Sandy Spieler receives the McKnight Distinguished Artist Award

BY THE McKNIGHT FOUNDATION
June 20, 2014

The McKnight Foundation has named Minnesota visual artist, performer, designer, director, and teacher Sandy Spieler as the 2014 McKnight Distinguished Artist, in recognition of artistic excellence spanning four decades. Now in its 17th year, the annual honor includes a $50,000 cash award and recognizes individual Minnesota artists who have made significant contributions to the quality of the state’s cultural life.

“Sandy Spieler understands the power of art in context,” said Kate Wolford, president of The McKnight Foundation. “Even as her sculptures and performances transcend place, lifting us to realms of fantasy and imagination, she never loses touch with the earth below. An artist of true distinction, Sandy’s pieces are an enhanced reflection of the reality around her, and around all of us — our joys and challenges as members and caretakers of our communities and the greater world.”

Spieler is well known for her leadership of In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater (HOBT), a Minneapolis company she has directed since 1976. Originally named the Powderhorn Puppet Theater for its neighborhood home in Minneapolis, the theater was renamed in 1979. In 1988 the company relocated to the old Avalon Theater, a building that started in the 1930s as a family-oriented movie house but later became an X-rated theater. (At the time, HOBT noted the transition on its new marquee with “Bye Bye Porn, Hello Puppets.”) Embracing its rich, culturally diverse surroundings in south Minneapolis, HOBT continues to draw on local and regional perspectives to inform its work. The theater performs locally, but also travels nationally and internationally, playing to audiences that include schools, community groups, and churches.

Spieler’s interests in puppetry as an art form date back to her early studies with Vermont’s Bread and Puppet Theater. Last year she told Minnesota Public Radio that was when she first recognized the discipline’s power as “a way of telling stories and images that was visual, that was movement, that was musical, and that brought people together.”

Within and beyond the walls of HOBT, Spieler’s extensive artistic résumé includes everything from puppet shows performed in a suitcase to community collaborations, performance installations, public art commissions, and streetscape designs — all driven to engage and lift up the broader community. Minneapolis’ annual May Day Celebration includes a parade and ceremony “midwifed” by Spieler, as well as a related festival, and draws an estimated 50,000 people down Bloomington Avenue and into Powderhorn Park. A glorious testament to organized chaos, the parade is an exercise in leading without dictating one singular, prescribed artistic approach or aesthetic. In addition to the procession, the May Day Parade provides workshops and other opportunities for community volunteers of varying skill levels to roll up their sleeves and create elaborate puppets and costumes.

Spieler also teaches regularly at traveling workshops in Bemidji, Ely, Winona, Fargo-Moorhead, and other cities statewide about how to do puppet theater. Central to her work for over 30 years, a focus on water as the heart of many workshops. Her “Invigorate” see page 6
From Greek Φιλανδρός (Philandros) “friend of man”: Philander Prescott

For the first hundred years of the Minneapolis Pioneers and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery’s history, Philander Prescott was the cemetery’s most visited among the pioneer dead. In more modern times he is remembered by those with a keen interest in the Dakota Conflict of 1862, otherwise he is mostly forgotten. Prescott arrived at Fort Snelling in 1819 and lived in what later became Minneapolis until his death. Over the course of the years he, like many pioneers, did many jobs in order to survive. He was a sufferer (i.e., ran the store at Fort Snelling), trap, fur trader, translator, Bureau of Indian Affairs agent and farmer. He married Spirit of the Moon (also known as Mary), the daughter of Man Who Flies, one of the elders of the Lake Calhoun band of the Dakota. They were married almost forty years and had ten children. He was one of the casualties of the Dakota Conflict of 1862.

By all accounts, Prescott was modest and unassuming. Although he was the first white man to visit Pipestone quarry and wrote about it as early as 1832, the reddish brown stone was named after him but was named catlinite after George Catlin, another, rather more flamboyant explorer. Frank Mayer, a New York artist who visited Minnesota in 1851, spent more than two years among the Dakota people. What Mayer couldn’t fathom is that after thirty years in the “Northwest,” Prescott had little in common with visitors from the East. His family, his work and his life were here.

