(s) do you self identify?

- 81% White/European descent
 - 8% Asian
 - 5% Latino
 - 5% Black/African-American
 - 3% African descent
 - 2% Native
 - 1% an indigenous person
- 58% Male
 - 41% Female
 - 3% Transgender
 - 4% Gender non-conforming

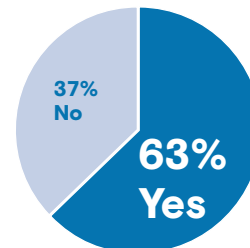


Your age ... ?

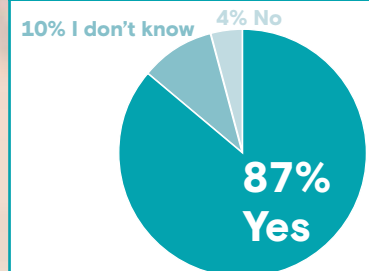
- <17 | 2.5%
- 18–24 | 23%
- 25–32 | 29%
- 33–40 | 16.5%
- 41–47 | 10%
- 48–54 | 8%
- >55 | 11%



Have you attended Northern Spark before?



Are you planning to attend Northern Spark next year?



2018

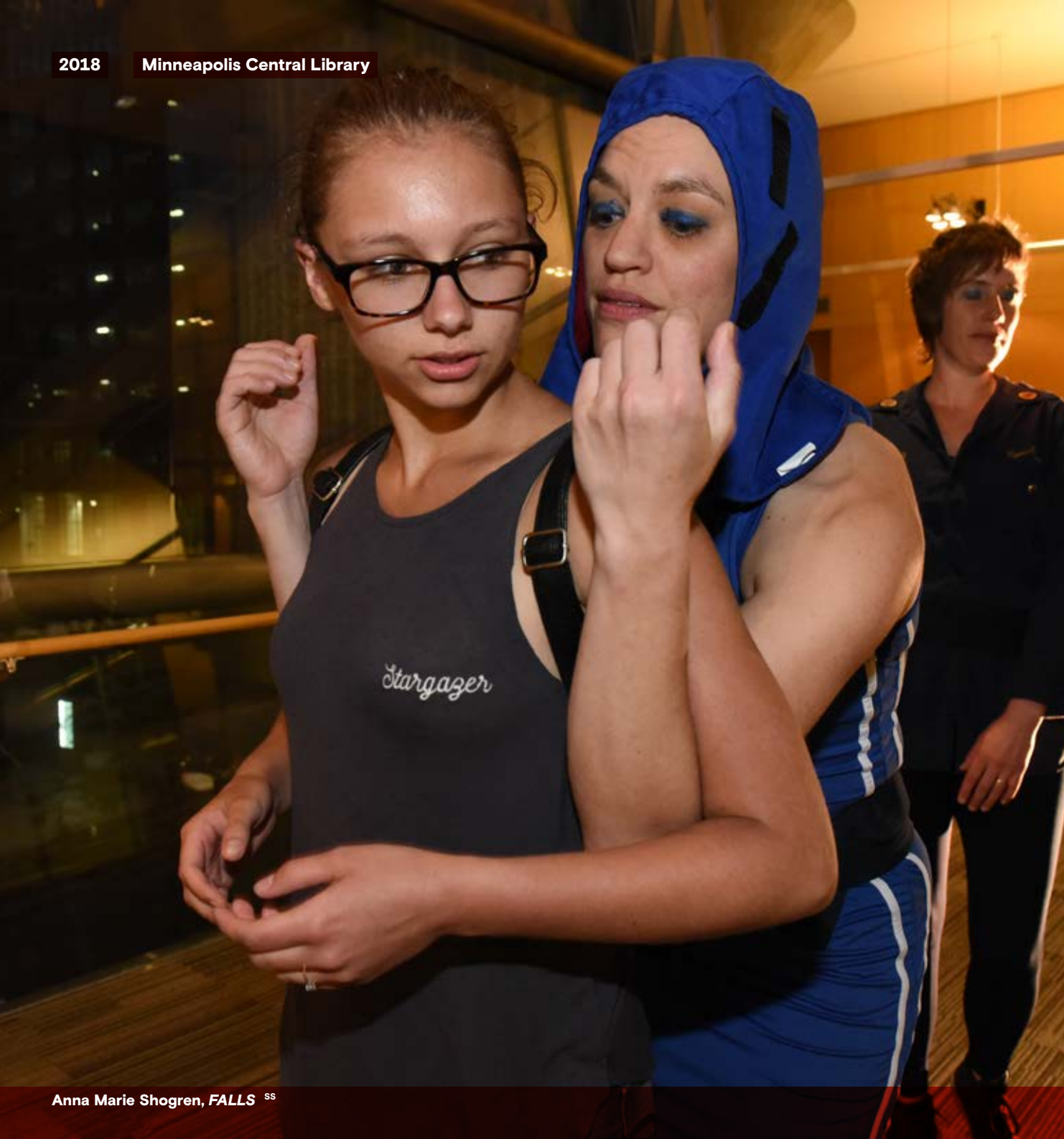
“ I most like Northern Spark because it encourages us to interact with each other and our surroundings in an entirely different way than what we're used to. Fresh perspective is so necessary for us to reimagine a world that is more fair, sustainable and enjoyable for us all. By showcasing our community's creative resourcefulness, Northern Spark helps to solidify my connection with the city I love most.” —festival goer, Matt Bartholomew

