I’m Back Again, For More Than One Day
By Davida Kilgore

I started Interact in March of 2020, and was only able to work on an embroidery project for one day before COVID forced my life line to the outside world to shutter its doors. Eighteen months began of meeting the artists on Zoom in the comfort of my living room, with workshops, working on projects I was proud of finishing. But now I’ve started over and started out, finally, in the cavernous studio on Minnehaha Avenue, three days a week. Even behind their masks I recognized all the artists I met on Zoom and could call them by their names. Since September I’ve filled 60 pages of an 80-page sketch book with illustrations for my graphic novel which is right on the ambitious schedule I’ve set for myself because I’m back.

At Interact, in-person makes me feel I can create anything my mind can envision. The smell of paint, the soft scratches of gel pens and colored pencils, the messiness of clay sticking to my fingers is a joy I’m trying to express into words.

Like I do in the writing workshop Jonas and I facilitate, but rhymes come up short, sometimes only visuals will do. I’m thriving now, mentally and artistically, recognizing once again, the healing properties of art, how our heart beats sync as we create order from chaos, or the other way around, whichever works. We are artists, We are together, We are thriving, We are individually, one!

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Artistic & Executive Director/Founder

Our Vision
We push the boundaries of traditional art forms by including the unique perceptions of our artists.
We expand the meaning of “accessibility” beyond physical structures for artists with disabilities by playing an active role in the creative process.
Artists share in the audience’s appreciation of the work which has a healing and integrating effect.

Our Values
– Excellence in artistic expression
– Radical inclusion
– Unlocking human potential
– Social justice
– Fiscal prudence

In all of our work, Interact:
– Creates art in a spirit of radical inclusion.
– Inspires artists and audiences to explore the full spectrum of human potential.
– Transforms lives by expanding ideas of what is possible.
the gala

Interact’s 26th Anniversary Celebration was an overwhelming success!

Over 150 guests gathered at the Nicollet Island Pavilion to hear the artists perform, purchase art from the Gallery, raise a glass to toast founder, Jeanne Calvit, and dance the night away after the show. Thank you to musical director Ryan Bynum and his band, Good Vibe, plus the incredible talents of Robert Robinson, Sheridan Zuther, Ivory Doublette, Elise Jones, and Chadwick Niles Phillips for making it a night to remember.

As one attendee said, “I go to parties all the time, but this was the best time I’ve ever had at a gala!”

Let’s do it again next year!

news from the gallery

by Gallery Director, Brittany Kieler

In July 2021, we opened Interact Gallery, a new space located at 755 Prior Avenue North in the Prior Works building next to Can Can Wonderland. Located just one block away from our Saint Paul studio, our new gallery has already seen two exhibitions by Interact artists, which you can learn more about at gallery.interactcenter.org. We are thrilled to announce an upcoming series of solo shows in 2022, including an exhibition by Janice Essick at Interact Gallery in the spring, as well as three other exhibitions by Mike Harris Jr., Carl Clark, and W.S. Norton at venues throughout the greater Twin Cities area. We’re also preparing for a number of collaborations with arts organizations throughout Minnesota next year, including Franconia Sculpture Park and the Arts at MSP Airport Foundation.

zoomtopia

During the first half of 2021, artists and staff participated in over 50 creative workshops a week on Zoom. As a result, the Visual and Performing Arts departments produced a first ever virtual performance called Zoomtopia. Produced by Uptop Films, and music directed by Ryan Bynum, the show ran for two months and captured new audiences all over the world.

new staff

Interact recently welcomed these talented staff to the team in 2021!

Jackson Mercogliano
Operations, Reception and Transportation Coordinator

Mike Whistler
Performing Arts Instructor

Ahnika Lexvold
Substitute PA Instructor

Phoebe Mol
Visual Artist, Arts Instructor

Philip Olmstead
Advancement Coordinator

Jared Zeigler
Performing Arts Department Manager

Beth Gilleland
Performing Arts Instructor

interact artists

Daniel Mauck – Performing Artist

There is a sense of calm and belonging at Interact. Being able to say, I’m here, let’s create, I have a sense of hope for the future. No matter what we are faced with, we have each other and a willingness to create theater.

Michael Wolfe – Performing Artist

I enjoyed the zoom classes and they helped me survive the pandemic. Now coming back and brainstorming and improvising, it fulfills me emotionally. There are new staff bringing new skills to the table and I’m growing as an artist.

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