



LIC Arts Open is back and better than ever

■ Five-day festival promises entertaining and thought-provoking work

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by Tess McRae, qboro editor | 0 comments

The largest arts festival in Western Queens, the LIC Arts Open, is back in action and this time, a lack of No. 7 train service will not get in the five-day event's way.

After months of begging the MTA to suspend track work during the weekend of the festival, founder Richard Mazda saw his wish come true, making this year's festival even more accessible than last year's.

"The reality is that the art-going public rarely comes to Queens except to see the international artists in the museums, which we're certainly proud to have," Mazda said. "But Queens itself is home to a community of talented artists from the emerging like Stef Duffy, to rising stars like Luba Lukova, to celebrities like Matthew Barney and Joel Shapiro.

"Our goal with the festival is to raise the profile of our local artists, to ensure they have a platform, too."

There will be dozens of shows, events, exhibits and open studios from May 14 to 18 but here are some highlights that art lovers should not miss.

For those looking to not only take in but also take home some art, 10Squared will host an auction for works that artists created specifically for the festival. Bidding begins on May 14 and ends at 9 p.m. on May 18.

During the 8 p.m. closing party at Gotham Center, at the corner of Queens Plaza South and 28th Street, the works will be sold at a silent charity auction with



MAP ILLUSTRATION BY MATT STEFANI; COVER DESIGN BY ELLA JIPESCU

proceeds going to help fund the Queens Council on the Arts "High School to Art School" program and the LIC Arts Open. Pieces that would normally sell for thousands of dollars will go for as little as \$110.

If bidding is not an interest you possess, the opening reception for Luba Lukova's exhibit "Drama on Paper: Posters for the Stage" kicks off on May 14 at The Local, LIC, located at 13-2 44 Ave.

The artists of 5Pointz come back home to Long Island City for a special talk at the Jeffrey Leder Gallery, located at 21-37 45 Road, accompanying their exhibit "Whitewash." The panel of street artists will discuss the effect of working on walls and the scale of their work as well as the impact of their art on the street and the challenges of moving to canvas after 5Pointz's destruction.

"The Pop Culture Pop-up Art & Shops" is taking over Coffeed to bring together artists, arts and crafters, fashion designers and poets. Guests will weave their way through installations while listening to music and poetry and sipping on a beer, coffee or wine.

Homemade goodies from the rooftop farm overhead will be provided and the first 10 guests receive a complimentary drink and gift bag. The party starts at 6:30 p.m. on May 16 at 37-18 Northern Blvd.

If you enjoy laughing at someone else's pain, you may want to stop by The Local at 13-2 44 Ave. on May 17 at 8 p.m. for "BATSU!" the city's only live Japanese game show.

Four "warriors" — all performers from the comedy group Face Off Unlimited — battle to avoid electric shocks, paintball gunshots and other punishments at no cost to the audience.

If game shows aren't your thing, "Big Whirlygig" will feature live music, dance, art, a DJ and light show at 5-25 46 Ave. Special musical guests include performers from Captain Beefheart, Jonathan Richman & The Modern Lovers, Dream Syndicate, Fleshtones and rapper Jason Lalor on May 17 at 8 p.m.

The Local will host the "Queens World Film Festival 2014 Best of the Fest Films" on May 17 starting at noon and running on a loop every two hours.

The Closing Party at Gotham Center will bring all of the artists and guests together for food from the Crescent Grill and music by Messenger-Grau.

To accommodate the number of shows, the LIC Arts Open will provide free private shuttles from the court house to Vernon Boulevard, the Falchi Building, Studio 34 and Queens Plaza.

Everything during the weekend is free except the Queens New Music Festival — \$20 for a single performance, \$30 for the day, \$50 for the weekend. Most exhibits and open studio hours will run from 12 to 6 p.m.; openings will run from 5 to 10 p.m. A full schedule and explanation of all the events can be found at licartsopen.org.

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