

Music, art, inspiration... And a little black dress? 9 ways to enjoy Cincinnati Summerfair weekend

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CINCINNATI - The 47th [Summerfair Cincinnati](http://www.summerfair.org) (<http://www.summerfair.org>) gets underway Friday afternoon and continues all weekend at Coney Island. The nationally renowned juried art show features an eclectic mix of more than 300 artists, artisans, and performers from throughout the U.S. and Canada.

With support from hundreds of volunteers, Summerfair Cincinnati hosts more than 20,000 art enthusiasts of all ages.

9 ways to enjoy this year's show

1. Shop for original art and handmade products.

If you want something artistic or handmade for your walls, bookshelves, kitchen, garden, patio, or closet, you can find it at Summerfair. Artists from cities throughout the U.S. and Canada will display jewelry, sculptures, photographs, paintings, furniture, drawings, mixed-media art, leather goods, ceramics, metal-work, and clothing. Items are available in all price ranges and make memorable gifts.

2. Attend the Little Black Dress event Friday night.

On May 30, Summerfair Cincinnati and [Cincy Chic](http://cincychic.com/) (<http://cincychic.com/>) join forces for the fourth annual Little Black Dress (LBD) event. Arrive between 7 and 8 pm wearing your favorite LBD and some sassy shoes. Shop the artists' booths, sip on

a cocktail, snap fun pics in the Audrey-inspired photo booth, and enjoy a fashion show in Moonlite Gardens. The show features LBDs from local boutiques accessorized with one-of-a-kind jewelry, scarves, hats and bags created by artists exhibiting at Summerfair. After the show, dance the night away as a DJ heats up the dance floor!

- Day-of-the-event tickets can be purchased for \$20 (cash only) at the door.
- Proceeds benefit Summerfair Cincinnati's award, scholarship, and exhibition programs for local artists and arts organizations.
- Learn more and RSVP at 2014lbd.eventbrite.com (<http://2014lbd.eventbrite.com>)

3. Attend Summerfair's first after-hours concert on Saturday

On May 31, your \$10 Summerfair admission fee includes a concert by urban folk-soul singer Jen Chapin. Praised for her powerful story songs that search for community and shared meaning, Chapin has appeared onstage with Bruce Springsteen and opened for Bruce Hornsby and the Neville Brothers. The concert takes place from 8 to 10 pm on the Acoustic Stage.

4. Meet up-and-coming young artists

At Summerfair you'll meet artists of all ages, genres, and styles from cities such as Austin, Asheville, Atlanta, New Orleans, Santa Fe, and Boulder. There will be 42 local artists at Summerfair 2014, including [Mike Maydak of Covington](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mike-Maydak/150248164883). (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mike-Maydak/150248164883>)

Maydak is becoming nationally known for his comic-book-inspired acrylic paintings. Some of his architectural studies and cityscapes help us imagine what familiar sites in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky might look like as comic book settings. He regards Summerfair as a great venue for showing and selling his original paintings.

While everyone can always view and buy art online, there is still something special about seeing original works in real life and meeting the artist who created them.

Summerfair is just one stop on a busy show circuit for Mike. Earlier this year he traveled to the Middle East Film and Comic Con in Dubai and he just returned from the Puerto Rico Comic Con. After Summerfair, he's off to events in Phoenix, Denver, and Philadelphia. From March to mid-June and August through mid-October, Maydak shows his art at about 25 to 30 comic cons and art fairs.

5. Hear interesting stories about artists and their work

Every artist has a different story about how and why they got started. For example, if you talk to award-winning sculptor [Ryan Slattery](http://www.slatteryscreations.com) (<http://www.slatteryscreations.com>) you'll learn that not all Summerfair exhibitors are full-time, formally trained artists.

During the week, Slattery is a journeyman sheet metalworker at A&E Buscha in Carthage. But on nights and weekends, he crafts whimsical metal sculptures, such as his attention-getting 9-ft. tall Tin Man made from thousands of pieces of recycled stainless metal.

"I've worked as a sheet metal worker since 2000 when I started my 5-year apprenticeship," said Slattery. "I've done most everything from ductwork to polished stainless conveyors. I've worked in prisons, schools, corporate offices, warehouses, rooftops, paper mills, food plants, and many more."

He started experimenting with metal art in 2003.

"First, I built a dog out of pieces of a pipe," Slattery said. "Then, looking at the body and neck of the dog, it reminded me of an old steam train. So I built one."

