

## Armed with a permanent space, organizers of annual Terrain art show have high hopes

Nathan Weinbender

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Tags: Diego Sanchez Ginger Ewing local art Luke Baumgarten Mark Camp Patrick Kendrick Terrain



Artist Christian McGirk installs “Hostile,” made of wood, wood stain, plaster, latex, water based ink, sepia ink, in the Terrain space last Monday.

### If you go

#### Terrain

When: 5 p.m. Friday

Where: 304 W. Pacific Ave.

The event is free and all ages.

#### Music Lineup

- Twin Towers
- The Backups
- Paisley Devil
- Haunted Tubes
- Tone Collaborative
- Phlegm Fatale
- Cathedral Pearls
- Wampire

Every year, the organizers of Terrain – Luke Baumgarten, Ginger Ewing, Patrick Kendrick and Diego Sanchez – meet clandestinely on the night of the event for a celebratory champagne toast.

“We always go to a section of the building that’s off limits to the public,” Ewing said, “so that always feels kind of special.”

“One year in the old space, it was in a junk closet,” Baumgarten said, “and we were stepping over nails and screws sticking out of the floor.”

Friday marks the eighth one-night-only celebration of local artists, musicians, poets and filmmakers. In 2014, the event moved from the old Music City building on First Avenue and into the Washington Cracker Co. building on West Pacific Avenue, where Terrain will eventually have a permanent gallery space that’s open all year round.

In the basement last October, the organizers drank bubbly from coupe glasses off a silver platter as the floorboards above them creaked and groaned from the combined weight of the attendees upstairs. There was something more serene about this particular toast, though, especially since the gatherings of previous years had consisted of huddling together, slamming down champagne and running back to tend to the event.

“Instead of talking about Terrain, we were talking about what was going on between us,” Sanchez said. “We were actually able to enjoy it.”

They estimate 7,000 people came through the doors last October (compare that to their estimate of 5,500 attendees in 2013), and that number will likely increase this year.

“The best thing about last year, for me, was seeing people in line to go upstairs, and the line for that was longer than the line for the beer garden, and the amount of time people were taking with the art,” Baumgarten said. “Everything I had hoped Terrain would become, in terms of being a community event where art was the focus, happened last year.”

“People were waiting in line for two hours, and they were actually happy about it,” Ewing said.

The eighth annual Terrain is already bigger than last year’s. In terms of art, more than 1,300 pieces were officially submitted. About 300 of those will be displayed, representing nearly 150 different artists.

“The vast majority of the artists I’m unfamiliar with,” Ewing said, “so it’s fun being able to fall in love with and get to know new artists. But it’s also about seeing artists that have been involved year after year and seeing the evolution of their art.”

“When the music submissions come in, I’m shocked that I don’t know who these bands are,” Kendrick said. “I have to book a hundred bands for Volume Music Festival a couple months before, and then six or seven bands come out of nowhere. It’s amazing.”

Mark Camp, owner of Anvil Coffee Roasting, bought the Cracker Co. building with his business partner Darby McKee in July 2014. Anvil currently occupies one corner of the building; Overbluff Cellars, Camp and McKee’s winery, has set up a cellar and tasting room in the opposite corner that has been in quiet operation since the summer.

“My job was the figure out how to get tenants into the building, to try and get some energy in here,” Camp said. “Terrain couldn’t be better, especially for an eclectic thing like this. They’re going to be dragging a lot of creative types through here. ... They’re not going to squash us with their presence, and they’re all amazing people.”

Camp says he first experienced the DIY ethos and come-together spirit of Terrain when the event was still in the Music City building, and he was called late at night to come over

and jury-rig a fire exit.

“The night of the artists’ reception, the fire department still hadn’t cleared some things,” Camp recalled. “I’m kind of a hobby welder, and they asked me to come down and fix some railings. ... It was, like, 10 at night, I’m wearing coveralls and my welding hood, and I’m out on the back step installing this handrail. It made me feel good, and I felt like I had a chance to help it come off.”

Other office spaces in the Cracker Co. building have been rented out to Datarang web servers, Coil yoga studio, Davidson Commodities and Haven Real Estate. Baumgarten’s Fellow Coworking and Ewing’s Window Dressing art gallery also occupy offices, and there’s a plan to eventually open a restaurant in one of the back rooms. Although the first floor will function more or less as a common area, each tenant will be able to operate autonomously.

“We have this big event space, and we wanted to keep it so that they can do things to raise money for Terrain,” Camp said. “There will be times when we’ll do stuff ourselves – we’ll have a wedding or concerts – but we want to work with them, so there are trades happening.”

One of those “trades” is a sound system and stage lights, which the Terrain organizers hope to provide via a \$25,000 Kickstarter campaign. A stage will eventually be constructed, too – whether it will be done by Terrain night remains to be seen.

If you attended Terrain in its new space last year, walking into it now is something of a shock.

The building boasts new windows and floors, a sliding glass garage door that opens onto a new patio and shiny new ductwork snaking around the updated ceilings. There’s a bar on either side of the main room – one to accommodate Anvil, the other Overbluff – and a dozen or so large tables. Over one of the doorways are 10-foot tall steel shelves, which will eventually store large burlap sacks filled with coffee beans. Above the main entryway is a newly built structure that will house sound and light boards.

The enclosed gallery space, Terrain’s future permanent home, has bright white walls and still smells of drying paint and fresh wood and plaster. A birdlike sculpture called “Hostile” crouches in one corner; above it, a punk doodle of Johannes Vermeer’s “Girl with a Pearl Earring.”

There's a brand new elevator, although the old freight elevator is still there and is in operation. The updated bathrooms on the second floor have been built inside the husk of the defunct cracker oven, and glass panels in the bathroom's entryways allow you to see down into its concrete innards.

In a matter of days, the building will be stuffed with wall-to-wall people, but on this late Monday afternoon the only real sound is the constant thrum of Camp's coffee roaster in the far corner.

Now that Terrain has settled into its new location, the event is only going to grow. Once the gallery space becomes Terrain's permanent home base, the organizers will mostly focus on local art exhibitions that will remain on display for two or more months at a time. And once the stage is erected, there will be a performance space for live music and theater.

"We want it to be a community gathering space, whether it's for a band or a theater group," Ewing said. "We're in conversation right now with a visiting artist lecture series. We want to keep the space alive and have it be a community arts focus space."

In the days leading up to that eighth champagne toast, the stress of the event is starting to wear on the foursome. But once Friday arrives and thousands of people file through the Cracker Co. building, the organizers know the weight of their obligations will melt away.

"As soon as we open the doors for the artists' reception the day before, I see all of these amazingly talented, creative people that make Spokane a place I want to live," Ewing said. "It's reinvigorating, it's humbling and it makes me fall in love with my city year after year."

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