



Community Planning & Economic Development

News Release

Contact: Rose Lindsay, communications (W) 612.673.5015 (C) 612.250.8661

Minneapolis City Goals: A Safe Place to Call Home □ Jobs & Economic Vitality □ Eco-Focused □ Livable Communities, Healthy Lives □ Many People, One Minneapolis □ A City That Works

Thirteen Emerging Artists Selected to Participate in John Biggers' Seed Project

McKnight and Poland Foundations Award Grants to Support Public Art Project

December 20, 2013 (Minneapolis) – The City of Minneapolis and partners Obsidian Arts, Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center, and the University of Minnesota's Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) announce the selection of 13 mid-career and emerging artists for the John Biggers' Seed Project (Seed). Seed is inspired by Biggers' "*Celebration of Life*" mural and the role the mural played in launching the careers of young artists and organizations, planting artistic "seeds" on the Northside.

The 13 selected artists will learn about African American art and community history, be provided with career development and transferable skills, and create a sense of place that speaks to the culture of North Minneapolis. To accomplish this, they will work with four master artists to complete a new public art installation made of enamel at Interstate 94 at Highway 55. The master public artists include Willis Bing Davis of Ohio and Jon Onye Lockard of Michigan as well as local artists Seitu Jones and Tacoumba Aiken, all of whom worked with John Biggers in the past.

"I am quite impressed with these artists and I am proud of all of their accomplishments past and present," said Ta-coumba Aiken. "I believe that we are on a great journey together, and that they will contribute to our greatness as a collaborative team to honor the work of John Biggers."

The artists will begin training in January, kiln construction will start in February, fabrication of the enamel panels is expected to begin in June, and the installation of the artwork will occur in October 2014.

The Biggers' Seed Project is funded in part by a placemaking National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant and matching funds from the City of Minneapolis' Art in Public Places program. Seed also recently received a generous grant of \$100,000 from the McKnight Foundation's Region and Communities Program and \$10,000 from the Pohlad Foundation.

To encourage community engagement and participation in the arts, the City and partners will be holding a meet-the-artists event and a series of four art history workshops. The meet-the-artists event will take place in mid-to-late January and the art history workshops will be held on Saturdays in February and March. All of the events will be free, hosted at UROC, and open to the public. Details of the events will be published closer to the event dates.

For more information on Seed, including biographies and photos of the project artists, visit the City of Minneapolis website www.minneapolismn.gov/dca/.

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