INVITED, SEPT. 28–NOV. 11
CURATORIAL STATEMENT*

The two-part exhibition, comprised of *Invited: The Anniversary List* and *Invited: Celebration Station*, grew out of the desire to engage the Station North Arts & Entertainment District community, and as a result, the premise of the exhibition is built largely around the effect of art on a community. Since Station North’s inception 10 years ago, the arts have had a large impact on the people and places within the three neighborhoods that make up the district: Charles North, Greenmount West and Barclay. The exhibition was divided into two parts to reach the community through interactions that would be both meaningful and celebratory: *Invited: The Anniversary List* places art into the lives of 10 Station North businesses through installations, and *Invited: Celebration Station* brings the people of the district into the gallery.

*Invited: The Anniversary List* endeavors to create new connections among artists, business owners and the community. The exhibition strives to simultaneously attract traditional art audiences into businesses where they’ve never been, while inspiring the businesses’ everyday customers, through the installations, to explore a gallery space.

The 10 installations making up *Invited: The Anniversary List* are hosted by a wide array of businesses, from restaurants to a barbershop and everything in between. The exhibition strives to reach as many Station North community members as possible while recognizing the contribution of businesses drawn to the area because of the cultural district designation, as well as those established prior to the district’s creation. *Invited: The Anniversary List* aims to recognize the Station North businesses: C & N Deli Grocery, Caribbean Paradise, Chaudron Glass & Mirror Co., Inc., Heavenly Blessings, Honey Carry-Out, Nak Won Korean Restaurant, Nutty Sensations, Pearson’s Florist, Soul II Soul Barbershop & Hair Studio and Sun Grocery, all of which were previously not considered art venues.

*Invited: Celebration Station* playfully engages the community in the celebration of Station North’s 10 year anniversary, while also welcoming the community into a more conventional gallery space. The whimsical and brightly colored work of Adehla Lee and the socially awkward yet comical installation of Paul Gagner contribute to the festive atmosphere.

While celebratory, *Invited: Celebration Station* also embraces community involvement as an essential exhibition component through works, such as Kwantaeck Park’s mobile recording studio, which engages community members in recording Station North’s sounds and auditory experiences; Nobutaka Aozaki’s *Smiley Bag Project*, which turns the mundane smiley face plastic bag from restaurant carry-outs into a memorable portrait; Skye Gilkerson’s *Dislocate*, which calls attention to forgotten natural spaces within urban settings; and the augmented reality of Chris Manzione’s virtual sculpture. The exuberance of the quirky collective Push Pops, combined with the New Public Sites tour created by Graham Coreil-Allen and the participatory map by DEUXO Studio help anchor the community within the exhibition metaphorically and physically.

By bringing together a wide variety of people from different social perspectives and life experiences in both non-conventional and traditional venues for displaying artwork, *Invited: The Anniversary List* and *Invited: Celebration Station* provide opportunities for interaction with works that are reflective of the community and its ability to revitalize itself through art.

*Curatorial statements do not necessarily represent the views of MICA.*

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