His own reminiscences of his time among the Dakota people. There is no question that Prescott was a religious man and that he supported the conversion of Native Americans to Christianity. He was one of the founding members and financial supporters of the First Presbyterian Church. After fifteen years of living together and raising several children together, Prescott and Mary were married in a Christian ceremony on the shore of Lake Calhoun. Gideon Pond and

Tales from Pioneers & Soldiers Cemetery
SUE HUNTLEY WEBB
114th in a Series

Steven Riggs, early missionaries to the Dakota people, performed the ceremony. Prescott was also employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to teach Dakota men to farm, an effort that many today view as the government’s attempt to destroy traditional Dakota values and culture. His memoirs hint at a different, more personal, motive: he was concerned that as the herds of buffalo and deer diminished, people would not have enough to eat, something that he had experienced first hand. One thing that is clear from various lodgers and account books is that Prescott didn’t exploit the tribes financially. Many other traders attempted to cheat the tribes by submitting huge, and questionable, claims. Those traders received cents on the dollar, but Prescott’s claims were treated as honest accounts of what he was owed and paid in full. As early as 1856, Prescott warned the Bureau of Indian Affairs about tribal members’ discontent about their treatment by the government. He warned the agency that unless their treatment of the tribes changed, there would be trouble. It is not clear from the

Prescott, killed in 1862 at the Dakota Conflict after warning U.S. 6 years earlier of inevitable trouble without changes, was buried on the prairie and reinterred later at Layman’s Cemetery where Mary died in 1867. His tombstone was encased ca. 1938 by the Hennepin History Museum in order to preserve it longer.

letter he wrote whether he intended to resign or whether he was fired as a consequence of his outspokenness. In either case, it ended his career as government farmer.

Prescott’s warning to the BIA went unheeded and six years later, his predictions came true. What he had not predicted is that he would be one of the casualties. Philander and Mary Prescott were at the Lower Sioux Agency on August 18, 1862, when the Dakota Conflict broke out. He was advised to hide and was initially spared. For reasons that are not entirely clear, he later attempted to reach Fort Ridgely. He was killed on the way. Mary was taken prisoner but escaped and made her way to Shakopee where she lived until her death in 1867. Prescott had been buried on the prairie but when Mary died, he was disinterred and brought back to Minneapolis. They are buried in Lot 4, Block A.
A Traditional Somali Hut, Aqal Soomaali, erected on Lake Street

A traditional Somali hut was donated by a community in Xingalool, Puntland, transported to Mpls., temporarily erected on Lake Street near Blasdell Avenue to Mpls., temporarily erected on Lake Street near Blasdell Avenue. Spokes, a community biking and walking center with a goal to get more people biking and walking at 1915 East 22nd Street Minneapolis, (one block west of Minnehaha Avenue on 22nd Street, 22nd Street is one block south of Franklin Avenue) gathered bikers on June 22nd to bike to Somali Independence Day at Lake Street and Blaisdell Avenue. Spokes also repairs, teaches and promotes walking and biking always connecting people at the same time.

Somalia Independence Day on Lake Street and 1st SummerFest in East Phillips Park 24th St and 17th Ave.

East Phillips SummerFest 2014

A Roaring Success!!!

The East Phillips Community held its First Annual SummerFest Sunday, June 22nd in the extraordinary East Phillips Park. The festival honored the diversity of the community with foods and entertainment from many of the cultures who call East Phillips home and the festival celebrated the 5 ½ year struggle against all odds, to raise the money and redesign what used to be called “Cockroach Park” into the vibrant community center and park home for the community that is today with its wonderful soccer fields, basketball courts and baseball diamond. The East Phillips Improvement Coalition (EPIC) and Minneapolis Park and Recreation sponsored the Festival. The mantra of success for this community as stated by neighborhood advisor Arthur Himmelman many years ago was and still is: “If you want to go Far, go alone. If you want to go Fast, go together.” The community choice has always been to go Far Together. The community came out in huge numbers to celebrate the vast distance it has traversed (far) since those days of “Cockroach Park.” Once again, many organizations and individuals from this community came together to create a fantastic SummerFest. Entertainers included Inti Samay, Bhalta, Kusissa, The Little Thunderbirds, Holy Rosary Youth, Willie Murphy (who named an album “CockRoach Park”), and Chinelos. They provide 7 hours of non-stop music and dance from Minneapolis Park’s Showmobile. Fabulous food was provided by Holy Rosary, Taco Taxi and Mariana Robles.

