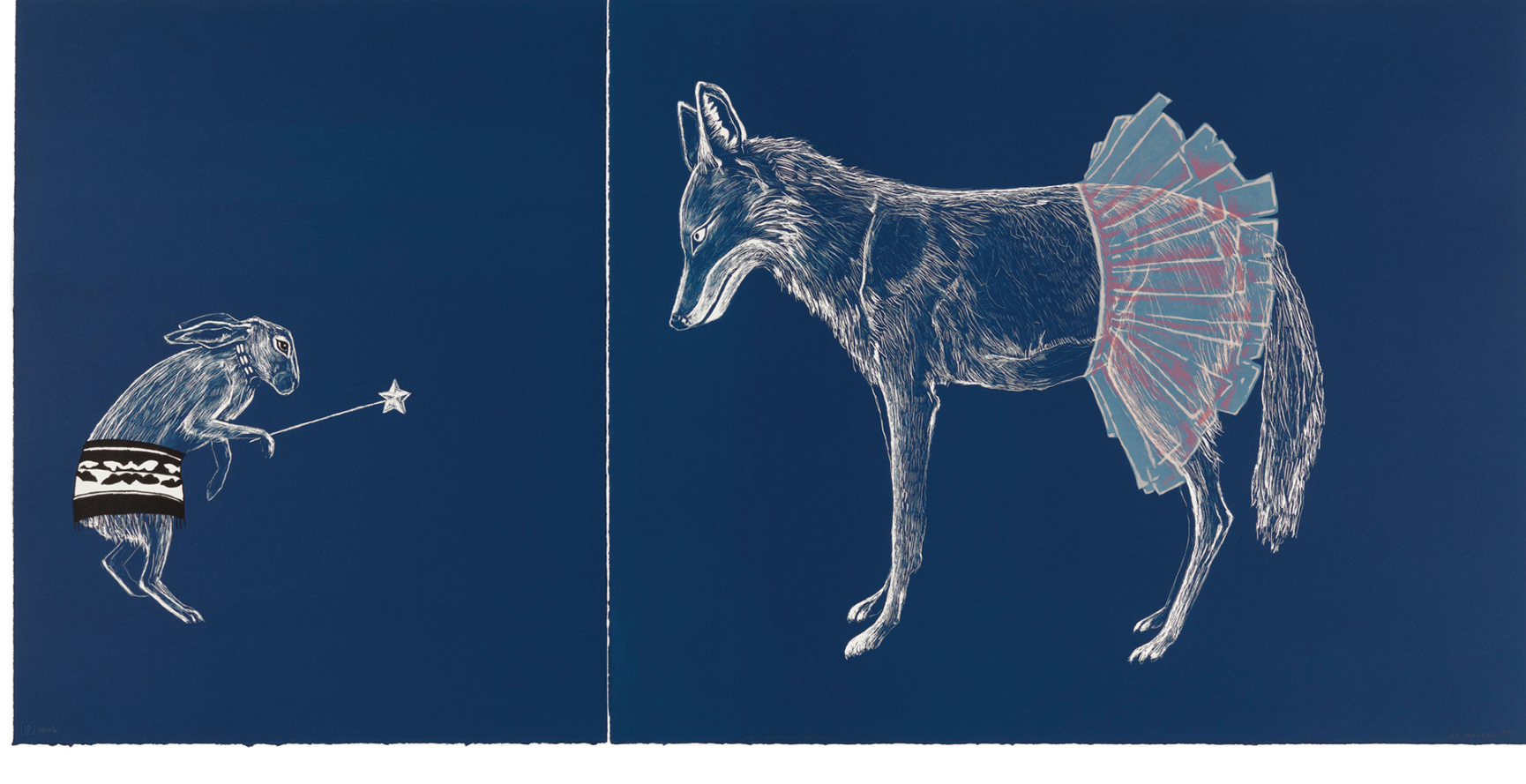


# Mia to Showcase 20 Years of Artistic Printmaking

In October, the museum highlights Highpoint Editions, a Minneapolis printmaker that closes an accessibility gap for artists

By **Sheila Regan** - September 16, 2021



Julie Buffalohead's "The Trickster Showdown"  
COURTESY OF HIGHPOINT EDITIONS

**Influential French artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's approach** to printmaking was more collaborative than the one he developed for painting. And, today, similar collaborations are still happening.

"Toulouse-Lautrec made prints, but he didn't print them," says artistic director and master printer Cole Rogers. Instead, a publisher or financier would hire Toulouse-Lautrec to paint or illustrate something, plus a lithographer to use a chemical process to create a print-out of it. Then the publisher sold the finished work to recoup the cost. This made the equipment-intensive art of printmaking less prohibitive.

