



Around the Coyote ramps up for its October festival

By Kay McKinlay Ford

After a typical Chicago summer packed with the usual street fairs, block parties, and art fairs winds down, the planners at Around the Coyote have decided to add a new twist to the usual fare. The folks at Around the Coyote ramp up for fall by throwing an all-out, no holds barred bash celebrating the change of seasons, creative minds, and the Wicker Park/Bucktown/West Town neighborhood.

They have had a fall festival for years, but not like the one they have planned this year, and not in October—right in the middle of Chicago Artists Month. Like the neighborhood, however, the festival has evolved.

“We have spent the last year re-imagining what we do, and we’ve made an effort to pump up the art using juried new and emerging art from schools like Columbia and Art Institute of Chicago,” explained Jessica Cochran, festival coordinator.



Around the Coyote will feature musical entertainment.

The festival curators have focused their attention on film and video, literature, music, public art, theatre, and visual art at numerous venues within walking distance of each other throughout the Wicker Park/Bucktown/West Town neighborhood. More than 300 painters, sculptors, photographers, installation artists, and printmakers will join with emerging artists from Chicago’s theatre, music, literary, and film communities to offer a weekend stuffed with exhibits, lectures, art tours, and performances.

Not everything has changed, however. The popular Beginning Collectors Tour continues on Saturday, Oct. 13, at 1 p.m. and costs \$10 in addition to festival admission. On the

tour, Around the Coyote Executive Director Allison Stites will take participants through the fall festival to demystify the art-buying experience and provide tips on how to start and maintain an art collection. Stites also will spotlight some of her favorite festival artists and answer questions. To reserve space on the tour, which is limited to 20 people, call (773) 342-6777.

For those interested in a little studio snooping, a Neighborhood Studio and Public Art Tour will be held Saturday, Oct. 13, at 4 p.m. Cost is \$10 in addition to festival admission, and the tour begins at the Around the Coyote Gallery. Led by Jessica Cochran, it highlights some of the outstanding artists living in the Wicker Park/Bucktown/West Town neighborhoods as well as the new public art installations going on throughout the festival. The tour includes a peek into private houses used as artist studios as well as two major art studio buildings in the neighborhood: the Flatiron Arts Building and the Splat Flats. Space is limited, so be sure to reserve a spot by calling (773) 342-6777.



Enrique Suarez will display his works, such as A Jar Full of Music, at Around the Coyote.

Emerging artist, curator, and architect Haseeb Ahmed will present the Fall Artist-in-Residence Lecture on the concept and execution of the site-specific piece he created in the Around the Coyote gallery space. Find out what motivates the artist and his trials and challenges in his efforts to advance his career on Sunday, Oct. 14, at 1 p.m. The lecture is free with festival admission; otherwise the cost is \$10.

The Curator's Choice Tour will be presented Sunday, Oct. 14, by guest curator Shannon Stratton, chief curator of ThreeWalls,

a non-profit organization dedicated to art and art education, and one of Chicago's leading art professionals. Stratton will reveal her methods of curating exhibitions, what attracts her to working with artists, and how collectors can build solid collections. Admission is \$10; to reserve space on the tour call (773) 342-6777.

In addition, a fresh group of curators has worked tirelessly to enhance the festival experience. "We have a new team of curators that is an exciting change this year with a greater emphasis on film and video," said Cochran.

One of the film and video curators is Catherine Forster, a filmmaker, artist, and educator. Her work explores themes of identity, social development, and the impact of pop culture on individuality. Another video curator is Abigail Satinsky, a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University in video and electronic media; she also is a graduate student at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Leading the festival's literature focus is Kristi McGuire, who holds master's degrees from the University of Chicago and the School of the Art Institute. McGuire has chosen a more academic approach for the festival this year. Programs include "adoption translation," which involves readings from works that have been translated from other languages; "flash literary theory," a method of putting an often lengthy explanation into a quick sketch; and "iconic sheik," in which female Chicago writers and poets share their work.

Music curator Jill Katona, owner of Paperwork Media, Chicago's newest addition to the world of music management has scheduled more than 60 bands to perform throughout the weekend, representing myriad genres such as R&B and rock.

A new addition to the festival line-up this year is Public Art, curated by Humboldt Park resident Stevie Greco and Ben Schaafsman. The exhibit consists of works based on found objects and can be viewed around Wicker Park and other locations.

In the theater realm, four new plays by emerging playwrights will debut. Coordinating the efforts are curators Cynthis Castiglione, Oriana Fowler, and Jonathan Pitts. Improvisation, stand-up comedy, and short plays round out the lineup of staged entertainment.

As always, the visual art component continues to be key to the success of the festival. This year Stratton leads the way with many new faces, as recent graduates mix it up with established artists throughout Around the Coyote.

"The best way to navigate the festival is to grab a program and a map at Around the Coyote Gallery and plan to spend the day and wander," asserted Cochran.

The festival kicks off with a party on Thursday, Oct 11, from 8 p.m. until midnight. Friday, Oct. 12, the festival runs from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. On Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 13 and 14, the fun runs from 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Festival day passes are available for \$10 and are good for one day; these passes provide entrée to all parties as well as visual art, literary, film, music, and theatre venues. An all-access weekend festival pass is \$40 and includes admission to the opening night party and all venues all weekend long.

Around the Coyote Gallery is located at 1935 ½ W. North Ave. To purchase passes or tickets in advance call (773) 342-6777; tickets will be held at will call and can be picked up at the Around the Coyote Gallery and office. Tickets also will be sold at the door throughout the festival.