

**I'm Back Again,  
For More Than One Day**

**By Davida Kilgore**

I started Interact in March of 2020, and was only able to work on an embroidery project for one day before COVID forced my lifeline to the outside world to shutter its doors. Eighteen months began of meeting the artists on Zoom in the comfort of my living room, with workshops, working on projects I was proud of finishing. But now I've started over and started out, finally, in the cavernous studio on Minnehaha Avenue, three days a week. Even behind their masks I recognized all the artists I met on Zoom and could call them by their names. Since September I've filled 60 pages of an 80-page sketch book with illustrations for my graphic novel which is right on the ambitious schedule I've set for myself because I'm back.

At Interact, in-person makes me feel I can create anything my mind can envision. The smell of paint, the soft scratches of gel pens and colored pencils, the messiness of clay sticking to my fingers is a joy I'm trying to express into words.

Like I do in the writing workshop Jonas and I facilitate, but rhymes come up short, sometimes only visuals will do. I'm thriving now, mentally and artistically, recognizing once again, the healing properties of art, how our heart beats sync as we create order from chaos, or the other way around, whichever works. We are artists,

**We are together,  
We are thriving.  
We are individually, one!**



Davida Kilgore



Mary Kay Kennedy

the board

**Mary Kay Kennedy**  
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**Ann Leming**  
Board Member

**Susan Shapiro**  
Board Member

**Jeanne Calvit**  
Artistic & Executive  
Director/Founder

## the mission

CREATING ART THAT CHALLENGES  
SOCIETY'S VIEWS OF DISABILITY

### Our Vision

**We push** the boundaries of traditional art forms by including the unique perceptions of our artists.

**We expand** the meaning of "accessibility" beyond physical structures for artists with disabilities by playing an active role in the creative process.

**Artists share** in the audience's appreciation of the work which has a healing and integrating effect.

**We exemplify** the idea of community integration by supporting artists with and without disabilities working side by side every day.

### Our Values

- Excellence in artistic expression
- Radical inclusion
- Unlocking human potential
- Social justice
- Fiscal prudence

### In all of our work, Interact:

- Creates art in a spirit of radical inclusion.
- Inspires artists and audiences to explore the full spectrum of human potential.
- Transforms lives by expanding ideas of what is possible.

# Interact



DECEMBER  
2021



## a letter from jeanne

Interact is back in action, with gratitude that we are surviving and thriving!

When COVID closed our doors, Interact's 100+ artists kept the creative spirit alive with over fifty virtual artmaking workshops each week.

We connected with new artists with disabilities from all over the state. We reached arts patrons as far away as Montreal and London. And we premiered *Zoomtopia*, our first-ever virtual theater event.

We could never have accomplished all this without your help and support!

For twenty-six years, Interact's mission to "create art that challenges perceptions of disability" has transformed lives. We officially opened our new gallery space, we've launched a literary arts journal, and we're creating an all-new theater event for 2022.

The artists and staff are so excited to be back in our space with their community of fellow creatives. Their pent-up creative juices are flowing and the place is buzzing with ideas and dreams of a wonderful year to come!

Your support has made it all possible! And we're inviting you to support us now as we create a new future.

Keep in touch through our site at [interactcenter.org](http://interactcenter.org) or like our Facebook page for all the latest happenings at [www.facebook.com/interactcenter](http://www.facebook.com/interactcenter).

*Your friendship and support mean the world to Interact!*

**Thank You! And Happy Holidays!**

—Jeanne Calvit, Artistic/Executive Director



surviving  
& thriving

# the gala

Interact's **26th Anniversary Celebration** was an overwhelming success!

Over 150 guests gathered at the Nicollet Island Pavilion to hear the artists perform, purchase art from the Gallery, raise a glass to toast founder, Jeanne Calvit, and dance the night away after the show. Thank you to musical director Ryan Bynum and his band, Good Vibez, plus the incredible talents of Robert Robinson, Sheridan Zuther, Ivory Doublette, Elyse Jones, and Chadwick Niles Phillips for making it a night to remember.

As one attendee said, "I go to parties all the time, but this was the best time I've ever had at a gala!"

**Let's do it again next year!**



**Jackson Mercogliano**  
Operations, Reception and Transportation Coordinator



**Philip Olmstead**  
Advancement Coordinator



**Mike Whistler**  
Performing Arts Instructor



**Jared Zeigler**  
Performing Arts Department Manager



**Ahnika Lexvold**  
Substitute PA Instructor



**Beth Gilleland**  
Performing Arts Instructor



**Phoebe Mol**  
Visual Artist, Arts Instructor

# news from the gallery

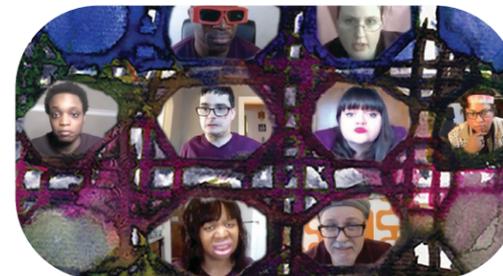
by Gallery Director, **Brittany Kieler**

In July 2021, we opened Interact Gallery, a new space located at 755 Prior Avenue North in the Prior Works building next to Can Can Wonderland. Located just one block away from our Saint Paul studio, our new gallery has already seen two exhibitions by Interact artists, which you can learn more about at [gallery.interactcenter.org](http://gallery.interactcenter.org). We are thrilled to announce an upcoming series of solo shows in 2022, including an exhibition by Janice Essick at Interact Gallery in the spring, as well as three other exhibitions by Mike Harris Jr., Carl Clark, and W.S. Norton at venues throughout the greater Twin Cities area. We're also preparing for a number of collaborations with arts organizations throughout Minnesota next year, including Franconia Sculpture Park and the Arts at MSP Airport Foundation.



## zoomtopia

During the first half of 2021, artists and staff participated in over 50 creative workshops a week on Zoom. As a result, the Visual and Performing Arts departments produced a first ever virtual performance called *Zoomtopia*. Produced by Uptop Films, and music directed by Ryan Bynum, the show ran for two months and captured new audiences all over the world.



## interact artists >

**Daniel Mauck** – Performing Artist

*“There is a sense of calm and belonging at Interact. Being able to say, I'm here, let's create, I have a sense of hope for the future. No matter what we are faced with, we have each other and a willingness to create theater.”*

**Michael Wolfe** – Performing Artist

*“I enjoyed the zoom classes and they helped me survive the pandemic. Now coming back and brainstorming and improvising, it fulfills me emotionally. There are new staff bringing new skills to the table and I'm growing as an artist.”*

new staff

Interact recently welcomed these talented staff to the team in 2021!