



The irreverent, tongue-in-cheek,
spectacularly unofficial guide to



ARTOMATIC 419!

Text by Alia Orra, Julian Garcia
and Joseph Schafer
Cover and artist portraits
by Robert Wagner
Installation photos by Elliot Charney

Artomatic 419!, now in its fifth incarnation, is like the Big Top of the creative class — the most unique event in Toledo. Every other year, the Arts Commission of Greater Toledo gathers hundreds of local artists and displays them together in an enclosed space. It's a lot to handle, for aficionados and novice observers alike, so we put together a primer to the event, TCP-style: all the information you need (and some you don't) to wring the most out of Artomatic 419!

WHERE: The old Metropolitan Distributing Building on 911 Summit St., next to Belle Amour Bridal shop.
WHEN: Saturdays, April 13, 20 and 27, 11am-11pm. Admission is free.

1 ARTISTIC ORGANIZATION

"The whole spirit of Artomatic 419! is that the Arts Commission takes care of the logistics and provides basic infrastructure, but the artists themselves come out of the woodwork to make it happen. It's a grassroots effort on behalf of the creative community." —Ryan Bunch, co-founder of Artomatic 419! and performing & literary arts coordinator at the Arts Commission of Greater Toledo



It's an (Artomatic) set up: Maura Meyers, left, and Britney Gerathy prepare

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ARTOMATIC ETIQUETTE: 5 all-important rules

1 Go with the flow (of people)

Artomatic is about individuality, but don't go against the grain too much. How much is too much? Chest-bumping strangers. That's too much.

2 Keep your critiques to yourself

Everyone's a critic, but most people have the good sense to whisper. The only thing more awkward than making fun of someone else's hard work to their face is doing so in the middle of a crowd.

3 iPhones welcome. Flash? Less so.

The Metropolitan Building is pretty dark, so please don't blind your neighbors just to get a good picture. Besides, art is not your lunch — you don't need to Instagram everything you see to your friends.

4 Bring money, make it rain

Just because entry is free doesn't mean you won't find something worth buying. Artists need to eat and much of their work is for sale. Feel free to haggle, however.

5 Repeat visits encouraged

There is no way to cover two buildings and hundreds of artists in a single visit. Come back, explore, find nooks and crannies, spend some time talking to your favorite artists. This only happens once every two years — enjoy yourself.

"There's such a wide variety
and it reaches such a breadth
that it invites more people out
of the woodwork that might
never participate."

Erik Bang!!! (a.k.a. Erik Thomas),
performance and recycled metal
sculpture artist



GRAVITY DEFYING

Erin Garber-Pearson, Locks of Steel aerialist
eringarberpearson.com

Appearing: Saturday, April 20; Garber-Pearson will perform demos during the day and take part in an all-out circus performance from 7-10pm.

Artomatic status: Rookie

Aesthetic: 19th century circus performer meets funky art teacher

Day job: The Tuscon, Arizona native moved to the area to be an art instructor at Bowling Green State University.

About her: Garber-Pearson co-founded Bird's Eye View Circus Space, a local organization that teaches contemporary circus skills (like acrobatics) at the Collingwood Arts Center, and performs her own aerial silk dance at DIY circuses. "For Artomatic I'm going to really focus on pushing circus culture here, because we need more of it."

Idolizes: New York choreographer Elizabeth Streb. (www.streb.org)
"She's, like, bad ass."

Artomatic audience advice:

"We love to hear you. This is live theater, so hearing your voice, hearing your excitement, it is fuel for us and it's why we do it. Be loud."

Can be overheard saying...

"It's harder than it looks."



SHE'S CRAFTY

Betty Floored, Oh Sew Betty!

facebook.com/OhSewBetty

etsy.com/shop/BettyFloored

Appearing: Saturday, April 20, 11am-11pm, at Handmade Toledo's Maker's Mart, an indie craft show taking place during Artomatic 419!

Artomatic status: Veteran

Aesthetic: Dita Von Teese meets John Waters' Crybaby

About her: The founder of Maker's Mart, Floored (real name: Jessica Crossfield) designs and sews retro aprons, dresses and other gear.

Signature piece: Kitschy, applique plush owl pillows.

Artist gripe: The idea that crafting is a dirty word.

