

Northern Spark 2022 Open Call for Festival Closing Event

Application Deadline Extended: Sunday, January 9, 2022, at 11:59 pm CT.

Apply [here](#).



Census by Pramila Vasudevan and collaborators, Northern Spark 2016. Photo: Max Haynes. Image Description: a person wearing a grey hoodie sits with their back to a single lamp pole with a glowing light bulb. In front of them is a skyline at dawn with vivid orange, pink, purple and blue sunrise.

WHAT IS NORTHERN SPARK?

In past years during Northern Spark, tens of thousands of people have gathered throughout the Twin Cities from dusk to dawn. In 2022 this structure returns, and festival curators lean into our uncertain times to invite artist projects that connect and inspire festival goers in experimental, surprising ways. For the first time since 2017, this year's event includes a project that will take place from 2 am until dawn, bringing back the beloved Northern Spark experience of greeting the dawn together, outdoors, after a night of magical art happenings.

More information about previous years of Northern Spark:

- 2021.northernspark.org
- 2019.northernspark.org
- 2014.northernspark.org
- 2013.northernspark.org

- 2018.northernspark.org
- 2017.northernspark.org
- 2016.northernspark.org
- 2015.northernspark.org
- 2012.northernspark.org
- 2011.northernspark.org

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SUMMARY

Northern Spark 2022 is taking place in-person along University Ave in St. Paul, MN on Saturday June 11, 2022, from 9 pm to 2 am. A Closing Event will follow from 2 - 5:30 am on Raspberry Island in downtown St. Paul.

This is an Open Call for proposals for the festival Closing Event, focused on water. Projects can span any artistic genre, i.e. visual, literary, performance, behavioral, etc. Ideal projects will offer engagement opportunities for festival goers. (For information about the Open Call for Participatory Installations, go [here](#).)

Project proposals will be selected by a jury consisting of the [Northern Spark Artist Council](#).

Proposals must also respond to this year's theme: **What the World Needs Now**

Keep reading for information on how to apply, who is eligible and the full timeline of required dates and meetings.

For information on future calls and other Northern Spark 2022 project opportunities, sign up for our e-newsletter [here](#).

WHY WATER

Mnísoṭa Makhóčhe, the Dakota name for Minnesota, translates to “land where the waters reflect the sky.” Our state is home to more than 10,000 lakes. Their waters run through our cities as the Wakpa Tanka / Misi-Ziibi / Mississippi River, and it runs through our bodies as our drinking water. This river also bridges us to peoples, places, lands, flora, and fauna along a 2,340 miles course to meet the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean.

In Dakota tradition, water is our first medicine. When in utero and the water breaks, life as an individual begins. It is a key part of our physical makeup and it's required for all living things. Water is life and with that gift comes a responsibility for us to protect it. Our waterways have been the focus of activism locally in the fight against Line 3 and other efforts to protect fragile ecosystems as well as Indigenous treaty rights. Water is a vital part of our world and worthy of our attention today, and every day.

For the first time since 2017 Northern Spark, this project will invite participants to greet dawn together outdoors as an ending to the festival. We are looking for participatory projects that propose a festival closing gesture which:

- Creates a connection between the festival's overall theme and the Wakpá Thánka / Misi-Ziibi / Mississippi River specifically or bodies of water generally
- Considers the night-into-day nature of the event's timing
- Is participatory – allowing and encouraging interaction between attendees, the river, each other and the art experience; and
- Acts as a [denouement](#), a culmination, a bringing together of people; a “sending.”

PLACE AND SITE INFORMATION

Raspberry Island

Raspberry Island - named for the wild raspberries that once grew there - sits in the middle of the Wakpá Thánka / Misi-Ziibi / Mississippi river with views of downtown Saint Paul to the north and Harriet Island to the south. The Wabasha Street Bridge crosses directly over it. The park features a bandshell, a large grassy plaza, trees, native grasses, and walking paths around the perimeter. There is existing lighting at the bandshell and around the perimeter; the grassy plaza is unlit. There is access to one 20-amp circuit at the bandshell. The island is accessible by foot, bike or car across a bridge starting on the Harriet Island / south side of the river. There are also staircases coming down from the middle of the Wabasha Street Bridge (100 steps with viewing platforms partway down). It is part of the Harriet Island Regional Park run by the City of Saint Paul.

Please note: the west end of the island, including the boat house, is private and cannot be used for the festival.

Further context:

Dakota people have generational knowledge of the relationships and connections between people, plants, animals, and land through the waterways. In the Twin Cities, there are many

places that tell the stories of these connections such as Bdote, translated from Dakota meaning "where two waters come together". Bdote represents the spiritual and physical place of creation for the Dakota people and is located at the confluence of the Wakpá Thánka (Large River) Mississippi River and Mnísota Wakpá (Clear Waters Reflecting the Blue Skies River) Minnesota River, on the eastern edge of the Minneapolis–St. Paul airport, and south of the Twin Cities.