Now he creates functional art, such as lamps and custom tables as well as art that reflects his passion for movies, motorcycles, and guitars. He makes most of his pieces from recycled metal, using skills he learned from other journeymen and co-workers.

In 2007, Slattery won first place in the Scrap Metal Sculpture competition at the 2007 Aquatennial in Minneapolis. His work has won Best in Show at an arts festival in Champaign, Illinois, and in 2013 Slattery was named “Sculptor of the Year” in the Art Comes Alive program sponsored by Cincinnati’s Art Design Consultants.

6. Meet the designer of the Summerfair poster

A 2013 graduate of the Art Academy of

Cincinnati, [Hannah Graff \(http://hannahgraffillustrations.com/\)](http://hannahgraffillustrations.com/) is a freelance illustrator who works on children’s books, an online comic series, and corporate and private commissions. She will be signing posters at Summerfair’s West Gate merchandise booth from 12 pm to 2 p.m. on Saturday.

This was the first time Hannah entered Summerfair’s annual poster design competition. She says she was shocked when she got the phone call telling her she had won.

“It’s amazing the amount of publicity and recognition you get, especially if you are an artist just starting out,” said Graff. “I couldn’t be happier or more thankful for the experience.”

Her previous visits to Summerfair helped her create the winning design.

“I tried to really capture the overall feeling of creativity that flows from the event.”

7. Watch performances by musicians, dancers, and other entertainers

As you stroll the aisles of Summerfair, you may run into fiddlers, barbershop quartets, or banjo and accordion players. At stages and pavilions throughout the park, you can watch performances by singer/songwriters, dance troupes, choral groups, and many other entertainers.

8. Support emerging artists and community arts groups

The Summerfair art show lasts three days, but the impact on the region's arts community continues year round. Some proceeds generated by the event support individual artists and community arts organizations through awards, scholarships, and exhibits.

For example, each year, professors from the College of Mt. St. Joseph, Miami University, Northern Kentucky University, the University of Cincinnati, Xavier University, and Thomas More College nominate junior and senior art majors for the Emerging Artists Exhibit.

Conducted in partnership with the Malton Gallery in the Rookwood shopping area, the Summerfair Emerging Artists exhibit enables students to meet the gallery owner, learn more about professional gallery and exhibition practices, and compete for awards. The 2014 Emerging Artists Exhibit was displayed at the Clifton Cultural Arts Center in February.

Summerfair Cincinnati is also the largest non-government source of awards for individual artists in the Greater Cincinnati area. Each year, a \$3,000 award is given to four local artists who need funding for current or future projects. Summerfair also gives special awards to help small to mid-sized arts organizations create or expand programs or support production or presentations expenses.

Details on how to qualify for an award can be found on the [Summerfair Cincinnati website \(http://www.summerfair.org\)](http://www.summerfair.org) .

9. Get inspired to make your own art

In Summerfair's Youth Arts pavilion, kids can create T-shirts, work on arts and crafts, decorate planters, or learn how to build art-related projects.

Some Summerfair artists didn't pursue their passion for art full time until late in life—after they had accumulated some savings from other jobs. But having a day job never stopped them from creating a body of work or developing a recognizable style as an artist.

Poster designer Hannah Graff says visiting Summerfair can inspire young artists: “It really gives you a sense of hope and excitement. You are surrounded by artists and craftsmen who are all there showing their work and getting paid for what they love to do. It made me think, ‘wow! I can do this, too!’”

Graff enjoys interacting with the many other artists who are part of the Summerfair community. Ryan Slattery says “Summerfair is by far my favorite show out of the six that I do. It is the most exhausting but exciting week of the year for me.”

For collectors, Summerfair offers “a plethora of amazing art,” says Graff. “From jewelry to photography to pottery, there are so many great things to see. You could go to Summerfair not looking for anything in particular, and still find something that catches your eye.”

Hours and Admission

- The Summerfair Cincinnati art exhibits are open from 2 to 8 p.m. on Friday, May 30; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, May 31; and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, June 1.
- Admission is \$10.
- Children 12 and under are admitted free.
- Parking is included in the ticket price.
- No dogs are permitted on the grounds unless they are registered service dogs.

Connect with Summerfair

- **Twitter** [@SummerfairCincy \(https://twitter.com/SummerfairCincy\)](https://twitter.com/SummerfairCincy)
- **Facebook** (<http://facebook.com/SummerfairCincinnati>)

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