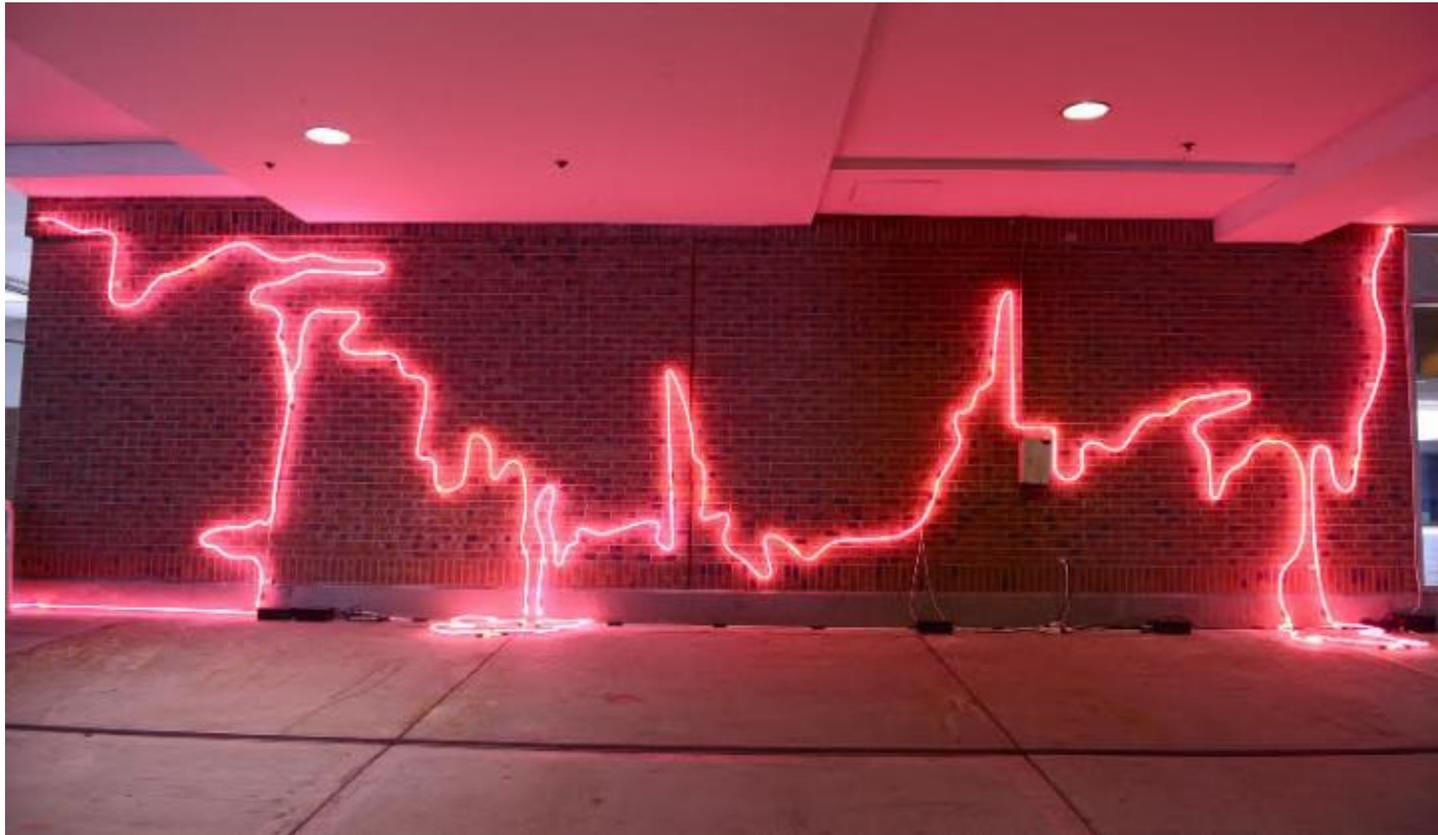


# Stripclub Dali: The Next Big Piece of Public Art to Hit the NEON is “Seep”

December 16, 2015 By Jesse Scaccia

“When I first visited Norfolk, I really enjoyed the energy that everyone had,” said Chicago-based artist Erik Peterson, who is lending a gigantic piece of public art to the NEON for the next five years. “Energy isn’t even the best world—it’s a drive to create the city for yourself.”

It is a poignant moment for the neighborhood: the energy created by the people of this town has attracted literal positive energy from elsewhere in the form of a neon installation that will span much of the 90 foot north-facing ledge of 801 Granby St.



“I feel like it could be a banner for the NEON,” said Peterson, who is in town staying at Work | Release as he prepares for installation, which should be sometime in mid-January.

This is not the first time “Seep” has been in Norfolk. It probably won the award for most Instagrammed piece of art at W|R’s first show, AGLOW, which was curated by New York-based artist Suzanne Peck. “Seep” dripped like a melting cherry red ice cream cone frozen in time at the entrance to the space. The design is wild and unbridled, but by definition of being a piece of glass art, it is yet totally in control. While making no overt sexual references it is a damn seductive piece of art.

“I thought Seep was an interesting parallel where it’s liquid and solid, it’s an object but it’s light and gas,” said Peterson. “I was also interested in what Suzie was saying about the neighborhood being at the beginning of its revitalization process. It’s that in-between space. The piece is very in-between... it’s gorgeous and sexy but also gruesome and gross.”

Since AGLOW came down last May the piece has lived hidden in Alchemy NFK, latent energy in cardboard and bubble wrap.



