



Community Planning & Economic Development

News Release

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John Biggers Seed Public Art Design to Be Unveiled at UROC on June 19

Wednesday, June 18 (Minneapolis, MN) - On Thursday, June 19, the artists and partners behind the John Biggers Seed (Seed) project will present the design of the new North Minneapolis gateway from 6:00-7:30 p.m. at the University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) located at 2001 Plymouth Avenue N, Minneapolis.

“The storyline and design developed by the Seed artists speaks the same visual language, as spoken, by Bing Davis, Jon Lockhard, and John Biggers,” said Seed master artist Seitu Jones.

The design was developed in collaboration with the 13 emerging and mid-career artists selected to participate in Seed last fall. Artists include: Mica Lee Anders, Chrys Carroll, Roger Cummings, Patrick Cunningham, Angela Davis, Loretta Day, Christopher Aaron Deanes, Adrienne Doyle, Jeremiah Bey Ellison, Jordan Hamilton, Chris Harrison, Esther Osayande, and Chris Scott. Master artists Willis Bing Davis of Ohio and Onye Lockard of Michigan as well as local artists Seitu Jones and Tacoumba Aiken have been guiding the emerging and mid-career artists along in the creative design process. Davis, Lockard, Jones, and Aiken each worked with John Biggers in the past.

The artwork will be created in porcelain enamel. The medium was selected for its creative potential and durability. Enameling is a similar process to painting or glazing ceramics. Multiple layers of color are applied to steel panels. The panels are then fired multiple times in a kiln. The entire process, including construction of a kiln for this project, is being coordinated by the Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center. The emerging and mid-career artists are learning the enameling process and fabricating the panels as one goal of Seed is for each of the artists to learn new skills to enhance their marketability beyond the project.

Seed is inspired by the John Biggers *Celebration of Life* mural and the role the mural played in launching the careers of young artists and organizations and planting artistic “seeds” on the North Side. The new artwork installation will be located along the Olson Highway Memorial Bridge at Interstate 94 at Highway 55. The location, currently an industrial corridor unfriendly

to pedestrians, serves as an important connection between the North Side and Downtown. The project aims to build an attractive link between these areas, improving walk-ability by incorporating the colorful imagery influenced by Biggers' art and the North Side's history.

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 is also supported by the McKnight Foundation's Region and Communities Program, the Pohlad Foundation, and the North Loop Association.

For more information, visit the [City of Minneapolis website](#), [the Seed Project Blog](#) or follow the project on [Twitter](#).

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