The Minneapolis Police brought their huge Bomb Squad truck and their mounted patrol with three beautiful horses galloping across the park. Many neighborhood service organizations provided the attendees with information on their programs and mission. The Minneapolis Park Board provided two large inflatable slides and bounce houses for the kids. This was truly a community effort – Even the weather cooperated – Thanks to all for a Remarkable Sunday. We’re looking forward to many more!

The Second Annual East Phillips Summer Fest is already being planned for June 21st 2015!
Community Engagement: What does this really mean for Ventura Village in 2014?

What is Community Engagement? Is this what we really practice or simply what we preach about to others we want to impress?

By co-chairing Ventura Village’s Community Engagement Committee, I should be very well versed in what community engagement really means. According to Wikipedia’s entry, “community engagement refers to the process by which community benefit organizations and individuals build ongoing, permanent relationships for the purpose of applying a collective vision for the benefit of a community. While community organizing involves the process of building a grassroots movement that involves communities, community engagement primarily deals with the practice of moving said communities towards change, usually from a stalled or otherwise similarly suspended position.”

Core Principles of Community Engagement

The City of Minneapolis defines the primary purpose of community engagement as the empowerment of people to influence City government decisions that shape their city and their lives. Of course, community building, outreach and education activities are also important to the City.

1. Right to be included – Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Contribution will be thoughtfully considered – Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will be thoughtfully considered.
3. Recognize the needs of all – Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
4. Seek out involvement – Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Participants design participation – Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Adequate information – Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Known effect of participation – Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Adapted by Minneapolis City Council - Dec. 2009

Seattle’s Three Guiding Principles of Community Engagement

Enhance Relationships & Engagement: There is a greater likelihood of engagement from underserved communities when organizations take steps to enhance their relationships with those populations. Creating trusting relationships, increasing accessibility to facilities and services, and providing diverse opportunities to become involved, are key actions that reflect on organizational attitudes and values about developing equitable and sustainable engagement.

Enrich Knowledge Gathering: Strengthening connections with communities through knowledge gathering allows those constituents to play a key role in determining relevance and appropriateness of organizational programming. We must look beyond surveys as a means of gathering crucial data and feedback to-wards more personalized modes and means of this important task. In essence, exchanging information, rather than collecting it, provides an incentive for engaging in conversations and collaborations, as well as a greater sense of ownership in the outcome.

Embrace Organizational Change: In order for community engagement to flourish, organizations (and individuals that represent those organizations) must be open to organizational changes that are responsive to community insight and allow for shared power between communities and the organizations that serve them. The process and results of increased community engagement must go beyond activities to involve more community members, but rather become a prominent organizational value that drives everyday decision-making processes.

It’s time for our neighborhoods to gather together and decide for ourselves the best directions to go that truly reflect best examples of Community Engagement!

Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities

Take a look at PolicyLink’s language that reflects a culturally-based and less divisive dialogue regarding engaged neighborhoods that should be initiated:

“Community engagement encompasses a more comprehensive approach, creating practices and institutionalized mechanisms that share power and vested decision-making control in marginalized communities. When utilized for the purpose of increasing community power and agency for problem solving, community engagement is guided by a few key principles:

- Honor the wisdom, voice, and experience of residents.
- Treat participants with integrity and respect.
- Be transparent about motives and power dynamics.
- Share decision-making and initiative leadership.
- Engage in continuous reflection and willingness to change course.”

