



FILMNORTH

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FilmNorth® marks 35th anniversary with move to permanent home in expanded headquarters

The region's largest filmmaker service organization will expand services and programming, adding a state-of-the-art 52-seat cinema

(Saint Paul, Minn.) FilmNorth® will move from its current leased space to a new home in an historic building designed by renowned architect Clarence Johnston at 2441 University Avenue, Saint Paul. FilmNorth will purchase and co-own with D/O Architects. The move will allow FilmNorth to serve a larger community of burgeoning filmmakers in a space that is 30% larger than its current facility. The project's innovative capital campaign, capturing unique tax credits along with partnering with D/O Architects, made the move fiscally feasible. "This will be a state-of-the-art education and laboratory space for media artists that will be a model for the nation," said Andrew Peterson, FilmNorth's Executive Director. "As we mark this extraordinary organization's 35th anniversary, this move creates a dynamic permanent home for FilmNorth that looks to the future, greatly expanding our community-based film programs and increasing our engagement with artists in the North." Included in the expansion will be more classroom space, editing suites, and a unique and beautiful state-of-the-art screening room with DCP projection.

Tax credits and ownership-provided financial incentives

Tax credits passed by the 2021 Minnesota legislature gave a financial boost to historic reuse projects. This financial opportunity provided FilmNorth's leadership the catalytic spark to move on their long-term goal of owning a space which would incorporate a cinema and expanded classrooms, keeping them in the community they have built, without fear of displacement that often happens to nonprofits as rental rates increase. Both the old and new FilmNorth locations exist within Saint Paul's rapidly developing Creative Enterprise Zone.

FilmNorth will co-own the historic Brown-Jaspers Inc. Store Fixtures Company building with D/O Architects in a 50-50 partnership. The project will use New Market Tax Credits combined with Historic Tax Credits, to cover 59% of the \$10.6 million project costs. The remaining construction balance will be split between FilmNorth and D/O Architects.

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“This move is a win on many levels,” said Bianca Rhodes, FilmNorth Board of Directors President. “Not only will tax credits make our move financially viable, our location along the Metro Green Line is a win for our education programs, especially for young people. We will be close and accessible to students coming from high schools and universities in both east and west metro areas.”

A national model for a low carbon adaptive reuse project

D/O Architects has taken on the added challenge to complete the renovations and buildout for FilmNorth and its own architecture office, in a sustainable, eco-friendly way. The firm’s architects will carefully calibrate the design to significantly reduce the carbon impact. The historic building will become a case study for a national model of adaptive reuse projects that support a low carbon economy.

FilmNorth® will occupy nearly 8,000 square feet on two floors in the new building. D/O Architects will have office space on the third floor. A creative digital marketing firm has committed to leasing most of the second floor filling it to 93% occupancy. Rental income generated from tenant leases will provide an income source shared equally between the two partners.

Acclaimed Sundance Film Festival filmmaker got an early assist from FilmNorth®

Filmmaker Lyle Mitchell Corbine, Jr., received a \$25,000 McKnight Media Arts Fellowship in 2018, administered by FilmNorth, at a crucial time. “It kept me afloat while I was developing and producing my first feature film ‘Wild Indian,’” said Corbine, a member of the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Corbine’s film about two men confronting a traumatic secret premiered to great acclaim at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for four Film Independent Spirit Awards, including Best First Feature. Corbine credits key assistance from FilmNorth’s executive director for his success. “Andrew is a very supportive leader — he arranged for a cinema to test our film before sending it to Sundance, provided feedback on my screenplay, and helped us find additional nonprofit financial support.”

FilmNorth is one of only 30 national partners in the Sundance Film Festival’s “Satellite Screens” program. As a festival partner FilmNorth presented the Minnesota premiere of Wild Indian during the 2021 Sundance Film Festival. In addition, FilmNorth is a regular partner of the Sundance Institute, co-presenting eight Sundance workshops for filmmakers from underrepresented communities since 2013.

Details on the filmmaker’s toolbox available to grow in new home

While the building will be historic, the equipment and features — including the screening room, edit spaces, and creative labs — will be cutting edge, allowing FilmNorth to expand its multi-media work and present more and higher quality digital artworks, including digital films and augmented reality projects. This new facility will allow FilmNorth to invite values-aligned partnerships locally and nationally to program in the space. This will allow them to provide expanded crucial infrastructure and support to BIPOC-led film festivals and organizations.

“We find ourselves in an exciting and critical time to be in the visual storytelling arena,” said Peterson. “Audiences are hungry for films told by independent voices from historically underrepresented communities, including Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQ2IA+, women, and people with disabilities. We are thrilled that we will be able to expand our services to current and developing filmmakers with more classroom and laboratory space, more editing suites, as well as a truly state-of-the-art teaching cinema that will also serve the broader community through innovative programming.”

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About FilmNorth®

FilmNorth, formerly known as Independent Film Project, was founded in 1987. It rebranded as FilmNorth in 2017 to better reflect its service to and representation of filmmakers in the 5 state region. Today, it serves as the largest filmmaker’s service organization in the Upper Midwest, and one of the largest in the nation.

Through fellowships and fiscal sponsorships, FilmNorth helps artists bring their projects to life. Each year, FilmNorth sponsors 50 fiscal sponsorship projects and administers several similar programs, including four competitive McKnight Media Artist Fellowships. Annually, over 250 new, emerging, and established filmmakers seek access to our low-cost editing suites, classrooms, meeting space, and filmmaking equipment. We expand audiences for film and increase understanding of the cultural, political, and social implications of films through our Cinema Lounge and Film Independent Spirit Awards screenings and discussions. More than 4,000 audience members attend screenings, workshops, and seminars each year.

FilmNorth is governed by its 16-member board of directors who are skilled nonprofit and corporate leaders with expertise in fundraising, marketing, strategic planning, law, education, and film creation/production/distribution.

FilmNorth is currently located at 550 Vandalia St., Suite 120, St. Paul, MN 55114. To learn more, visit FilmNorth.org or call 651-644-1912.

FilmNorth® is a registered trademark of FilmNorth, registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.