

Healing Place

Healing Place is an artist-led community project that explores and expresses the healing connections among people and place.

Historically, the river area of the Twin Cities has been a place of healing, conversation and transformation; it has also been the site of cultural trauma and environmental degradation. We want to explore how this place provides a source of healing for individuals and for a fractured society, and how people can help to repair a place in need of healing and how the place can help to heal the people.

Healing Place offers a “deep mapping” approach to tracing and presenting connections among people and place. Deep mapping is multi-disciplinary, a collection of and presentation of information from multiple perspectives. It includes art, science, social sciences, performance. Deep mapping often focuses on places of trauma. Deep Mapping is produced all over the world to build and repair connections between people and the landscapes in which they live. It requires communication and collaboration across disciplinary and cultural boundaries. The beginning of this project (Introductory Year – 2014) is about establishing and nurturing those connections.

The **visible starting point** for the introduction to Healing Place was an evening of performance and experimentation with video for Northern Spark, June 14, 2014. Emily Johnson and Catalyst Dance, with community participation, are shaping an adaptation of their performance, “Shore” for the 2014 Northern Spark event. Allies: media/art worked with videographers to create a short piece for exploring ideas about movement and healing and place. This piece can be viewed at <http://vimeo.com/104962035>.

A less visible starting point began in spring of 2014. Healing Place extends an **invitation to other individuals and groups** that already explore healing, healing this place, and how this place heals through language, music, scientific research, performance, historical information, environmental knowledge, and through play. The Healing Place coordinators and core partners are seeking out core and participating partners for inclusion in the umbrella of Healing Place. Work already exists that connects to Healing Place. However, Healing Place will ask partners to

- 1.) Focus on **this place** - the Minneapolis-St. Paul river area,
- 2.) Reflect on **healing** (place and/or people).

Initial funding has been provided by the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board for the Northern Spark performance and resulting art piece and for the initial work of writing/coordinating. The work and mission of many potential partners **already connects to the vision of Healing Place** so funding for their work may already be in place or readily fundable. We hope, though, to raise funds to include help for some grass roots organizations like indigenous language teachers/schools, or youth education programs to develop Healing Place activities. One possible example is the teaching of traditional Dakota/Anishinabe dance that could take place with a Native after school program. Dancers from these classes and from

the community at large will work with Catalyst Dance to develop the blending of traditional and modern dance for the central performance. Native Academy at Migizi Communications could focus their summer science work on measuring the health of a certain species in the area and share their findings. A language table could be established for local stakeholders to learn the Dakota words that deepen their relationship to the St. Anthony Falls area, broadly defined.

Confirmed and potential project partners include individual artists, poets, Minneapolis Parks, DNR, Migizi Communications, River Life of the U of M, Wicoie Nandagikendan, Native American Community Development Institute, Dakota Language Society, University of Minnesota, Mill City Museum, National Park Service, Wilderness Inquiry, MIA (MN Institute of Art) and many more.

Potential projects include public panels discussing the nature of healing, the state of the river here, activities promoting the healing of the Bdote area, projects (art/science/landscape design) that present possible futures of the area, etc., etc.

Like healing itself, this project is a process and one that is not entirely predictable. At this early stage, a focal event in 2016 that includes a performance installation collaboration of Catalyst Dance and Allies: media/art and the sharing of the work of project partners (a Healing Place ‘festival’ if you will) is envisioned, but the process and the evolution of the partners’ collaboration is leading to a series of events, and/or a documentary, and/or a book and/or some unknown way to share and involve the community in healing of place and people.

Healing Place events will:

- Provide avenues for river workers to learn new approaches
- Offer ways for new collaborations to evolve
- Present a variety of river area related projects to the public
- Enhance the visibility of healing that is underway
- Invite engagement in efforts that address the deep ongoing need for healing.

Partners will contemplate what it means in their particular work **to start with the indigenous, consider healing and focus on the place** (the river area of the Minneapolis-St. Paul area). There will be a supplementary piece to further clarify what it means to start with the indigenous, to consider healing and to focus on place. These considerations will hopefully inspire and focus, rather than limit or shape.

An initial funding plan has been developed. Fiscal sponsorship through Springboard for the Arts is in place. Initial meetings with possible partners and funders are underway to begin the process of gathering partners and existing work.

The process may include consistent project creation/development as a group of partners, or perhaps partners will carry on or create their projects on their own while an event coordinator will spearhead the focal sharing event for spring of 2016. Most likely, Healing Place will evolve as a combination of approaches. **Join us!**

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