2014 Community Engagement Projects

With our mission in mind and our going on our third year of successful projects, co-chairs Abdullah Hassan and Robert Albee announced the following activities and projects for Ventura Village’s 2014 efforts:

- Somali Independence Day Celebration
- New language learning classes in Somali, Oromo, Spanish, Dakota & Ojibwe/Anishinabe
- “Top 100 Words to Learn” Project
- Neighborhood Navigator’s Program
- Elders Crafts Project Classes & Groups
- Annual Paseo Park Celebration

And on the Drawing Board:
- Cooking Classes - Training Our Old Tastebuds for New Adventures!
- I have an Idea! Seed $ for Startups

— PolicyLink

The Mission of the Ventura Village’s Community Engagement Committee is simple: Until our community meetings, activities and events more fully embrace our residents and those people served by agencies and organizations in our neighborhood, our challenges must continue to move more people into participating on as many levels as they wish to.
Places to Watch Fireworks

1. Stone Arch Bridge: This is the absolute best place to see the skies. Watching fireworks on the Stone Arch Bridge is like watching history, as the bridge is a link to the rich past of Minneapolis. You’ll be right above the Mississippi River and right below the action. Get here early, though; as this is the best spot, it fills up quick.

2. Gold Medal Park: One of the most underrated spots in downtown Minneapolis, Gold Medal Park offers a more traditional viewing experience. Throw a blanket on the grass, throw a ball around and lie down and relax. The grass, throw a ball around and lie down and relax. Then you need to stop what you’re doing and order tickets NOW! These tickets go very quickly and the view is a real bargain.

3. Guthrie Endless Bridge: A more unconventional place to watch fireworks, true, but it has that same VIP feel that the Mill City Museum Observation Deck has. You’ll be off the ground and closer to the action, and you’ll have a completely unobstructed view of the fireworks.

4. Restaurant Rooftops: A lot of people don’t generally think of restaurants as prime places to watch fireworks, but we say, “Why not?” You’re up in the air, you’ll have a great view AND there are people that will serve you food and alcohol.

5. Lake Calhoun: Parks are great, and buildings can get you closer to the fireworks. But, if you want the most authentic 4th of July “I LOVE AMERICA!” experience, Lake Calhoun is where you want to be. Grill out, play some volleyball, kayak/jay/paddle on the lake while you get a great view of the downtown fireworks.

6. Commons Park - Excelsior: If you are in the west metro enjoy the only public 4th of July fireworks event on the shores of Lake Minnetonka experienced at Commons Park in downtown Excelsior.

Powderhorn Park 4th of July

For 123 years, Minneapolis has celebrated the Fourth of July at Powderhorn Park. Over the decades the event has reinvented itself to reflect the changes in our community and 2014 marks another transformation.

Working with our longtime partner, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, PPNA’s Board of Directors voted in March to continue to co-host a daytime event on the Fourth of July at Powderhorn Park. Although the nature of the event has changed, as there will not be a fireworks display, you can still enjoy the pride and joy inherent to the spirit of the Fourth of July remains unchanged. PPNA and the MPRB are committed to reimagining this event for future generations in a way which best fits our dynamic and ever-changing community.

Celebrating Our Independence will feature a day-long lineup of extraordinary local talent, family-friendly activities and delicious food vendors. Our programming will run from 11:00 am to 11:00 pm on the Fourth and park visitors are welcome to stay in the park well after the program to celebrate with family and friends. In the park you will find canoeing, badminton, croquet, bocce ball, children’s arts and crafts, face painting and a bouncy castle.

Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association 821 E 35th Street Minneapolis, MN 55407 (612) 722-4817 info@ppna.org

In Mpls. 2 years ago, Dr. Dorothy Cotton, former member to Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke to a gathering and said: “There’s been a lot of talk today about elders passing on the torch to the youth. “I’m here to tell you God gave me this torch to me and I am still using it!”

“I’ll be glad to light your torch so that together we may light the way and fight the fight!”

Dr. Cotton, 84, was the Education Director for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) from 1960 to 1968. Under the Carter Administration, Dr. Cotton served as the Southeastern Regional Director of ACTION, the Federal Government’s agency for voluntary services, from 1975 to 1981.

She has been a president of a university and many other influential positions as well as her own consulting organization in which she is active today.

Sandy Spieler from page 1

“I’m still using my torch!... I’ll be glad to light your torch!”

