



Art-A-Whirl 2025

Background Information

Artists: Michael and Kelly Helsinger

Sculptures: Mississippi Tempest and Northeast Gale

Artists:

Michael Helsinger is a woodworker, guitar builder, and drum maker with over 15 years of woodworking experience. His guitars and drums are a dynamic blend of artistic restraint in the pursuit of creating a blank canvas in which to create art through sound. He has recently delved into the world of sculpture through his unique light fixtures made from wood veneer. He enjoys exploring the intricacies and imaginative possibilities inherent in wood as a sculptural medium.

Kelly Helsinger is a 2D artist focused on abstract expressionism. Her work is defined by a delicate balance of chaos and control, brought to life through vibrant colors, dynamic movement, and organic flowing lines. Kelly's work has been collected internationally and across the United States, earning her a dedicated following of art enthusiasts and collectors. In addition to her art practice, Kelly is the creative force behind the blog Messy Ever After, where she shares her insights and experiences as an artist and teaches creative business skills. She is also actively involved in the Minneapolis arts community, working with the Holland Arts buildings, The Atelier Studio Program of Fine Art, and the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA).

Sculptures:

“Mississippi Tempest”

Size: 6' x 3' x 3'

Display Location during Art-A-Whirl, May 16-18: The Holland Arts East Gallery

Materials: Ebonized red oak, acrylic, shellac, wax, lighting

Michael and Kelly's intention when creating "Mississippi Tempest" was to harmoniously combine their skill sets while executing their conceptual interpretation of the iconic Art-A-Whirl logo. Michael created the structure of the tornado from laminated red oak tubes cut into thin rings, utilizing precision cuts within the rings to mimic graphic lines. Michael ebonized the red oak with a mixture of steel wool dissolved in vinegar to create a deep black tone to honor the illustrative contrast of the Art-A-Whirl logo. The dark exterior allows the cuts and breaks in these wood rings to expose the interior of the structure and allow color and light to flow out. Kelly used her control of color by painting select interior surfaces of the wood rings to provide dynamic breaks within the sculpture. Coupled with interior lighting, the viewing experience shifts depending on the time of day the sculptures are viewed. During the day, the sculptures are crisp and sharply defined with clean lines and interior color blocking. At night, the interior of the structure is illuminated to cast colorful light and shadows onto the surrounding walls, transforming the entire space into a part of the sculpture itself.

"Northeast Gale"

Size: 29"x 29" x 14"

Display Location during Art-A-Whirl, May 16-18: at NEMAA booth in Quincy Hall

Materials: maple, dye, urethane, wax, lighting

"Northeast Gale" is crafted from thin sheets of maple veneer shaped into cylindrical rings, twisting accents, and a hand-laminated frame as a homage to the iconic Art-A-Whirl logo. Backlit framing and interior LED illumination bring the sculpture to life, casting an interplay of vibrant colors and dynamic shadows for an engaging visual experience.

"Northeast Gale" is part of a raffle for Art-A-Whirl. [Art-A-Whirl Raffle - NEMAA](#)