"I think crafters are absolutely artists, it's just a different form of art. It's like saying a musician isn't an artist, because they don't make art that can hang in a gallery or a museum — we're all making something."

Artomatic is ... "A three-weekend, super awesome, giant, untraditional art show that happens every other year."

Can be overheard saying: "Crafting is art, too, @\$\$#!&\$."

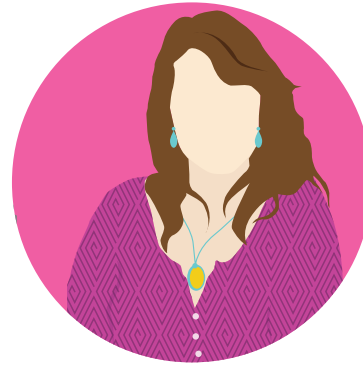
Idolizes: Retro sewing queen Gretchen "Gertie" Hirsch, www.blogforbettersewing.com

Advice for other artists: "Think big."



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A FIELD GUIDE TO THE SIX ARTISTIC PERSONALITIES YOU'LL FIND AT ARTOMATIC 419!



The crafter

Spends nights rummaging through the knick-knack drawer for materials. Considers Hobby Lobby heaven. Armed with a hot glue gun at all times. Eschews Facebook in favor of Etsy. Can be found in church gymnasiums/community centers. Carries chip on shoulder. **Often heard:** "Why buy _____, when you can make it yourself?"



The avant garde

Won't accept art older than she is. Preferred styles include 'found pieces' and 'installations.' If it looks like a plain old object, then it's artistic genius. Justifies poor workmanship as 'experimentation.' Considers Tilda Swinton napping at MOMA art. **Often heard:** "An empty chair in a bare room is art ... if you think of it that way."



The hipster

Not afraid to make an artistic statement as long as it's ironic. Won't show in a gallery if he can't smoke indoors. Never makes a piece that won't fit in a Toyota Prius. Paints the cast of Terminator 2 in The Last Supper. **Often heard:** "Well, you've never heard of it."



The art snob

Instantly knows the values of paintings. Performs appraisals at random — wanted or unwanted. Is on the waiting list to be a docent at the TMA. Judges art by which gallery it's in. Considers non-juried shows to be rooms full of doodles. Has a closet full of black turtle necks. **Often heard:** "That's subjective, really."



The street rebel

The world is his gallery, even if that means breaking and entering. Preferred medium: spray paint on brick. Puts Jackson Pollock on the bottom of his skateboard. Believes art is free, but accepts donations (also barbers for prison tattoos). Hates theater, loves mimes. Branches into fashion by customizing Vans and Doc Martens. **Often heard:** "One man's art is another man's vandalism."



The esoteric poet

Believes a piece of art is only as good as its manifesto. Stacks art textbooks to make living room furniture. Always quick to add meaning to phallic symbols. Only tweets quotes from Friedrich Nietzsche. Still authoring his PhD dissertation at age 45. Describes metaphors with other metaphors. **Often heard:** "You see, the tree represents oppression, and the sky is allegory for the vastness of human emotion."



A SPECIAL SNOWFLAKE

Artomatic 419! is unique, but it's not one-of-a-kind. The first Artomatic began in Washington, D.C. in 1999, and our nation's capital still hosts that event. The Toledo iteration of the extravaganza started in 2006.



On hidden gems ...

"One thing that is really magical about Toledo is that there are artists everywhere in all different kinds of jobs — stay-at-home moms, people in factories — everywhere."

— poet Jonie McIntire, who will appear April 13 at 8pm on the Main Stage with Almeda Street Poets



POETIC JUSTICE

Jeremy Crawford, Madd Poets Society

www.maddpoetsociety.org

Appearing: Crawford will host Madd Poets Society's spoken word performance on Saturday, April 13 from 8-10pm on Stage 3.

Artomatic status: Rookie

Aesthetic: Langston Hughes meets hip hop

Day job: Rapper and producer at his own Run Amuk Studios; poet and youth mentor with local organization Madd (Making a Direct Difference) Poets Society.

About him: Crawford, a Chicago native, discovered the power of self-expression when he started a journal as a teenager; he

now channels that confidence when he's in front of a crowd, performing hip-hop infused spoken word poetry on everything from social ills to politics. "Once I figured out I could do poetry, my life changed. It opened up a lot of doors for me."

