

# MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

## NEWS RELEASE

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### State Fair's 2021 Official Commemorative Art by Kevin Cannon is Unveiled

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St. Paul, Minn. – The Minnesota State Fair's 2021 Commemorative Art was unveiled at the State Fairgrounds on Tuesday, July 20, by cartoonist and illustrator Kevin Cannon. Surrounded by State Fair enthusiasts, he presented his highly detailed watercolor rendition fairgrounds map publicly for the first time. Originally commissioned for the 2020 Minnesota State Fair, the piece was modified for 2021 after the previous year's fair was cancelled due to the pandemic. Cannon's 22 ½ by 30-inch painting will be on display in the Fine Arts Center during the 2021 Great Minnesota Get-Together, Aug. 26 through Labor Day, Sept. 6, and can be viewed at [mnstatefair.org/commemorative-art/](http://mnstatefair.org/commemorative-art/).

Media use: A high-resolution, downloadable commemorative art image is available at the following link: [mnstatefair.org/get-involved/media/media-gallery-commemorative-art/](http://mnstatefair.org/get-involved/media/media-gallery-commemorative-art/)

The original artwork was designed to represent a timeless view of the State Fair and required only slight modifications for use in 2021. In addition to revising the date, Cannon added a streamer with the 2021 State Fair tagline "Great Minnesota Get-Back-Together." "That banner is really the only nod to the crazy year we've had," Cannon said.

The painting provides a whimsical and jam-packed overview of the State Fair. "My hope is that people will get lost in my image, in the same way it's fun to get lost at the fair itself, not exactly having a plan, just wandering, exploring and finding something new and exciting around every corner," he said.

As a cartoonist, Cannon typically creates art on a small scale. Working with the relatively large size of the watercolor paper for this project presented a logistical challenge, which he solved by rigging up a mini drafting table that allowed the paper to bend out and curve as if feeding a piece of paper into a typewriter. He used this system for the penciling and inking stages, and then laid the painting flat to layer on watercolor paints.

Observant viewers of the artwork may discover a secret message hidden throughout the painting. "I hope people spend a lot of time with this illustration and that they discover something new every time they take a look," he said.

Cannon is best known for his detailed cartoon maps in the Star Tribune as well as his humorous all-ages graphic novel, "The Cartoon Introduction to Philosophy." Born and raised in St. Louis Park, his art career began at a very early age, drawing with Mr. Sketch markers on scraps of foam core from his uncle's photography studio. He went on to study studio art at Grinnell College in Iowa and resettled in Minneapolis after short stints living in London and Manhattan. In 2004, Cannon co-founded Big Time Attic studio with Zander Cannon (no relation) and Shadi Petosky. The trio tackled a wide range of projects such as animating online games for Cartoon Network and designing the Eau Claire-based family fun center Action City before each artist went their separate way. Cannon focused his career on cartooning, writing and illustrating the arctic adventure graphic novels "Far Arden" and "Crater XV," the former garnering an Eisner nomination (the comic world's equivalent of an Oscar). The last decade has found him splitting his time between drawing children's books and creating illustrations for clients such as Apple, Harvard and the US Naval Academy, and publications like The Village Voice, Minnesota Monthly and Mpls.St.Paul Magazine. He lives in Mounds View with his wife, Maggie, their son, Ulysses, and cat, Cottleston Pie.

The commemorative poster and a limited number of signed prints and other merchandise featuring the art are available for purchase at [mnstatefair.org](http://mnstatefair.org) and will also be available during the fair at State FairWear Gift Shops and Bargain Book and State Fair Poster Carts on the fairgrounds. Proceeds will support the Minnesota State Fair Foundation 501(c)(3) mission to preserve and improve State Fair buildings, fairgrounds and educational programs.

The 2021 Minnesota State Fair Commemorative Art is the 17th in a series of artwork created by Minnesota artists for the Great Minnesota Get-Together. In past years, artists have included: Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher (2004), Mary GrandPré (2005), Nancy Carlson (2006), Michael Birawer (2007), Edie Abnet (2008), Leo Stans (2009), Deborah Voyda Rogers (2010), Steve Thomas (2011), Joe Heffron (2012), Marie Olofsdotter (2013), Emily L. Taylor (2014), Adam Turman (2015), Michael Sweere (2016), Ta-coumba Aiken (2017), Kristi Abbott (2018) and R. J. Kern (2019). A gallery of past artwork is available at [mnstatefair.org/commemorative-art/gallery/](http://mnstatefair.org/commemorative-art/gallery/).

The Minnesota State Fair is one of the largest and best-attended expositions in the world, attracting more than 2 million visitors annually. Showcasing Minnesota's finest agriculture, art and industry, the Great Minnesota Get-Together is always 12 Days of Fun Ending Labor Day. The fair is a quasi-state agency that is self-supporting and has not received state government funding of any kind since 1949. Visit [mnstatefair.org](http://mnstatefair.org) for more information. The 2021 Minnesota State Fair runs Aug. 26 - Labor Day, Sept. 6.