

NEW IDEAS NEED OLD BUILDINGS

- Project Proposal -

Narrative

While renovations for the new M are underway this February, Twin Cities-based printmaker and book artist Laura Brown will embellish the Robert Street skyway [bridge #30] with a pop-up exhibition of distinctive and colorful cut films and signage-inspired artwork. The project's title, *New Ideas Need Old Buildings*, is a quote from writer and activist Jane Jacobs's influential book on urban planning and architectural design, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

"I'm interested in creating something that speaks to the story of this place," Brown says. Her work will touch on the construction and wayfinding signage, day-glo colors, and layered narratives in building sites and urban structures like the Pioneer Endicott building. "I want this project to resonate with the history of the Pioneer Endicott and its legacy in the printing industry."

For decades, the Pioneer and Endicott buildings also served as a thriving marketplace and urban hub for downtown St. Paul. "And in this time of transition and rebuilding," Brown says, "I hope my project touches on ways this museum continues that sense of community and urbanity, and how the M will contribute its own stories and distinctive spin on this space in the years to come."

Laura Brown is a printmaker, book artist, collaborator and teacher. Her current work uses the vocabulary of construction signage as a way of investigating social and political upheaval in American society. She draws inspiration from the most mundane experience and routine patterns of life. She holds an MFA from the University of Texas at Austin. She has participated in residencies at the Myren Graffikk in Kristiansand, Norway; the Kala Art Institute in Berkeley, California; Minnesota Center for Book Arts in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and the Women's Studio Workshop in Rosendale, New York. Her work appears in collections at Yale University and the Library of Congress, among others.

Dates:

Installation: March 15, 2018 [TBD]
Project Review: December 31, 2018

Brief site information:

A selection of skyway windows (96 x 98" each), across Robert Street, between the Pioneer Endicott and First National Bank Buildings in Lowertown St. Paul [bridge #30].

Timeline:

1. **Installation: March 15 – 21, 2018**

Brown will install a site-specific window installation, using removable SOLYX® Transparent Vinyl Colored Window films [see attached spec sheet]. The project will be overseen by the M's Curator of Exhibitions and Public Programs, Christopher Atkins and Exhibition Services Technician, Curtis Bjerke.

2. The site will be surveyed on a regular schedule by the M. Maintenance, repairs, and removal will be conducted by the M.
3. The building managers from the Pioneer Endicott and 1st National Bank have agreed to have the work on view through December 31, 2018, at which time the project will be reviewed and either extended or removed.

About the site

Robert Street Skyway windows between the Pioneer Endicott and First National Bank Buildings

- No more than the 18 window sections across Robert Street. Each window is 96 x 98"
- Interior of windows only
- A single 20 x 15" printed vinyl information panel about the M and Brown's *New Ideas Need Old Buildings* project will be mounted on the inside of the skyway glass.

Brown's creative plan and inspiration:

- Temporary translucent films mounted directly on interior window surfaces only
- Text and colored geometric graphic structure will connect with construction signage, colors, and building history
- Colors and shapes will be translucent so that sunlight will create colored lights in skyway and allow views to the outside and street level pedestrian traffic.

Materials:

- Temporary vinyl films mounted directly to interior window surfaces only.

Contacts:

- Christopher Atkins
Curator of Exhibitions and Public Programs
Minnesota Museum of American Art
catkins@mmaa.org
651-797-2853
- Laura Brown
Artist
laurabrownart@gmail.com
715-497-9912

The below renderings are provided to give an idea of what Brown's project will look like once it is completed. It should not be considered how the final composition, shapes, or colors will appear in the Skyway.





