

# Creating Art that Challenges Perceptions of Disability



**Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts** is a non-profit organization under IRS section 501c3 located in the Creative Enterprise Zone in Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA.

Since 1996, Interact's mission to ***create art that challenges perceptions of disability*** has opened doors for artists with disabilities and audiences eager to experience their work, who might never have seen the arts as a life choice, but who now see the arts as essential to their humanity.

With over 125 artists working in **theater or studio arts**, Interact is multi-cultural, intergenerational, and embraces the entire spectrum of disability labels. Interact's work is driven by a vision of radical inclusion. We collaborate with artists with and without disabilities, from mainstream and marginalized communities, whose stories and life experiences are the grist for our original, ensemble-generated theatrical work, and inspire the spectrum of media that are created in our studio.

## Programming

Interact Theater produces two original, fully staged theater productions each year. Our work is created and performed by the entire company and attracts a wide, eclectic audience. Our theater also offers seasons of shorter works designed for special events such as school shows, industry events, and conferences. Our ensemble-generated creation and developmental process means that artists with disabilities fully participate in conceiving new work, developing the original material, writing scripts, and incorporating everyone's ideas through improvisation and other ensemble-building techniques. Collaborating with major guest artists such as Kevin Kling, Larry Yazzie, J. Otis Powell and others, Interact Theater artists with disabilities have become an integral part of the Twin Cities and regional arts community. All artists are paid for their performance work.

Interact's Studio mounts professional public exhibitions each year in the Interact Gallery, along with special exhibition events in invited venues throughout the metro area. Because artists with disabilities face even greater economic and space/mobility challenges than most mainstream artists, Interact provides generous, accessible studio space and all necessary art supplies to facilitate painting, drawing, sculpture, clay, textile work, and other media. We provide a full roster of visual arts seminars, guided by six professional staff as well as guest artists, in areas such as life drawing, mosaic, art history, sculpture, and multimedia forms. Artists are trained and supported through the long process of aesthetic maturation and evolution, and they are challenged to complete work for Interact's exhibition season. Visual artists are paid 50% commission on pieces that they sell.

*"My daughter Naa has Down syndrome. Her first job was cleaning a local mall in the early mornings before the stores opened - before anyone would see her. I was told she was lucky to have this job, but I knew that she had more to offer the world. And then I found Interact. My daughter is now recognized as a talented artist, bowing alongside her colleagues to standing ovations from audiences who watch her dance in Interact Theater productions."*

— NaaAbashie Moreaux, Proud mother of an Interact performing artist

## What is the process of becoming an Interact Artist?



### **Schedule a tour:**

Touring our space is the first step. You will have the opportunity to learn more about our programs as well as meet staff and artists. Contact Interact's Artist Support Department Manager to set up a tour.



### **Schedule an Experience Day:**

You are given the opportunity to spend the day at Interact and experience what it is like to be a visual or performing artist. Our staff and artists will welcome and support you on that day.



### **Become an artist:**

Post Experience Day, our Client Care Coordinators will work with you, your family, and your support workers to set you up for success at Interact.

## **Before you visit you should know:**

**We focus on possibilities, not disabilities:** You do not have to be an accomplished artist to join – we look for aspiring artists who are motivated to grow their skills in a creative environment.

**Our staff are professional, working artists:** They teach and mentor in ways that maximize your artistic growth.

**Interact is a full time, 5 day-a-week program:** We provide programming from 9:30am-4pm. To maximize your artistic experience, we ask for a minimum commitment of 3 days a week.

### **Contact Information:**

**Artist Support Department Manager:** Deb Holtz debh@interactcenter.com or 651-209-3575 ex. 117