



Community Planning & Economic Development

Media Advisory

Contact: Rose Lindsay, communications (W) 612.673.5015 (C) 612.2508661

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

For Immediate Release

City of Minneapolis Seed Project to Host Three Public African American Art History Workshops

WHAT: The City of Minneapolis will be hosting three public African American Art History Workshops over the next several weeks. These workshops are part of the John Biggers Seed Project (Seed). Seed is a public art project 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 planning the artistic "seeds" on the Northside.

The first workshop will take place on Saturday, February 8 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. and feature Ben Heywood (the Soap Factory), Nate Young (the Bindery Projects), and Catherine Kennedy (artist). These three artists will share their thoughts about black artists they feel are creating important work, including Theaster Gates, Charles Gaines, Dave McKenzie, and Tony Lewis.

Subsequent workshops will take place on February 22 – "*Quilting and the Quilters*" and March 1 – "*The Black Arts Movement (BAM)*." All workshops will take place at the University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) located at 2100 Plymouth Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55411. The events are free and open to the public.

For more details visit the [City of Minneapolis website](#).

WHEN: *Contemporary African American Art: Views from Local Curators and Artists*
Feb 8, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Presented by: Ben Heywood, Nate Young, and Catherine Kennedy

Quilting and Quilters
Feb 22, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Presented by Remi K. Douah

The Black Arts Movement (BAM)
March 1, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Presented by: Helen Foster

WHERE: University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC), 2001 Plymouth Avenue N, Minneapolis, MN 55411

MORE: **Presenters' Biographies**

Helen Foster has a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Folklore and Folk Life. She has taught African American art history and American folk art courses at the College of Visual arts and the University of Minnesota. She is the author of *New Raiments of Self: African American Clothing in the Antebellum South*, and has co-edited other books and published numerous articles examining African American culture. She is also the mother of three children and seven grandchildren.

Remi Douah was born and raised in Ivory Coast, West Africa. He came to the US as a Fulbright Scholar to pursue his graduate education at Michigan State University and the University of Minnesota. He is currently Director of the Caribbean & Latin America Initiatives in the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. Remi has worked with African American quilters in Minnesota, and organized African American Quilts Discovery Days in Minneapolis and St. Paul. He co-curated *WHO'D A THOUGHT IT: Improvisation in African-American Quilting*, by Eli Leon for the University of Minnesota Goldstein Gallery.

Benedict Heywood is a graduate of Oxford University and the Courtauld Institute of Art, and relocated to Minneapolis in 2002. In England he served as the Deputy Director of The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust and an Officer in the Visual Arts Department at the Arts Council of England. He is currently the Executive Director of The Soap Factory, which presents innovative programs in the visual arts and is the largest space devoted to emerging contemporary art in the US. He has served as chair of the Minneapolis Arts Commission, and continues to write and lecture on contemporary art and built environment issues.

Catherine Kennedy was born in Liberia West Africa and left in the early 1990s during the first Liberian Civil War. After a period in the Ivory Coast, she relocated to the United States. She has an AA from the Ecole Des Beaux Arts D'Abidjan in West Africa and a BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. She is the recipient of a Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Award. Kennedy's work explores the artist's experiences as a displaced person and addresses

contemporary and historical paths between the Americas and West Africa, including the triangular trade and paths that bring African refugees and immigrants to the United States.

Nate Young has a BA from Northwestern College in Minnesota and an MFA from California Institute of the Arts. His work explores the contemporary discourse of racialization in a way that aims to deconstruct the essentialism that allows modern oppression. He has been a resident artist at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, awarded grants through the MN State Arts Board and is a 2009 Bush Fellow. He co-founded the Bindery Projects, an alternative exhibition space which facilitates engaging and meaningful exhibitions operating outside constraints of institution and market and seeks to be a catalyst for pragmatic critical thought and conversation.

The John Biggers Seed Project (Seed) is a public art and collaborative design effort that engages renowned African American artists in mentoring emerging artists in placemaking by educating them about African American art and community history, providing career development and transferable skills, and creating a sense of place that speaks to the culture of North Minneapolis. Seed is inspired by the *Celebration of Life* mural, an acclaimed public artwork led by John Biggers, a major African American artist of the twentieth century, which began the careers of young artists and organizations, planting artistic “seeds” on Minneapolis North Side.

Seed is funded by the City of Minneapolis Art in Public Places Program, the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Program, the McKnight Foundation Regions and Communities Program, and the Pohlad Family Foundation.

For more information, visit the City of Minneapolis website at www.minneapolismn.gov/dca.

###