

## Art at the airport: 10 great spots to catch a flight of fancy

By [Alicia Eler](#) Star Tribune DECEMBER 16, 2019 — 5:51PM



JERRY HOLT – STAR TRIBUNE

Travelers at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport walked past "You Are Here," a floor mosaic by Andrea Myklebust and Stanton G. Sears.

Mario Montalvo was busy texting away at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Behind him, rabbits, faces and pots made of ceramics loomed.

"Sometimes airports can be a blur," he admitted.

He was trapped in transit for an extra couple of hours after his return flight to Miami got delayed. An insurance consultant, he'd been in town on business with [Minnetonka-based SBG Inc.](#) But his down time at the airport wasn't all tiny phone screens. As he walked past the men's bathroom, something caught his eye.

"I noticed the photography at the end," he said, pointing to Brandon Lepasti's photo essay about his great-great-grandparents' farm on the Iron Range. "I think the photographs for me are more impacting because there is a story behind it."

What he saw was just one of many artworks on display, thanks to the [Arts @ MSP program](#) that brings art and cultural events to the airport.

Mini-exhibitions pop out from glass cases in the wall. Nature-inspired mosaics greet visitors at bathroom entrances. Floor mosaics reflect the sky as seen from Minnesota. It's like being in Minnesota without ever leaving the airport.

“Art at the airport is meant to de-stress you,” said Ben Owen, director of Arts @ MSP. “It is similar to hospital art in its intention to calm you.”

It's easy to fly by these artworks while rushing to your gate. So we made this handy guide to help you find your way (to art, not your flight — the latter is your responsibility).

Most flights leave from MSP's Terminal 1, and that's where the majority of the art is. But we also highlight two works in Terminal 2.

## 1. 'His Purple Reign: A Textural Tribute to Prince'

It wouldn't be the Twin Cities without some reference to [Prince](#). The international music god appears here in the form of dazzling handmade quilts in this [exhibition by the Textile Center](#). In one rendition, he's portrayed rockin' on a yellow guitar. In another, various views of his face, from only his eyes to a younger-looking Prince looking away, make for a funkier quilt. Oh, and doves border the edges of it. They aren't flying away, but if you squint closely enough you'll see that they are, [indeed, crying](#). (Gate E8; closing at the end of 2019.)



JERRY HOLT, STAR TRIBUNE

Some of the works in "A Textural Tribute to Prince."

## 2. Butterflies in the bathroom

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's Josie Lewis' "Minnesota Lepidoptera" — two giant butterfly mosaics at the entrance of the male and female bathrooms near Gate F4. This permanent display includes nine Minnesota butterfly species, like the harnessed tiger moth, the black swallowtail and the classic orange-and-black monarch. The bathrooms themselves are also an oddly luxurious experience with plenty of room for luggage and a convenient ledge for smaller belongings. [Oprah's best friend Gayle King](#), who passed through Minneapolis last January, even said our airport deserves an award for "best bathrooms."





JERRY HOLT, STAR TRIBUNE

Ben Owen, director of Arts @ MSP, stood in front of "View of a Minnesota Lake," a ceramic tile work by Sheryl Tuorila at the entrance to one of the airport bathrooms.

### 3. Michael Crouser's 'Sin Tiempo'

Photographer Michael Crouser works in a medium focused on capturing time. Fascinated by the idea of "timeless imagery," which evokes a sensibility more than a place or time period, Crouser travels the world to find it. He captures a graceful woman romantically smoking a cigarette on a balcony in "Gypsy Singer — Barcelona, Spain." A man bends to sweep the ground, using a long, swishing broom against the pavement in "Street Sweeper — Labrang, Tibet." The series of seven pictures is housed in a glass case, along with an actual Pentax camera and physical film. Digital photography doesn't exist here. (Through March in the F Concourse.)



JERRY HOLT, STAR TRIBUNE

Passengers walked by Michael Crouser's exhibit "Sin Tiempo."