Idolizes: David Bush, head of Madd Poets Society.

Artomatic audience advice: "Be genuine. When it comes from the heart, it can't be wrong."

Signature: A Martin Luther King, Jr. tribute performance.

Can be overheard saying ... "Hip hop is poetry."



Michelle Duni with her illustrations



LABOR OF LOVE

You might read this and think to yourself 'Dang, Artomatic 419! sounds like a lot of work!' And it is — unpaid work. Every visual artist — all 500 of them — must volunteer for 10 hours to earn their space at Artomatic 419!, and every band has to work the hour before their set, and the hour after.

Performance artiste

"We really have a mixture of things a lot of it is funny, some of it is a little more serious, and some of it is just weird, period."

Megan Aherne, who will appear as emcee of the Glaciy Underground Cabaret on April 20 & 27 at 4pm on the second floor



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SEEING & BEING SEEN

You walk into Artomatic, unassuming observer. Before long you start to notice them — women wearing glued-on feathers, men in tutus, hell, even a whole tribe of quasi-Teletubbies in tomato red suits. These are artists. And then it occurs to you: for the first time in your life, your regular uniform of Gap jeans and fake vintage concert tee make you look like, well, a yuppie posing as a hipster. **It's the one day of the year when looking normal is actually abnormal.** It's also the only day, ever, that the man in Pokemon shirt is making you feel like a dork. You kind of want a do-over. And you will get one. Because no other event in this town gives you three chances to arrive in style. You will let your freak flag fly — perhaps with an ironic take on DJ Lance, or something more Bjork-like — and you will return. Triumphant. Weird-looking. A part of the Artomatic tribe.

—Alia Orra

STEM MEETS ART

Ben Scheiber and Roan Martin-Hayden, robot designers

www.ts4arts.org

Appearing: All three Artomatic Saturdays, performing demos at noon and 3 pm with their painting robot.

Artomatic status: Rookie

Aesthetic: "Freaks and Geeks" meets future tech moguls

Day job: Toledo School for the Arts students

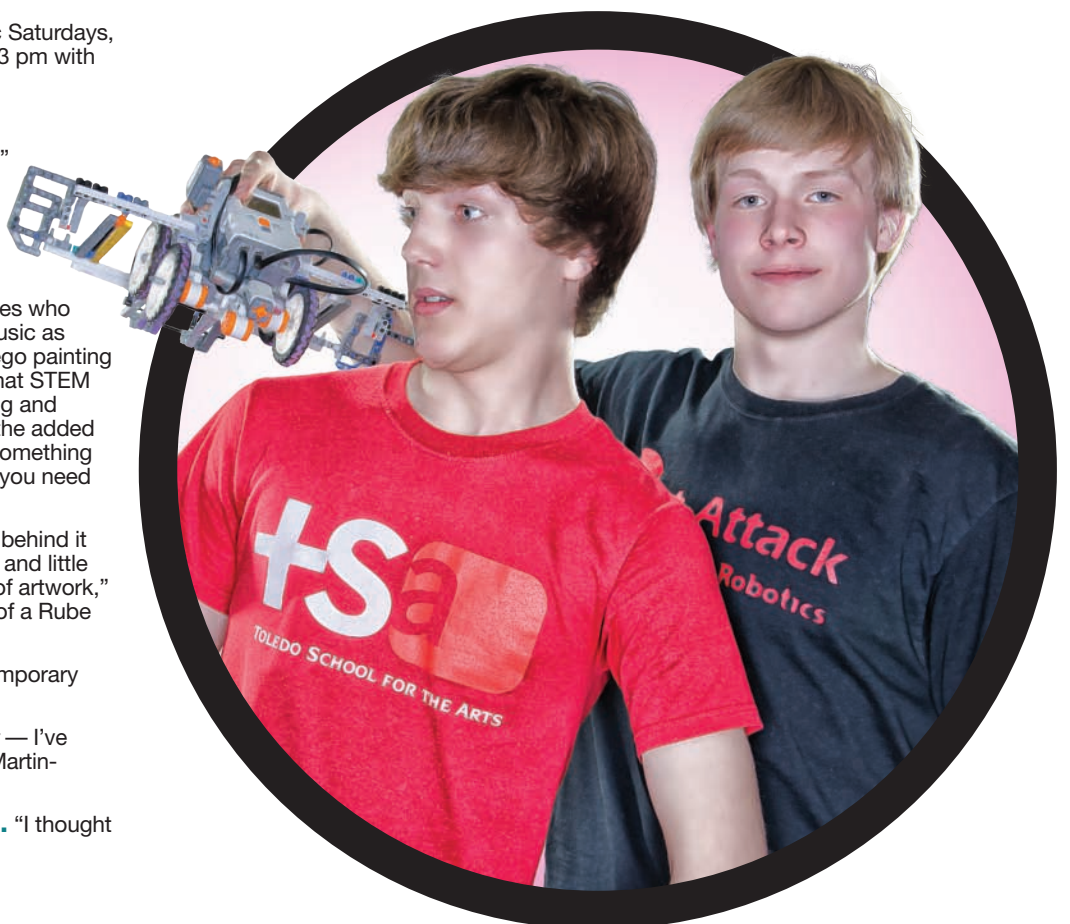
About them: Martin-Hayden and Scheiber, robotics obsessives who do double duty in drama and music as TSA students, will share their Lego painting robot and spread their mantra that STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) is way better as STEAM (the added A is for art). "In order to create something that people are going to notice, you need the art in order," Ben says.