Read more about Raspberry Island:

<https://lisastories.com/2018/09/15/raspberry-island-the-little-island-that-could/>

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/harriet-island-regional-park/raspberry-island>

Accessibility

We acknowledge that no festival location can be 100% accessible to everyone. Here are the accessibility features and limitations of this site.

- Gendered indoor bathrooms; gender neutral porta-potties; both with ADA stalls
- Bike racks, accessible parking spaces
- Paved walkways around the perimeter
- The bandshell platform has stairs (and no ramp)

FESTIVAL THEME

Northern Spark 2022: What the World Needs Now

Artists are truth tellers, dreamers, seekers of imagination. Between the ever-present uncertainty of our times and the impossible tangibility of the future, we wonder: what does the world need now?

Some may already be singing "what the world needs now is love, sweet love." These lyrics ring true as an anthem for our times. We all need love, but perhaps your answer to this statement is, poetry projected on every building, clean water for all who inhabit this earth, a sing-a-long in a local park, or endless bubbles shining iridescent in the sun. One thing is for certain: we know we will always need art to fuel our souls.

The 2022 Northern Spark Artist Council curatorial team arrived at this festival theme after many conversations in which the concepts of exhaustion, uncertainty, and hope repeatedly emerged as critical touchpoints for seeking continued healing in our communities. This theme does not aim to find consensus, but rather to be a portal through which the needs and desires of our world may be radically illuminated throughout the nights of Northern Spark 2022.

The theme was created by the [2022 Artist Council](#) with Northern Lights.mn.

ELIGIBILITY

This call is for **individual artists, artist collectives, culture bearers and creative community organizers**.. Non-profit organizations or companies are not eligible to apply.

Who is an Individual Artist?

Anyone who is a maker of things or experiences in the realm of art; can be self-taught, or academically trained, emerging or seasoned as an artist.

What is an Artist Collective?

Groups of artists who work together toward shared artistic goals or projects. These groups may be ongoing or temporary for Northern Spark. Artist groups that have 501c3 status are not eligible.

Who is a Culture Bearer?

These are individuals or groups who may not use the term “artist” to describe their work in maintaining, sharing, or practicing cultural lifeways and creative practices.

Who is a Creative Community Organizer?

A creative community organizer is a community member who has been involved with uplifting and organizing communities. This person has a deep understanding of community politics, privilege, and power and uses their voice to challenge the system to create social change.

COVID requirements: with abundant caution and care for our community, all festival artists must show proof of vaccination (including boosters, as applicable) or a negative COVID test result within 72 hours of the festival date. They must also be prepared to wear a mask if the festival team collectively determines it is necessary during the shifting state of the pandemic. This requirement is the same for festival staff and volunteers.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROJECT SELECTION

Projects will be evaluated according to these primary considerations:

- **Theme.** How is your project inspired by the theme: “What the World Needs Now”?
- **Artistic vision.** What is your project? What materials and/or processes will you use? We are looking for clear project descriptions that showcase a commitment to creativity.
- **Creative Team.** Who is making your project? What roles will each person play?
- **Participatory.** How will people interact, engage or exchange with your project?
- **Duration.** How does your project fully utilize the unique timing of this event, including darkness and sunrise? This project must run fully from 2 am - 5:30 am.
- **Accessibility.** Consider how your project will be experienced by people with differing abilities of vision, hearing, touch, cognition, etc.
- **Relationship to Place.** How does your project consider the unique location of this event and its proximity to the Mississippi River, both thematically and physically?
- **Known Unknowns.** If there are parts of your project that are unknown, that’s okay! Tell us what they are and what process you might use to figure them out.

In addition, while none of the following are strict requirements, they are factors in making our decisions:

Other considerations

- **Sound.** Due to the timing of this event, it needs to be quiet. We welcome projects that have a localized sound experience (whether amplified or unamplified) as long as it does not reach beyond the project footprint.
- **Safety.** Please consider the safety of the audience, the artistic team, and the natural environment of the site, including the river. Northern Lights.mn will have COVID safety protocols in place (TBD) that all projects must follow.
- **Sustainability.** We encourage artists to consider their carbon footprint and potential waste while creating and implementing their project.
- **Feasibility.** We are looking for projects that can be created between notification of acceptance and the start of Northern Spark, as well as set up and taken down on the night of this event. Northern Lights.mn will assist with general production, but you are responsible for the creation, production and implementation of your project.
- **Inclusivity.** Your project should be inclusive towards a wide public audience, people of differing perspectives and abilities.
- **Free.** Participation in Northern Spark experiences must be free of charge. Projects that intend to sell art or products are not eligible.

BUDGET

If your project is selected, you will receive a budget of \$5,000. We suggest you plan for an artist(s) stipend of \$2,000 within this budget.