“ This was such a timely theme and so important. Thank you so much! This was a healing experience.”



“ I feel connection to community when I come out to Northern Spark because it is about the creative process, and it's an opportunity for artists to address issues however they choose to. It brings out a group of people that I enjoy rubbing shoulders with downtown.”







2018

Minneapolis Central Library

“ This year was really great! I loved how things were spaced out and that there were two nights and it stopped at 2am.”

EMPATHY MUTUAL



“ I believe the themes of commonality and community are key to building the types of inclusive neighborhoods we wish to live in.”



“ I like how diverse the crowd is at Northern Spark. It's a really nice display of the city.”



2017



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



2017

Little Africa



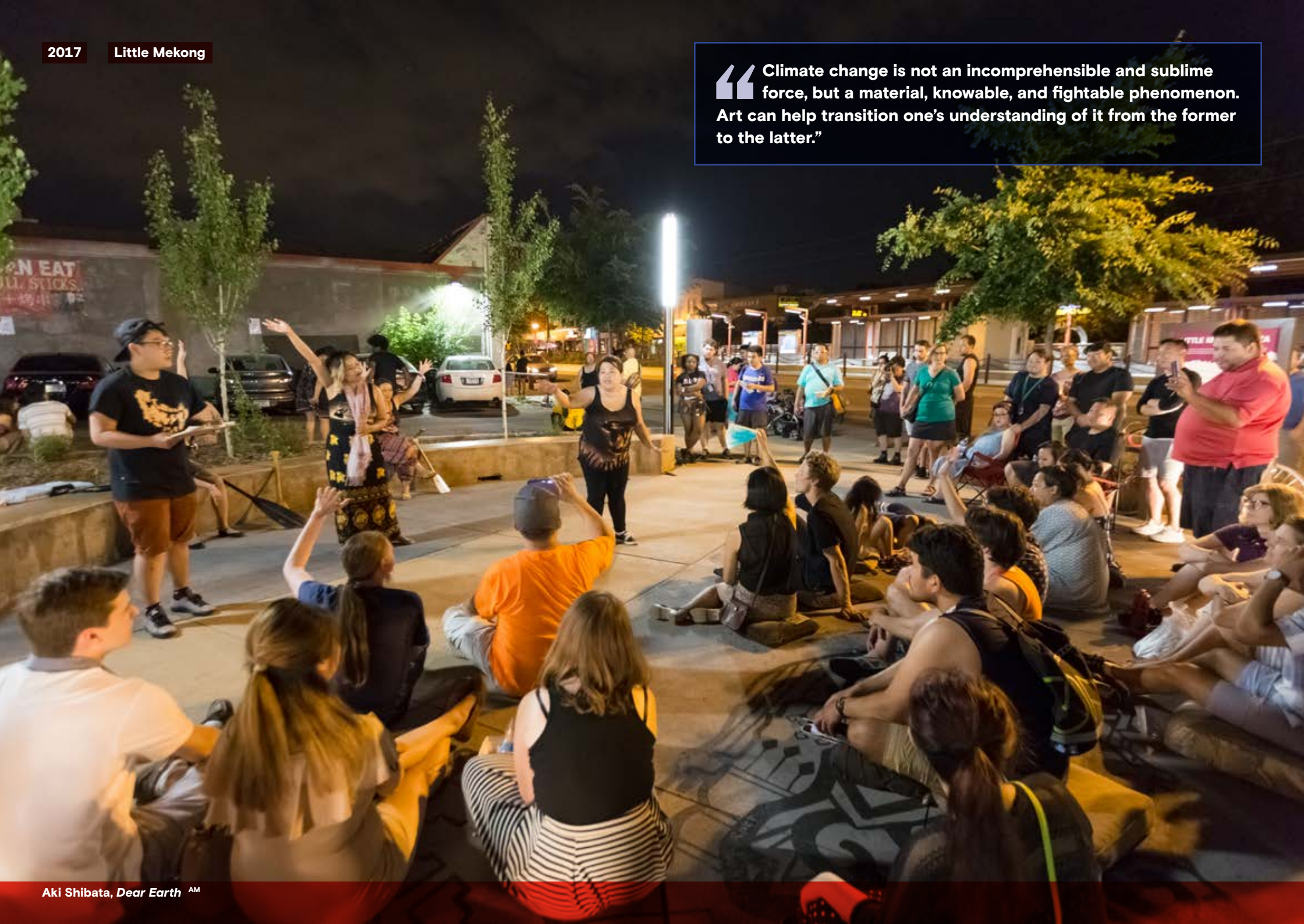
[Northern Spark is . . .] A free open art installation event in your neighborhood! An amazing, inclusive, culturally diverse night of fun!"