"That's pretty much what we're doing here," Rogers says, referring to the flagship publishing arm of Minneapolis' Highpoint Center for Printmaking, which he founded 20 years ago with executive director Carla McGrath.

By inviting in high-caliber guest artists—and not exclusively printmakers—to use traditional printmaking technology, Highpoint Editions facilitates sometimes boundary-pushing prints. Fine art, rather than reproduction, is the goal here.

In October, the Minneapolis Institute of Art is showcasing some of the results of this model with *The Contemporary Print: 20 Years at Highpoint Editions*. The exhibit features Mia's recent acquisition of Highpoint Edition's archive.

"I like to say Highpoint Editions has done everything right," says exhibit curator Dennis Michael Jon, Mia's associate curator of the global contemporary world. "Both Cole and Carla had a vision. They've done their homework."

Rogers, who is originally from Alabama, trained at the world-famous Tamarind Institute in New Mexico, founded by American artist June Wayne. "[Wayne] was having to go all the way to Paris to work with a lithographer," Rogers says. "At some point, she thought that American artists should have the same access to printers the way that Toulouse-Lautrec did."

As part of his training at Tamarind, Rogers put together a business plan for starting his own shop, but he didn't revisit that plan until years later. After first working at a Minneapolis print shop, he became the printmaking coordinator and shop director at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. There, he felt conflicted about the lack of opportunities and access to printmaking equipment for students, many graduating with significant debt. "That just didn't seem right," Rogers says—"that we were accepting their money with no next step."

Things changed when Rogers was invited to teach a printmaking workshop at the Walker Art Center with McGrath, who was the Art Lab coordinator there at the time. She was a law school graduate turned arts educator concerned about where the next generation of artists would come from. Things gelled artistically and romantically. They eventually wed. Together, the two came up with the idea of Highpoint, which would include educational programs, an artist co-op, a gallery, and Highpoint Editions.

They opened in 2001 and moved from the Whittier area to their south Minneapolis location on Lake Street in 2009. The airy space, designed by the late architect James Dayton, has sleek work areas and gathering spaces and includes a studio for guest artists creating work for Highpoint Editions. The studio overlooks a rain garden designed by Japanese American sculptor Kinji Akagawa.

"It's a lovely scene to gaze out into," New York-based artist Jim Hodges says. "Looking out into that space definitely influenced what I was rendering, and also how I was thinking about what I wanted to make there."

In some cases, Highpoint's collaborations with artists result in work that pushes the medium in new directions, like Houston-based artist Delita Martin's stunning photolithographs printed on antique christening dresses glued to a plate.

Martin knew she wanted to print directly onto the dresses and took Rogers' suggestion to try out a collagraphy technique, in which a collage of textured materials is glued to a printing plate. "That was something that I had not given consideration to," Martin says. "Being able to work with the dresses in that way and pick up the texture of the fabric—it was an incredible experience."

Minnesota-based artist Julie Buffalohead said her time at Highpoint has opened up new ideas and forms of creating prints. She remembers wondering one day if it would work to layer on tusche—an ink used in lithography—very thickly and then scratch into the surface. "I asked Cole if this would work. He basically said, 'Let's just try it,'" Buffalohead recalls. "That's kind of how you have to be with this process, just be open-minded."

Another local artist, Clarence Morgan, comments that in addition to being a place for artists to explore and discover, Highpoint is important to the fabric of the Twin Cities arts scene, along with other mid-sized organizations like the Minnesota Center for Book Arts and the nearby Soo Visual Arts Center. "Highpoint has been a really important cultural institution in this city," Morgan says. "And it has survived. I think it's important that it gets recognized as one of the things that makes the Twin Cities kind of special."

**The Contemporary Print: 20 Years at Highpoint Editions runs October 9, 2021-January 9, 2022 at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2400 Third Ave. S., Minneapolis.**

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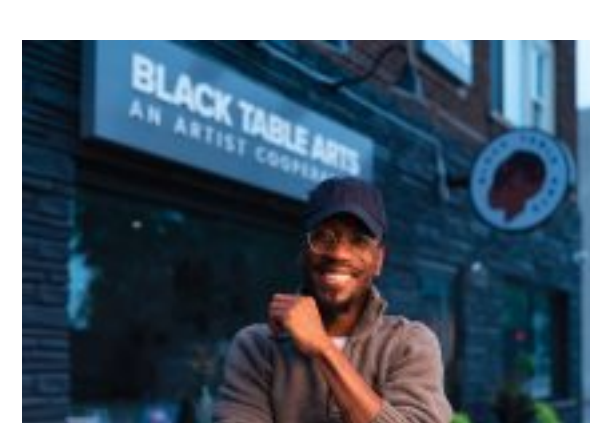


