

Session Spotlight: Practicing Your Beliefs: Engagement as a Core Value

Regina M Flanagan, Sara Daleiden, Seitu Jones, and Stephanie Glaros

What does a practice look like that holds civic good and community participation as a core value? That views engagement critical to the creative process, and more than a means to an end or a burdensome requirement? This panel's four artists will converse with each other and invite dialogue with the audience.

Regina M Flanagan, PLA, is an artist, writer, landscape architect and public art administrator from Saint Paul. Before returning to graduate school to study landscape architecture, she directed public art programs for the States of Wisconsin and Minnesota administering over 130 projects. She has developed and executed public art plans or programs and projects for Madison, Milwaukee, Detroit and Saint Paul. Flanagan has designed landscapes for cultural institutions including The American Swedish Institute and the Monroe (WI) Arts Center among others. She is one of four artists working on the re-design of Nicollet Mall and fields a website and blog: www.nicolletmallart.org Flanagan holds Masters degrees in Art from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and in Landscape Architecture from the University of Minnesota College of Design. Her landscape photography has been featured in over 85 exhibitions and in 2014, she was awarded a Minnesota State Arts Board Artists Initiative Grant for her work documenting the aftermath of the Pagami Creek Fire in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Stephanie Glaros is a teaching artist, author and speaker best known for her blog and book, *Humans of Minneapolis*. Glaros explains that, "my process is to approach someone I don't know, listen to their story, and document the interaction. I share the results on social media. With luck, my followers may feel a connection to that person. They often respond with words of encouragement and even offers of help. When my subjects discover these expressions of kindness, the circle becomes complete." This practice allows Glaros to utilize her gift for relating with many types of people in order to reveal the things we share in common. She's created community engagement projects for the City of Minneapolis, Metro Meals on Wheels, Friends of the Hennepin County Library, and the Minneapolis Parks Foundation. Her work has been featured in the *Star Tribune*, *Minnesota Monthly*, *City Pages* and on MPR. Glaros also leads talks and workshops that focus on empathy and connection.

Sara Daleiden facilitates civic engagement in developing landscapes, exercising cultural exchange strategies based in over two decades of experience. With headquarters in Los Angeles and Milwaukee, her initiatives, including MKELAX, encourage local cultures to value neighborhoods, public space, civic art, social entrepreneurship and racial and gender equity. In Los Angeles, Daleiden currently works with the Los Angeles County Arts Commission's Civic Art Program with the Open Space Creative Graffiti Abatement Project on the documentary *Civic Art: Four Stories from South Los Angeles*, as part of the public dialogue series *Civic Art Works*. In Milwaukee, she focuses on the development of *The Milwaukee Method of Creative Placemaking*; *HomeWorks: Bronzeville*; *HERE! Choice Neighborhood Initiative*; and the *Beerline Trail Neighborhood Development Project*. Daleiden received her Master of Public Art Studies degree at the University of Southern California (USC). She has additionally taught at USC, Otis College of Art and Design, Woodbury University and the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design.

Seitu Jones who grew up in North Minneapolis and lives in Saint Paul's Frogtown is nationally recognized as a dynamic collaborator and a creative force for civic engagement. Upon awarding Jones the McKnight Foundation's Distinguished Artist Award in 2017, President Kate Wolford remarked, "Jones has demonstrated what's possible when an artist with a hopeful vision and a generous spirit sets down deep roots in his community." Jones has been the guiding force behind the five-acre Frogtown Farm and other urban "greenlining" initiatives. He is also a master gardener helping to cultivate

new intersections between nature, art, and civic infrastructure. Jones is currently serving his third term on the Capitol Region Watershed District board. Jones' numerous awards and fellowships include a Minnesota State Arts Board Fellowship, a McKnight Visual Artist Fellowship, a Bush Artist Fellowship, a Bush Leadership Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts/Theatre Communications Group Designer Fellowship, and a Loeb Fellowship at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. In 2017, Jones also won the prestigious ArtPrize for his entry "The Heartside Community Meal" through the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA) in Grand Rapids, Michigan. ArtPrize, which bills itself as the world's largest public art event, involved projects by 20 artists that were voted upon by the public.