“ 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.”



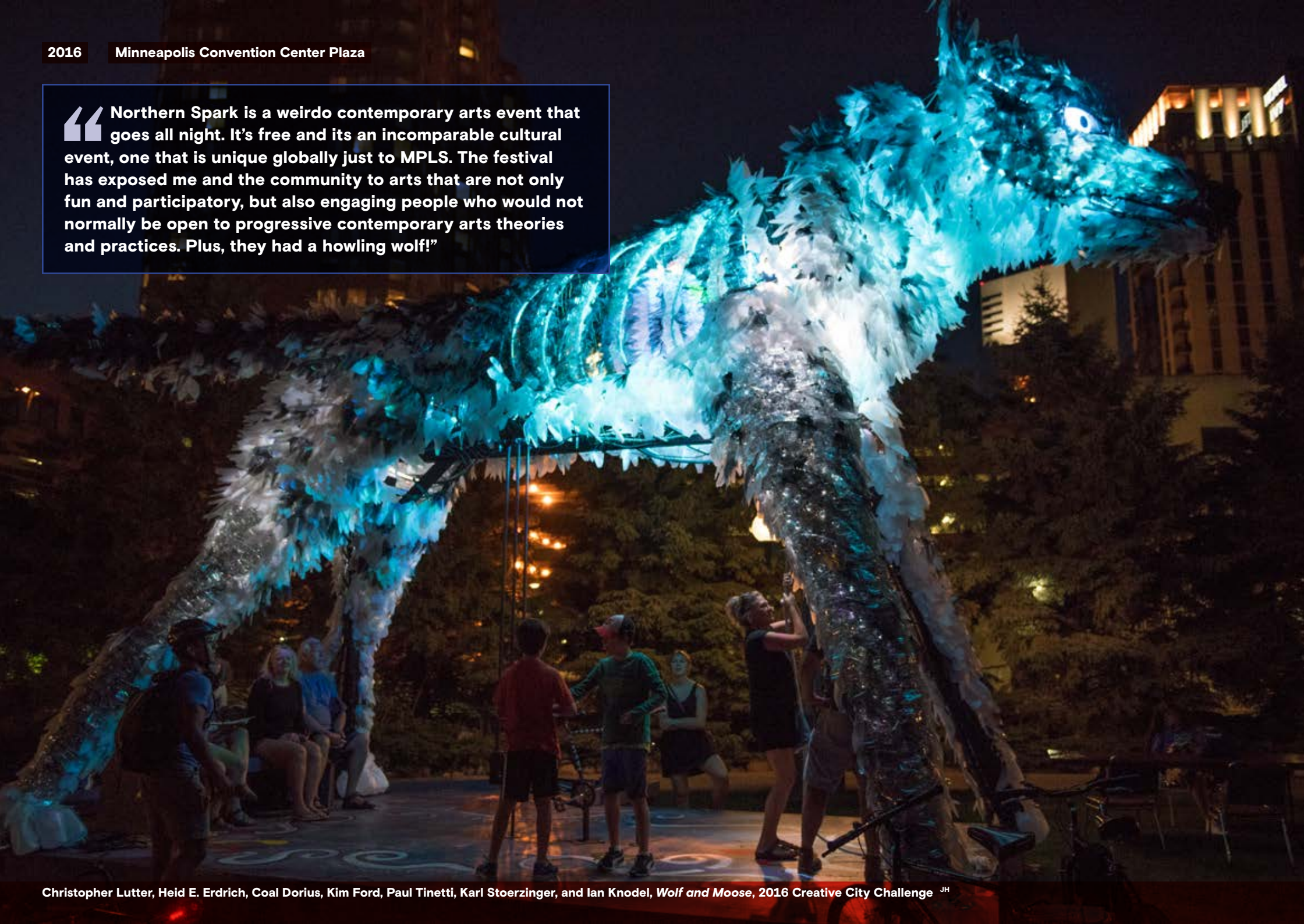
2016

“ 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!”



2015



“ 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



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 ^{1H}



MakeSh!t, Public Acts of Drawing ^{WS}



Amanda Lovelee, Christopher Field, Kyle Waites, and Sarah West, *Balancing Ground* ^{COURTESY THE ARTISTS}

2013

Welcome to Union Depot
June 9, 2013

“ 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* ⁰¹



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



Chris Larson, *Celebration/Love/Loss* ^{DH}



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



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



Michael Murnane, *Under Ice* PK

2011



“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* ^{PK}



Top: Debora Miller, *MURMUR* ^{NL}
Bottom: Janaki Ranpura, *Egg & Sperm Ride :: Hide & Seek* ^{PK}



Michael Murnane and Andrew Saboe, *Landmark in a River City* ^{DH}

Partners 2011–2018

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
Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters
Can Can Wonderland
Catalyst Arts
Center for Energy and Environment (CEE)
Center for Hmong Art and Talent
Center for Spirituality and Healing
Climate Generation
Conservation MN
Cycling Museum of Minnesota
Deborah Elias Danza Espanola
Douglas Dayton YMCA
Emily Johnson / Catalyst
Eyeo Festival
FOCI Minnesota Center for Glass Arts
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
Migizi Communications
Mill City Museum
MINN Lab

Minneapolis Art Lending Library (MALL)
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 Sacred Harp Singers
Mississippi Park Connection
Mizna
MN Orchestra
MN Original and Twin Cities PBS
