

HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

ORPHEUM ★ STATE ★ PANTAGES ★ NEW CENTURY

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Talk-It Hennepin, a New Public Conversation and Workshop Series, Runs March–June 2012

City Planning/Design series addresses the history of Hennepin Avenue in March and Creative Urban Intervention in April

MINNEAPOLIS—Today, Hennepin Theatre Trust announced the launch of ***Talk-It Hennepin***, a free, four-part series of public conversations and workshops bringing together today's foremost thinkers and professionals in city planning and urban design with Hennepin Avenue stakeholders. Running from **March 8 into June 2012**, the *Talk-It* series is part of the broader ***Plan-It Hennepin***, a year-long initiative led by partners Hennepin Theatre Trust, Walker Art Center, Artspace and the City of Minneapolis. Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the plan will re-imagine a stretch of this storied avenue as a revitalized cultural corridor from the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden to the Mississippi River.

The *Talk-It* conversations will range from the history of Hennepin Avenue to emerging cultural districts and global trends in urban planning, transit and public space. They will be paired with follow-up, interdisciplinary workshops conducted by Twin Cities' artists to help define values, vision and achieve goals. ***Honoring History: The Avenue through the Ages***, the first *Talk-It* event, is set for **7–9 p.m., Thursday, March 8** at the **Minneapolis Central Library**, tracing the Avenue's evolution from a Native American footpath to a modern thoroughfare. The correlating workshop will be held **Saturday, March 10 from 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.**, also at the Library. The second *Talk-It Hennepin* event is ***Creative Urban Interventions—A Dialogue with Candy Chang***, scheduled for **7–9 p.m., Thursday, April 26**, at **Walker Art Center**. Chang is an artist, designer and urban planner who often combines street art with social activism. Details about the final two *Talk-It Hennepin* conversation/workshops, scheduled for May and June, will be announced soon. For more information about *Plan-It* and *Talk-It Hennepin* visit hennepintheatretrust.org/plan-it.

Talk-It Hennepin—Conversation and Workshop Series

Talk-It Hennepin: Honoring History—The Avenue Through the Ages

Thursday, March 8, 7–9 p.m.

Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall (Pohlad Room, 2nd Floor)

Talk-It Hennepin kicks off with a panel of local historians and experts in Native history, transit and GLBT issues examining the stories and histories of Minneapolis' first street and gathering place. Discussion will range from Hennepin Avenue's roots as a Dakota footpath and a trading/transportation hub for fur, agricultural commodities and people, to its modern transformation and function within the city's evolving economy.

Panelists include: **Syd Beane**, author and adjunct professor at Minneapolis Community and Technical College and a community organizer who is working on a documentary film about his famous Dakota Sioux uncle, Charles Alexander Eastman; **Dorothy Bridges** (moderator) Senior Vice President for Community Development and Outreach at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis; **John Diers**, a transit consultant and writer/researcher on transportation history based in the Twin Cities who is active in historic preservation; **Kevin Murphy**, Associate Professor in History at the

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University of Minnesota whose studies include gender, the history of sexuality and GLBT history; and **Penny Peterson**, historian/researcher at Hess Roise and Company who has published articles about local history and worked as an interpreter for the Minnesota Historical Society.

Talk-It Hennepin Workshop: Honoring History

Saturday, March 10, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Minneapolis Central Library (Doty Hall)

This public planning workshop will engage participants in creative activities to explore Hennepin Avenue's history and values to help guide planning. Everyone is welcome, regardless of previous attendance at the March 8 conversation.

Talk-It Hennepin: Creative Urban Interventions—A Dialogue with Candy Chang

Thursday, April 26, 7–9 p.m., Walker Art Center Cinema, 1750 Hennepin Ave., Mpls.

Candy Chang, artist, designer, urban planner and co-founder of the New Orleans-based studio Civic Center, likes to make cities more comfortable for people. Many of her projects combine street art with urban planning and social activism, sparking conversations among strangers in public places and providing people with easy and innovative ways to have a voice. She will draw on many of these concepts in her *Talk-It Hennepin* conversation. With *Before I Die*, she transformed an abandoned house in New Orleans into an interactive wall where residents could share their dreams; The Atlantic called it “one of the most creative community projects ever.” She created fill-in-the-blank I Wish This Was stickers for people to express what they want in vacant storefronts. She's worked with communities around the world—New York, Johannesburg, South Africa; Finland, Nairobi, Kenya; Vancouver, Canada; Querétaro, Mexico and Almaty, Kazakhstan—to address issues ranging from tree-planting to street vendors' rights. Chang is a TED Senior Fellow and an Urban Innovation Fellow. She was named a “Live Your Best Life” Local Hero by Oprah Magazine. This *Talk-It Hennepin* conversation is presented by **Forecast Public Art, Walker Art Center and Hennepin Theatre Trust.**

Talk-It Hennepin Workshop: Creative Urban Interventions

Saturday, April 28, 10 a.m.–2:00 p.m., Walker Art Center, Skyline Room

From the perspective of the Walker's Skyline Room, workshop participants will articulate visions for the Avenue through words, drawings, skits, dance, sculptures and other forms to provide additional information to blend traditional city planning with cultural planning. Everyone is welcome, regardless of previous attendance at the April 26 conversation.

Background: Earlier this year, Hennepin Theatre Trust received a National Endowment for the Arts “Our Town” grant to develop plans to revitalize Hennepin Avenue into a cultural corridor working with Walker Art Center, Artspace, owner/operator of The Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts, and the City of Minneapolis. This creative placemaking initiative, which coincides with the recent Minneapolis Downtown 2025 broader plan, will include recommendations for transit and infrastructure improvements, public art, streetscape designs and ways to increase cultural events and collaboration among the Avenue's many cultural, business and educational organizations. An urban design team, led by Twin Cities landscape architect Bob Close and architect Mic Johnson, both of AECOM (formerly Ellerbe Beckett), will gather community input and ideas from the workshops to inform streetscape, infrastructure, transit and development.

“With a little more conversation and coordination among these groups, we believe Hennepin Avenue could see a big uptick in the volume of visitors and arts activities,” said **Tom Hoch**, Hennepin Theatre Trust President/CEO. Added **Olga Viso**, Walker Art Center Director, “We hope for the public conversation series to enrich and expand discussions about contemporary city design and issues related to cultural districts and corridors, urban public space and arts-driven economic development.”

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets are free, but RSVPs are requested and limited to available space. To confirm your attendance and for more information please visit www.hennepintheatretrust.org/plan-it.

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