You will submit a budget with your application that outlines the primary costs of your project: materials, equipment, tools, services or staffing to help prepare or run your project, etc. The budget should reflect everything you need to complete your project. Your project should be scaled to fit within this stipend and materials budget. **Projects that are contingent on further fundraising will not be considered.**

View sample budgets [here](#).

If you have questions, email submissions@northern.lights.mn or come to an online [Info Session](#).

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The application process is entirely online. Applicants are required to submit:

- **Name of Artist, Artist Collective, or Creative Community Organizer** (if collective, name Lead Artist)

- **Primary Contact** (name, pronouns, phone, email) This person will receive the project acceptance or rejection and any questions we might have during the decision making process.
- **Answers to the Key Considerations**
- **Project Supporting Materials (optional)** Please attach any files that help to illustrate your concept and vision (ex. visual renderings, audio files, video files, etc). This is different from a sample of past work.
- **Work samples** of past work that communicates your ability to manifest the project you are proposing. Work samples do not need to be of the same material or media as your project idea, but give the jury a sense that you can complete a project on the scale you are proposing. Please include identifying information and/or brief descriptions. If you are applying as a collaborative group, please note who on the team the work samples belong to.
- **A budget (1 page)** that fits within the parameters of the open call and outlines the major cost categories of your project.

The submission form is on Submittable, and will be available soon.
Download a Word doc of the Submittable form [here](#).

If you are unable to apply online or access the application, please contact us!
submissions@northern.lights.mn.

SELECTION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Projects will be selected by Northern Lights.mn and the Artist Council, who reserve the right to request additional material and information after the proposal deadline, and to reject any and all proposals received.

Application Timeline:

- Deadline for applications extended: **January 9, 2022, 11:59 pm, CST**
- Artists notified no later than: **February 1, 2021**

Being a Northern Spark artist means being part of a community of makers. Festival artists take part in monthly meetings at which you receive and give feedback and problem solving for your and others' projects, receive production and curatorial support and other networking benefits. Northern Spark is a professional development experience!

Before applying with a project, please make sure you will be available for the following dates and interested in a learning process. We want to help you succeed with your project.

Festival Artist Timeline:

Please save these dates! If you are selected, you will be required to attend.

- Festival Artists Introductory Meeting: **February 9, 2022, 6-8 pm on Zoom.**
- Monthly Festival Artist Meetings, 6-8 pm on Zoom: March 9, April 13, May 11
- Project Testings: TBD the week of May 23 - 26

- Project hours at festival: **Sunday, June 12, 2022 from 2am - 5:30am** (with additional time for set-up and strike directly before and after the project hours)
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INFO SESSIONS

Please join us for an **Info Session** and a **Walking Tour** of the possible sites for Northern Spark 2022.

Virtual Info Session:

Tuesday, November 30, 2021 from 6-7 pm

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84061124285>

Facebook Event: <https://fb.me/e/24SALIFY8>

(this event will be recorded and posted if you are unable to attend)

Walking Tour of site

Saturday, December 11, 2021 from 1-3pm

Meet at: Victoria Theatre Arts Center, 825 University Avenue W, St. Paul, MN 55104

This walking tour is for proposed projects happening along University Avenue during the 9pm - 2am festival hours. **There will be a separate walking tour of the Closing Event site December 11 from 3:30 - 4:30pm at Raspberry Island.**

Facebook Event for Participatory Installations: <https://fb.me/e/1kFxpZLS>

Facebook Event for Festival Closing Event: <https://fb.me/e/V3Y2ZPMD>

SUBMISSION FORM

The submission form will be available on Submittable soon. Find it [here](#), as well as on the Northern Lights.mn [Opportunities](#) page.

If you are planning on submitting a proposal and would like to receive relevant open call updates, sign up for our [newsletter](#).

If you have specific questions about the submission process or need help, e-mail submissions@northern.lights.mn

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much detail about my production process do you want to see in my proposal?

We want to see descriptions of materials and equipment you'll use, dimensions of sets or objects, placement diagrams, any special structures or features that would be needed, etc.

Basically, anything that will help us get a sense of how your project would physically fit into the landscape of the festival, and what the major physical components are.

I don't need funding for my project / I can provide all the funding for my project, and I would like to present it at Northern Spark. What is the process I should follow?

All proposals for Northern Spark projects must go through the Open Call process. This is an equity practice, so all artists have a chance to be presented by the festival regardless of their access to resources.

Is there a set number of projects that will be accepted?

We will select one (1) project for the Closing Ceremony.

I'm not interested in presenting a project, but I really want to be a part of this festival.

How can I get involved?

You can volunteer! We love our volunteers. Email volunteers@northern.lights.mn for more information.

What should I do if I don't see my question listed in these FAQ's?

E-mail submissions@northern.lights.mn with any additional questions.