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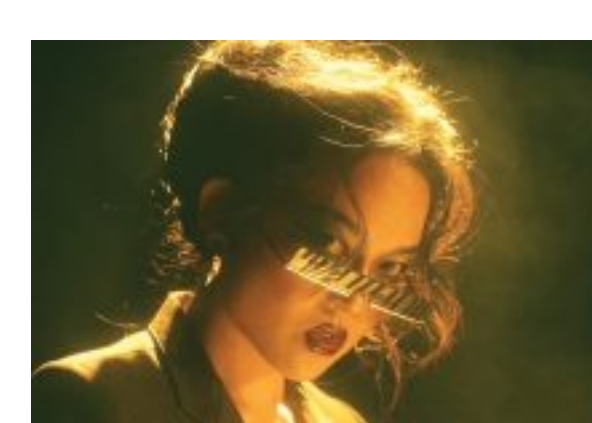
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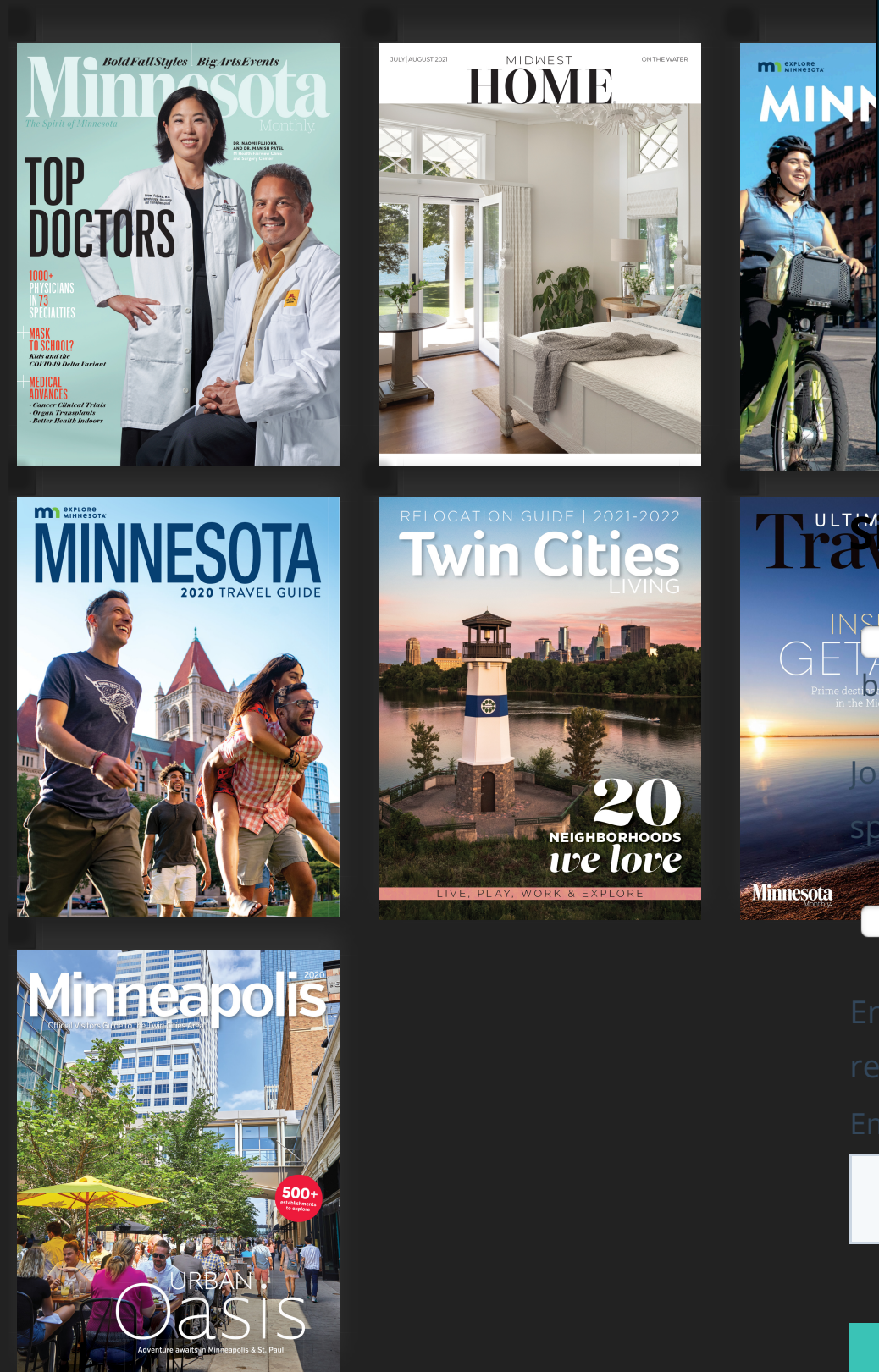
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