

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

NEWS RELEASE

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State Fair's Official 2022 Commemorative Art by Leslie Barlow Unveiled

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St. Paul, Minn. – The 2022 Minnesota State Fair's Official Commemorative Art was unveiled at the State Fairgrounds on Thursday, June 9, by Minneapolis artist Leslie Barlow. Surrounded by State Fair enthusiasts, she presented her vibrant and joyful oil painting for the first time. Her 3-foot-by-4-foot original painting will be on display in the Fine Arts Center during the 2022 Great Minnesota Get-Together, Aug. 25 through Labor Day, Sept. 5, and can be viewed at 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/.

The original artwork is a cosmic and youthful look at the fair. "I wanted to communicate the energy, excitement and joy that the fair brings me," said Barlow. "The fair often feels otherworldly, especially near the midway, with all the sounds, laughter, bright lights and activity. I wanted my work to represent that."

"I often paint people of color and love our skin tones to be really vibrant and beautiful," she said. "In this piece, you also see the neon lights from the midway reflected in the faces, communicating how bright and lively the fair is at night."

Although the painting presents one cohesive image, it is actually a collage. "I wanted the painting to look like a snapshot, but in reality, each element is from a separate image. For example the people are from one photo and each of the rides are separate too," said Barlow.

Barlow is a recipient of the 2021 Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship, 2019 McKnight Visual Artist Fellowship, the 20/20 Artist Fellowship from Springboard for the Arts, and four Minnesota State Arts Board grants between 2016 and 2021. In 2018, she received the Minnesota Museum of American Art Purchase Award in the juried Minnesota State Fair Fine Arts Exhibition. In 2011, she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) from the University of Wisconsin-Stout and later her Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in 2016 from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. In addition to her studio practice, Barlow has taught at the University of Minnesota, Metropolitan State University and Carleton College. She also supports emerging artists at Public Functionary as director of PF Studios, is a part of the Creatives After Curfew mural collective, and is a seven-year volunteer for the organization MidWest Mixed. In 2021, she was a participating artist in the Minnesota State Fair's Joyful World Mural Park project at the fairgrounds as one of 12 local artists painting large-scale artworks that reflect the world they want to live in. She is represented by Bockley Gallery. For more information visit lesliebarlowartist.com.

The commemorative poster and a limited number of signed prints featuring the art are currently available for purchase at mnstatefair.org/commemorative-art/. Proceeds will support the Minnesota State Fair Foundation 501(c)(3) mission to preserve and improve State Fair buildings, fairgrounds and educational programs. For more information about the Minnesota State Fair Foundation, visit msffoundation.org.

The 2022 Minnesota State Fair Official Commemorative Art is the 18th in a series of artwork created annually 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), R.J. Kern (2019) and Kevin Cannon (2021).

The Minnesota State Fair is one of the largest and best-attended expositions in the world. Showcasing Minnesota's finest agriculture, art and industry, the Great Minnesota Get-Together is 12 Days of Fun Ending Labor Day. The fair is self-supporting and has not received state government funding since 1949. The 2022 Minnesota State Fair will run Aug. 25 through Labor Day, Sept. 5. Visit mnstatefair.org for more information.