

DAILY TARGUM

Art show 'Resonates' through September air

Local student group hosts public night of painting and live music on Easton Avenue

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Published: September 10, 2007

A mellow breeze, a fence full of sunflowers, and a baritone singer accentuated "Resonate," the outdoor art show held last Thursday at 219 Easton Ave.

Collaborative Arts, a local nonprofit, non-tax exempt organization who aims to attract aspiring contemporary artists, hosted the show.

"We chose to call this show 'Resonate,' because it's a sounding board that allows artists to simultaneously show their work and to help one another improve," said Jorge Fiffe, the executive director of the show.

Fiffe, who completed Mason Gross' Graduate School of Art program in 2007, formed Collaborative Arts this past year with friends Daniel Swern and Philippe Garcesto.

The artistic theme of the night was reflected in Garcesto's shaman costume. Garcesto, a visual artist, Collaborative Arts' associate producer and a Mason Gross alumnus, stayed in character as he sat in front of a candle-lit circle of stones and carvings.

"'Resonate' is here for artists to hone their techniques and to tap into their own aesthetics," said Swern, the show's artistic director. "It's a proactive strategy that allows us to work around the red tape our organization dealt with when it was funded and facilitated by the University."

Collaborative Arts said it can increase its production value as a non-profit organization and has drafted an 80-page plan outlining their expansion over the next three years.

The musical event featured artists like Tin Kitchen, a female rhythm and guitar ensemble who played a set of their indie-inspired songs. Other artists featured were Assistant Principles, a masqueraded surf/garage/rockabilly quartet.

Throughout the night, the crowd steadily grew until more than 100 people stood observing the paintings suspended from tall shrubs, talking with other artists and onlookers by the bar, creating their own art drawings or listening to the live music.

Mason Gross senior Jamie Brumo, a local artist, exhibited three of her original paintings. "I'll probably still make art after I graduate," she said. "I hope to get a job that allows me to stay on top of what is current in contemporary art."

Collaborative Arts said they expected 200 people to come and go by the end of the show. In fact, the crowd was so large that "Resonate" took place in three combined backyards belonging to Swern and two of his colleagues.

Art show 'Resonates' through September air (continued)

"We fund our programs and have our own resources, but I think the strength of this group lies in its size," Fiffe said. "We are a tightly-knit group that just clicked from the beginning."

Plans are already in the works for a second show to be advertised in about six weeks, according to the group's Web site.

"The New Brunswick art community is also very tightly associated, maybe more so than that of New York City," Fiffe said. "Things happen in New York City because people can afford to make them happen, and they have the resources available. Artists in New Brunswick, however, have proximity and the fusing of theatricality and performance techniques between them."

As a manager of Individual and Institutional Giving at Performance Space 122, a multidisciplinary arts center in the New York City, Fiffe said he knows the New York City art world.

Swern also spends time in the art and theater community of New York, as assistant director at the Godlight Theater Company and as artistic production intern at the Manhattan Theater Club.

Eventually, Collaborative Arts would like to produce and direct its own shows, Swern said. The group often receives portfolios from aspiring playwrights and visual artists.

"My passion is directing, and that's what I'm working toward for the future," Swern said.