#### 4. 'Revisiting Folk Traditions'

Minneapolis-based artist [Haley Prochnow](#) learned the tradition of punch-needle embroidery, commonly used by homemakers to make small rugs out of thrifty materials like burlap feed bags and old wool coats. Her installation is a single display case of works that read as somewhere between cool thrift store find and stuff found in Grandma's box of vintage kitsch. The funniest is a circular portrait of a red fish with feet which wears a polka dot sweater and marches along a purple road, destination unknown. In another circular portrait, a common pigeon poses like a regal eagle symbol of America. (Airport Mall near Kiehl's cosmetics store through August 2020.)



PROVIDED BY ARTS @ MSP

Punch-needle embroidery by Haley Prochnow.

#### 5. 'Duck, Duck, Grey Duck'

Named after the Minnesotan version of "Duck, Duck, Goose," this exhibition organized by the [Northern Clay Center](#) showcases ceramics artists from the region. Two ceramic rabbits perch on the ground, staring at each other, in "Moonlight Two" by Kelly Connole.

Duluth-based Gruchalla Rosetti Pottery's "Bowl With Landscape Red Sky" offers a taste of nature. German-born, Wisconsin-based Gerit Grimm's stoneware "Female Head," with swirly tattoos carved into her face, gazes out at visitors. Fargo-based potter Brad Bachmeier's red-and-brown tinted pot is meant to inspire conversations about land preservation. Experience the aesthetic of this region without leaving the airport. (On view through January in Terminal 1 at the Thomson Reuters Mall Gallery.)



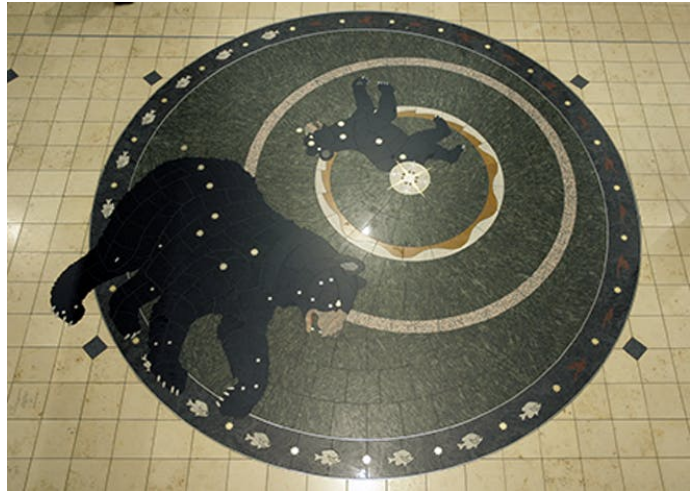
JERRY HOLT, STAR TRIBUNE

A glass case displayed ceramics from the "Duck, Duck, Grey Duck" exhibit.



## 6. 'The North Star'

Some oldies are goodies. Such is the case with this 1999 mosaic by Andrea Myklebust and Stanton G. Sears. Inlaid in the floor of the Airport Mall, it features a constellation map of the Big and Little Dippers. The two black bears of Ursa Major and Minor roam inside orbiting circles, and a combination of sunfish and cardinals make up a pattern on the perimeter. Surely you'd look up to see the North Star, but why not look down, too? Offering a moment of restfulness on the busy mall, the piece references Minnesota's nickname, "[The North Star State.](#)"



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"The North Star," a 1999 mosaic by Andrea Myklebust and Stanton G. Sears at the MSP airport.

## 7. Brandon Lepasti's 'Iron Range'

Lepasti's photographic essay exhibition documents his grandparents' lives on the Iron Range, 40 miles from the nearest grocery store. Their property in Little Swan was first homesteaded by his great-great-grandparents in 1920, and this ongoing series is clearly very personal to the artist. He photographs an old model airplane inside a barn, ready to fly. In another photograph, a small lake foregrounds two farm buildings. What will happen to this place once his grandparents pass away? The story evolves. (On view through March in the South display case of Terminal 1's main mall.)