MN Planetarium Society
MN350.org
martists.org
Motion Poems
Mpls Parks Foundation
MSP Film Society
Museum of Minneapolis
Musicant Group
Nash Gallery
Native American Community Development
Initiative
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

Select Sponsors 2011-2018



ARTS, CULTURE AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY
City Coordinator



National Endowment for the Arts
arts.gov



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.



Lowertown Future Fund of
THE SAINT PAUL FOUNDATION
An affiliate of Minnesota Philanthropy Partners



Video Highlights

Northern Spark 2018 <https://vimeo.com/297152679>



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



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

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

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

Stay Connected



northernspark.org



facebook.com/NorthernSparkMN



instagram.com/northernlights.mn



twitter.com/nl_mn



flickr.com/photos/northernspark



vimeo.com/northernspark



northern.lights.mn



neighborhoodclimatechange.tumblr.com



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

2018 Staff

Steve Dietz
Co-Director

Sarah Peters
Co-Director

Teeko Yang
Program Council & Project Manager

Leslie Barlow
Social Media Manager

Erin Lavelle
Producer

Kim Peterson
Volunteer Coordinator

Amy Danielson
Press Coordinator

Elle Thoni
Content Manager

Matthew Rezac
Design Director

Tyler Stefanich
Web Developer

EMAIL INQUIRIES
SPONSORSHIPS
sponsornorthernspark@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
DH: Dusty Hoskovec
OI: Olga Ivanova
PK: Patrick Kelley
NL: Nicole Larson
DN: Dan Norman
IP: Ian Plant
WS: Wendy Schreier
SS: Sean Smuda
RS: Ryan Stopera

Cover by Ryan Stopera

