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Niagara Falls: A pop up art show on Main Street

ON EXHIBIT: WNY photography collective holds free one-night event.

By Marissa Religa Special to Night and Day
Dec 12, 2019



Contributed PhotoSome of the photographers from Buffalo Obscura who will be exhibiting their work at the pop up art show Friday at 1902 Main St. include, from left: CJ Szatkowski, Daniel Calleri, Adam McCullough, Molly Jarboe, Chris Hawley, Christina Laing and Julian Chinana, all from Buffalo. There will also be artists in the show from Niagara Falls and Toronto.



Picture it, Main Street, Niagara Falls circa 1960.

If you were lucky enough to experience it firsthand, your memories likely bring you to the vibrancy of the street, bustling department stores, crowded sidewalks, cars bumper-to-bumper. It was one of the liveliest streets in the city.

The only remaining physical memory of this time is noted by the multitude of boarded up storefronts that line the street. This is one of the stark realities that residents of Niagara Falls face on a daily basis.

The idea that these distinct sights offer a glimpse into what was, what is, and what could be in Niagara Falls is the inspiration for Buffalo Obscura's upcoming event: "The City Beyond the Falls: Pop Up Art Show."

Buffalo Obscura is a photography collaborative with a passion to use art as a method to spotlight specific neighborhoods and buildings and their potential for revitalization. It began in Buffalo in 2017 by Chris Hawley, Molly Jarboe, and Christina Laing, who began using photography to capture the unseen and obscure sights of the city and then share them in pop up art shows in an effort to spark a revival in such locations.

In a first-time partnership Buffalo Obscura and LiveNF are coming together to host the event. “We’re bringing together artists from Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Toronto to highlight parts of Niagara Falls that people rarely see,” said Hawley. The event will display work from 18 different artists, the largest slay of artists yet for a Buffalo Obscura event. Originally focused on photography, the group has recently expanded to include painting, mixed media, video installation, and improvisational piano, all of which will be showcased.

The event will take place in the historic building once home to Krausmann’s department store. The former Krausmann’s building is one of 38 properties acquired by Blue Cardinal Capital, a Buffalo development firm, which plans to transform the properties into retail, housing, amenities and office space over the next several years.

Buffalo Obscura sees art as a vehicle for shedding light on potential areas of economic development. “The goal is to contribute to the trend of art being a part of redevelopment efforts,” said Hawley.

LiveNF and Buffalo Obscura share the mission to find more ways to foster art and creativity in the community. “We’re big fans of Buffalo Obscura. We’ve been trying to figure out a way to work on a project with them for some time now and this is the perfect opportunity to do that,” said Seth Piccirillo, cofounder and board member of LiveNF.

The artwork to be displayed is intended to be affordable for attendees. Each artist will display 9 unframed prints for \$25 a piece.

This one night event is free and open to the public. Those who attend can expect great artwork, wonderful music, and a fun-filled evening. Food and beer will be offered for a voluntary donation.

“The idea is to activate a vacant space through the arts by highlighting local creativity and reimagining it. We want to show the entire region the great possibilities of Main Street,” Piccirillo said.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: The City Beyond the Falls: Pop Up Art Show

WHEN: 6-11 p.m. Friday

WHERE: 1902 Main St., Niagara Falls

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