JERRY HOLT, STAR TRIBUNE

Photos from Brandon Lepasti's "Iron Range" project.

## 8. SEE18 Gallery and Short Film Space

Inspired by his own yoga practice, photographer Andy Richter traveled to ashrams and caves in India, a meditation center in Iowa and a massive group yoga event in Colorado to capture people lost in a moment of transcendence for his exhibit “[Serpent in the Wilderness.](#)” Next door, catch a movie at the [SEE18 Short Film Space](#), said to be the first state-of-the-art cinema in any major airport. Curated by the [MSP Film Society](#), it offers a wide variety of films, from Somali-American artist Ifrah Mansour’s three-minute poem “[I Am a Refugee](#)” to the 10-minute documentary “[America: The Ice Cream Truck.](#)” (Near Gate C18; “Serpent” continues through August 2020.)



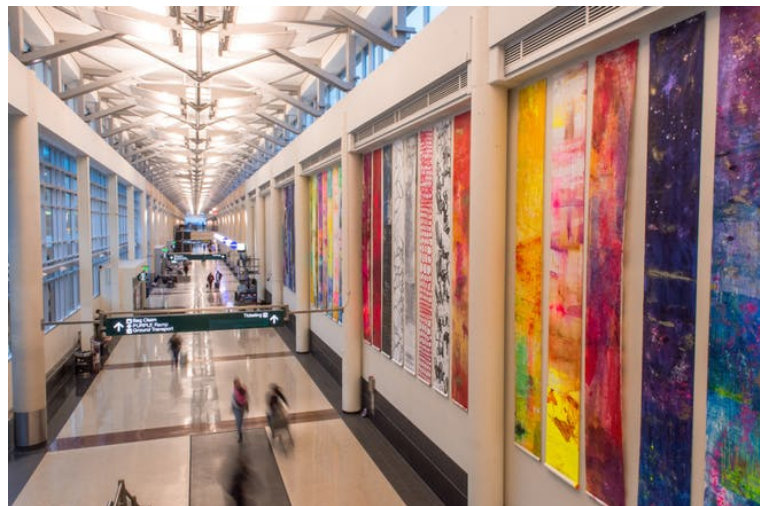
ANDY RICHTER

A portrait from Andy Richter's exhibit "Serpent in the Wilderness."

## 9. ‘122 Conversations: Person to Person’

These 48 colorful scrolls by Duluth-born, Minneapolis-based artist Anne Labovitz — some measuring 50 feet long — are meant to create a sense of global connection. So it’s only natural that they greet travelers before they begin their journey by going through security at Terminal 2. (There are also some in Terminal 1 that are coming down at the end of December.)

For this ongoing series, the artist conversed with people either in person or via Skype in Duluth’s five sister cities — Petrozavodsk, Russia; Rania, in Iraqi Kurdistan; Växjö, Sweden; Thunder Bay, Ontario, and Ohara Isumi-City, Japan — and then transformed those conversations into long, flowing scrolls. (Entrance to Terminal 2; runs through end of 2020).



STEVEN COHEN

Scrolls from “122 Conversations,” by Anne Labovitz, greet passengers at the entrance to Terminal 2.

## 10. 'The Friendship Committee'

Last winter, Arizona-based artist [Wesley Fawcett-Creigh](#) left the heat for the cold of Minnesota and spent six weeks in Otter Tail County on a residency sponsored by Springboard for the Arts. She was drawn to the stories of recent immigrant and refugee families in the [Pelican Rapids community](#), and worked with them on a collection of drawings, feltworks on woodboard, and videos. In one felt piece, a cow walks in front of a giant Fanta bottle. In a gentle animated video, a refugee from Bosnia talks about adjusting to life in the United States. (Gate H11 in Terminal 2. On view through October 2020.)



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Works from Wesley Fawcett-Creigh's exhibit "The Friendship Committee."

**Correction:** Previous versions of this article misspelled the name of artist Anne Labovitz.

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