Portrait of the artist in not quite enough light.

It has taken a community effort to bring “Seep” back to life. The Business Consortium for Art Support—[a driving force behind numerous pieces of public art in the NEON](#)—made a major financial contribution. The residents of 801 Granby are supporting the art on their building. The Downtown Norfolk Council has orchestrated all of the terribly-boring-but-utterly-necessary details that go into insurance, contracts, and the like.

“Working with the DNC has been great,” said Peterson. “Rachel McCall has put in 1,000 emails back and forth.”

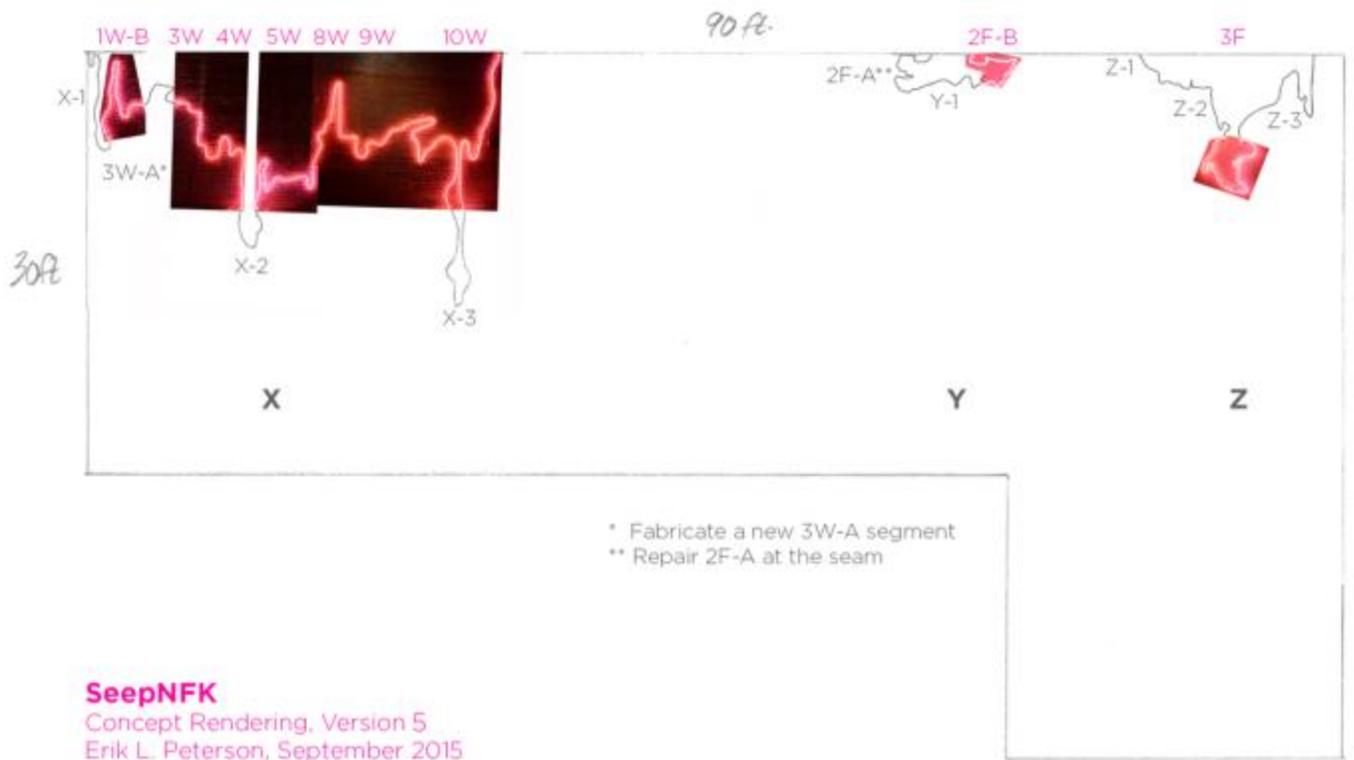
Peterson, whose personality reflects that of a guy who once turned a rusty industrial pipe into a soft serve dispenser, attended undergrad at Washington University in St. Louis. After a stint clearing Florida overgrowth with a machete for AmeriCorps he earned an MFA in studio arts at University of Illinois Chicago because “I wanted to be back in the pool and see if I could swim,” he said. Currently he is the manager of family programs and student engagement at [the Smart Museum of Art in Chicago](#). While he

perpetually considers his next work to be his greatest, a landmark in his career was the last he created in grad school, a piece called “Inner State.”



“Essentially I built a 100 foot long sculpture that mirrored a set of highway signs,” he said. “That was a pivotal piece that sprung me out of grad school and gave me the confidence to continue to push and do something I couldn’t do before.”

In terms of the ever-growing catalog of public art in the NEON District, “Seep” is sure to be noted by many as a personal favorite, a squiggly pink flash against the muted tones of 801 Granby. It compliments the light work of Julia Rogers and James Akers for everyone who enters the neighborhood from the north, and which continues with Cementascope and the historic Bob’s Gun Shop neon toward Downtown.



“There are a lot of smart and funny artworks here that can be looked at through the conceptual art lens, but can also be looked at through eyes that haven’t been through art history school and everyone can be a part of the conversation,” said Peterson as he finished his evening cappuccino at Zeke’s NFK. “It’s tough to find that sweet spot.”

“Seep” is both good art and rad art, and we’re lucky to have it call Norfolk home in the very near future.