Tech humor: "It drags a roller behind it over a stencil and you peel it off and little two-year-old Betty has a piece of artwork," Martin-Hayden jokes. "It's a bit of a Rube Goldberg machine."

Signature: So far, only on a temporary license.

Idolizes: "My dad's a professor — I've always looked up to him," says Martin-Hayden.

Can be overheard saying ... "I thought we fixed that?"



ECO DIVA

Dani Herrera, PaperDENIMart

Facebook page: PaperDENIMart

Appearing: Herrera's mini-gallery will be on display all three Saturdays, April 13, 20, and 27, from 11am-11pm.

Artomatic status: Sophomore

Aesthetic: Dumpster diver meets Old Hollywood kitsch

About her: Fashions portraits of Marilyn Monroe, Elvis, and the like from fabric, zippers, denim, even dryer lint. Most recent commission? A Willie Nelson portrait made from a man's deceased father's jeans.

Success story: Herrera's first showing at Artomatic 419! led to area gallery exhibits.

Signature piece: Lead Mountain, which is made completely of pencils, hangs at The Pour House.

Artist gripe: "There's so much material that people just throw away without even thinking twice about it. Everything I use has either been donated or found in the garbage."

Can be overheard saying ... "One man's junk is another man's treasure."

Idolizes: UK button and scrap metal artist Ann Carrington, www.anncarrington.com.



LIKE WHAT YOU SEE? MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Robert Wagner of Man Overboard Images shot the cover and circus-inspired portraits of Artomatic 419! participants for our feature story. Does the photog have any secret talents he could bring to the art extravaganza besides his lens work? "I'm good at beat boxing," Wagner says. "I'm better than I should be at something not so cool. That, or possibly the fact that I'm really good at trivia games and Jeopardy!"



419-344-6604
rbrtwgmr@gmail.com
www.manoverboardimages.com

WILD ONE

Tim Ide, Miserable City TV, Time To Productions
miserablecity.tv



Appearing: Ide and the rest of Time To Productions (Mark Moffett, Toby Fey and Megan Bremer) will show their WORK film installation all three Artomatic Saturdays, from 11am-11pm

Aesthetic: Reformed member of KISS meets experimental film director

About him: After Forbes magazine rated Toledo one of the country's "most miserable cities," Time To Productions started Miserable City TV, documenting T-town culture in film as a sort of middle finger to the haters. "It's kind of an if loving you is wrong, I don't want to be right kind of thing."

Signature: Ide moonlights as a fire breather (he has more than two decades of circus-style stunt training). "There's no trick to it. Mind over matter."

Crowd sourcing: Time To Production's Artomatic film installation will play clips submitted by Toledoans, young and old, of any film footage they like. (Send to callforclips@gmail.com)

Idolizes: Andy Warhol

Can be overheard saying ... "Have you submitted your video yet?"

BUT WAIT THERE'S MORE!



Check out more artomatic behind the scenes photos, stories and schedule online at TOLEDOCITYPAPER.COM

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