

Carla Hall & IAMA Recognized in VoyageMinnesota Feature Highlighting Creative Leadership and Community Empowerment in North Minneapolis

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Minneapolis, Minnesota ? Carla Hall, founder of Carla Hall Design and Industrial Arts Mentorship for All (IAMA), was recently spotlighted in a feature article by VoyageMinnesota magazine, drawing attention to her transformative work at the intersection of creativity, education, and community-based empowerment in North Minneapolis. The publication?s ?Life & Work? series honors local changemakers across Minnesota and this feature offered a platform to amplify the story of Carla Hall?s leadership, vision, and the broader mission of IAMA.

The article traces Hall?s creative origins and the path that led her to become a prominent educator, metal artist, and youth advocate in the Twin Cities. It documents the evolution of Carla Hall Design as both an artistic endeavor and a socially responsive platform for cultural storytelling, metalwork, and public engagement. Through this recognition, VoyageMinnesota honors Hall?s dedication to elevating marginalized voices and reshaping industrial arts spaces into inclusive, affirming environments.

Carla Hall?s design studio is rooted in the belief that metalwork is not only a mode of functional craftsmanship but also a vehicle for honoring personal histories, ancestral connections, and community resilience. Her creative work explores themes of belonging, resistance, memory, and place. She combines traditional blacksmithing techniques with experimental forms and public art, grounding her work in the lived experiences of Black and Indigenous communities, queer culture, and stories of working-class survival. The article underscores her belief that storytelling through metal is both a restorative act and a means of social critique.

In parallel with her studio practice, Carla Hall leads IAMA, a North Minneapolis-based nonprofit committed to providing accessible, culturally responsive industrial arts education to young people who are underrepresented in traditional trades and arts environments. IAMA operates a dedicated studio where youth and young adults can develop technical skills in blacksmithing, welding, fabrication, and metal design. The organization prioritizes access for BIPOC youth, queer and gender-expansive individuals, and youth historically excluded from creative industries and trades-based training programs.

The VoyageMinnesota feature highlights how the dual work of Carla Hall Design and IAMA converge on shared values of education, artistic excellence, community investment, and liberation through craft. Hall?s leadership approach blends mentorship with material practice, facilitating spaces where young people can build confidence, refine skillsets, and envision alternative futures shaped by their own cultural narratives and creative agency.

The article also gives visibility to IAMA?s flagship Pre-Apprentice Program, a four-month intensive that guides youth ages 17 to 24 through an immersive curriculum combining hands-on studio work, professional development, and leadership training. Participants gain exposure to metalworking techniques, studio stewardship, and real-world role models. The program culminates in a public exhibition of student work, allowing participants to showcase their creative growth and technical accomplishments to a broader audience. The program is offered tuition-free, reinforcing IAMA?s commitment to equity and access in industrial arts education.

Throughout the interview, Hall reflects on the challenges and triumphs of launching a studio and mentorship program as a queer Black woman in a field that has long lacked diversity. She describes the systemic barriers that artists and educators of color often face, including resource scarcity, gatekeeping, and cultural isolation. At the same time, she emphasizes the radical power of joy, community, and craft in creating sustainable change. Her work with IAMA demonstrates that technical skill development and cultural healing are not mutually exclusive, but rather mutually reinforcing.

Carla Hall Design and IAMA have steadily gained visibility across the Minneapolis arts and education

landscape, forging partnerships with local schools, trades organizations, and cultural institutions. Their work represents a new paradigm in trades education?one that centers care, creativity, and community voice. Through residencies, exhibitions, and youth-centered programming, the studio and nonprofit have become a beacon of innovation and inclusivity in North Minneapolis.

The VoyageMinnesota feature situates Carla Hall?s story within a broader cultural shift toward honoring place-based leadership and grassroots creativity. It recognizes that design and mentorship rooted in lived experience can produce outcomes that are not only beautiful and functional, but also transformative. By weaving together her personal journey with the collective mission of IAMA, the article honors Hall?s impact as both an individual artist and a community catalyst.

Hall?s inclusion in the ?Life & Work? series follows a series of recent milestones for both Carla Hall Design and IAMA. In the past year, the organizations have expanded their studio offerings, deepened community partnerships, and supported the next generation of makers through apprenticeships and public art opportunities. Their model has begun to attract regional and national attention as an example of how localized, culturally aware programming can challenge the status quo in the trades and arts industries.

The recognition from VoyageMinnesota affirms what community members, collaborators, and students have long known: that the intersection of material practice, mentorship, and cultural leadership has the power to reimagine entire ecosystems. Carla Hall Design and IAMA are building more than objects or exhibitions?they are forging pathways for resilience, economic justice, and cultural affirmation.

In reflecting on the journey shared in the article, Hall emphasized the ongoing nature of the work and the collective effort behind every accomplishment. The success of IAMA is rooted in the labor of youth participants, mentors, educators, artists, and neighbors who contribute their time, resources, and imagination. As Hall notes in the piece, the studio is a place where ?people come to build something bigger than themselves.?

The VoyageMinnesota article stands as a testament to what is possible when creative practice and social commitment are integrated into the heart of community work. Carla Hall?s story reminds Minnesotans that the forge is not only a site of heat and steel, but also one of transformation, storytelling, and hope.

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Industrial Arts Mentorship for All (IAMA)

Industrial Arts Mentorship for All (IAMA) is a Minneapolis-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to providing accessible industrial arts training programs for underrepresented youth in the Twin Cities.

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