In July, Sandy Spieler, the Common Well artist, has built awareness about water use and quality, including exploration of who owns and controls access to healthy water and whether our current networks of water infrastructure are a right or a privilege. Three decades ago, Spieler first explored the themes of water resources in her art, culminating in “The Circle of Water Circus” which involved 25 adults, 4 children, and 2 dogs traveling all the way down the Mississippi River from Stained in New Orleans. During a 2003 sabbatical in England with an intentional focus on water resources, Spieler became acquainted with the term “the commons,” meaning “belonging equally to all.” In a 2003 grant from the National Institute of Health newsletter, Spieler said the term “entered into me... If water is essential to all of life, then access to healthy water is essential for all life, a ‘commons’ for all to share.”

In a rededication to the importance of public water systems, and a rejection of the privatization of water, Spieler emphasizes drinking from the purest part of water bottles and has helped to initiate fountain renewal projects throughout Minneapolis.

Thematically, Spieler’s work tends toward such issues that weave together both humanity and the environment. Spieler has said that her work is ultimately about the interconnection of all things, and about recognizing human potential for change. “I think it’s about looking at each person as responsible, as culpable, but also having great power.”

Sandy Spieler, musical symbols and experiences the vision of a performance coming to Minneapolis. On July 4th, Sandy Spieler will be light the International ECOARTS network. She has been honored previously through Bush Foundation’s Leadership and Artist Fellowships, the Minnesota State Arts Board Fellowships, the Jerome Foundation, and the McKnight Artist Fellowships. Spieler has received two UNIMA-USA Citations of Excellence in the Art of Puppetry Award, and fields requests for commissioned work from organizations and arts patrons worldwide.


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INTEGRATE
Beyond The Great Bdote

For the Dakota, a ‘bdote’ was most frequently the convergence of two rivers (a place where two waters come together). In today’s world, “great bdote” refers to the ongoing meltdown of the polar ice caps. Unfortunately, close to 100 million people in Bangladesh stand to be inundated. How many millions of our own people might be reduced to refugee status? Moreover, in what spirit will those with power and guns respond? Is catastrophe inevitable? Actually, some sectors of the ruling class are behaving accordingly. Yet there is a glimmer which tends to be finicky. Meanwhile, we dare not sleep before the dawn “beyond coal.”

To put it mildly, carbon dioxide emissions must be suppressed before the dawn “beyond coal.” Yet there is a glimmer which tends to be finicky.

“Beyond the Great Bdote” refers to the most beautiful creatures of humanity were transformed into the most beautiful.

Frank Reflections

War’s definition and justification plague individuals and institutions alike

BY FRANK ERICKSON

The Catholic Church did a very good thing during the “Gulf War”…from the New Dictionary of the History of Ideas – “The Catholic Church responded to the Gulf War in a statement that put the very idea of a just war in peril. The theory of just war, they said, “was indefensible and has been abandoned. In reality—with the sole exception of a purely defensive war against acts of aggression, we can say that there are no ‘just wars’ and there is no ‘right to wage war.’”

Beautiful, without even realizing it, the Catholic Church is moving into a realm of seeing “war’s” inevitability of communism? So it was that the most vile creatures of humanity were transformed into the most beautiful.

How else can it be approached, than when you say “there are no ‘just wars’ and there is no ‘right’ to wage war,” you are flat out indefensible and has been abandoned. In reality—with the sole exception of a purely defensive war against acts of aggression, we can say that there are no ‘just wars’ and there is no ‘right to wage war.’”

Beautiful, without even realizing it, the Catholic Church is moving into a realm of seeing “war’s” inevitability of communism? So it was that the most vile creatures of humanity were transformed into the most beautiful.

It can’t exist both ways—that is, if you are going to say that “war” can only exist in a “purely defensive war,” then what you are saying is that “war” is the freedom to kill, or if it is a “purely defensive” mode.

So how is it “war” with acts of aggression that have no justification, aggression that has no right to be waged?

The Church puts out a good effort, but they mistakenly reinforce the same old belief, that “war” alone is the justification, the right.

If “war” to the Catholic Church only exists in a “purely defensive” mode, how can “waging war” exist through acts of aggression?

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tion from A Partnership of Diabetics
CHAT (A-POD)!

Meet members of the Growing the Backyard CHAT and sample some of their amazing vegetables!