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Artists, audiences converge on Allentown for Buffalo Infringement Festival

By Colin Dabkowski

Jul 25, 2013

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From one year to the next, it casts an ever-wider net and dredges up artists of all stripes from across the region. For many artists, the free-for-all festival serves as a launching pad to bigger things. For others, it temporarily lifts them from obscurity for the space of a 15-minute acoustic set in someone's backyard, only to drop them right back into the underground. And therein lies this festival's unpredictable beauty.

Starting tonight, the festival – a collection of unhinged street parties and unimaginable oddities mixed in with more mainstream performances and exhibitions – will transform Allentown into a hyperactive bastion of offbeat culture until the final note of the last band resounds in Nietzsche's on Aug. 4. There are plenty of venues outside Allentown, as well, from the hopping Filigree's Boutique at Elmwood and Forest avenues and People's Park, in the Parkside neighborhood, to a stretch of sidewalk near Hoyt Street and Forest Avenue that will host the Infringement Festival's second annual "Anti-Warped Tour" on Saturday.

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All the swirling activity is far too much to sum up in two pages, but our map should help you get your bearings, if only to lose them again when you encounter the specific brand of weirdness that interests you most. The full schedule, of which this spread represents only a tiny fraction, is online at **www.infringebuffalo.org**.

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Coming Home Buffalo: Center for Holistics and Arts

140 Elmwood Ave.

This funky Allentown space will host a head-spinning array of art and music. Highlights include the official opening of a new space called the Gallery Next Door from 7 to 11 p.m. Friday, featuring the visual art of Cari Feltz-Abdo and music from noise artist Sparklebomb. On Saturday, author Kathy Campbell will read from her spirituality themed children's book "The You In You."

Days Park

Between Wadsworth and Cottage streets

The de facto outdoor headquarters of Infringement, the idyllic Days Park, will have events daily starting Friday. It will serve as the nightly stage for fire dancing, including a Friday night performance of the Hoopnosis Fire Faery Show and alternating performances of Frank Santora Plays With Fire and A Buffalo Pyromance at dusk. It's also the venue for three performances of "Tree of Liminality," described as "an interactive performance where participants can engage in existential conversation with a visionary being who lives amongst the tree's enchanted branches." The popular Squeaky Wheel Outdoor Animation Festival is at 8:30 p.m. Saturday, followed by "SqueakEasy: Late night films" at 10:30 p.m.

Nietzsche's

242 Allen St.

Nietzsche's, the musical nexus of Infringement, will have nightly concerts. Highlights are tonight's Opening Ceremonies with 12 up-and-coming Buffalo bands, Friday's Intergalactic Costume Ball, including gifted Buffalo beatboxer Scantron, Space Junk and DJ Soma. Also check out Saturday night's Apocalypse Ball with performance artist Lesionread, Sunday Night Hodge Podge, Best Monday Ever, Nietzsche's Good Time Saturday Night on Aug. 3 and the Closing Ceremonies on Aug. 4. Following

Infringement tradition, the parking lot next to Nietzsche's will host Car Stories, the theatrical oddity launched by the Montreal-based theater artists who **founded the first Infringement Festival**.

The Foundry

298 Northampton St.

The local art collective known as 8BitBuffalo is setting up shop in this bustling East Side venue that's recently evolved into one of Buffalo's most intriguing grass-roots arts spaces. The collective's exhibition runs from 7 p.m. Friday through Aug. 4 and features painting, sculpture and interactive art that in some way addresses "the aesthetics of classic (circa 1985) video games." The Foundry also features an insane number of music shows and parties throughout the festival.

College Street

Allentown

The true spirit of Infringement is always on full display during the annual College Street Party. The street is closed to traffic and, on Sunday, becomes a showcase for 14 gifted bands, including Infringement vets Ramforinkus, beatboxer Scantron and the must-see Slyboots Drumming Ensemble.

People's Park

Main Street and Jewett Parkway

Though it's off Infringement's beaten track, this patch of earth in the Parkside neighborhood will be seeing plenty of action. The highlight is the People's Park Hip Hop Blowout from noon to 6 p.m. Sunday with Legal the Lightsaver, Tribe, Walt Dizziness and That Rapper Named D.

Manny Fried Playhouse

255 Great Arrow Ave.

Last year, director Bob Van Valin had to scuttle his Infringement production of Bertolt Brecht's "A Man's a Man." He's mounting it for real this time, and the multimedia production that reflects on unjust wars promises to be engrossing. The theater's parking lot will also host "Buffalo Car Plays," an interactive theater project by local playwrights Donna Hoke, Steve Roylance, Jon Elson and Darryl Schneider.

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For Infringement coverage throughout the festival, including daily recommendations, video interviews, mini-reviews and pictures. And follow @colindabkowski and @infringebuffalo to keep your Twitter feed full of Infringement news and opinions.