

Art Bop merges the art/music experience

**PAST
YOUR
BEDTIME**



WHAT: Art Bop @ Curve

WHY: To celebrate art, for art's sake.

WHERE: 2352 Bardstown Road

WHEN: Part of FAT — Frankfort Avenue Trolley Hop, every last Friday of the month.

Breakdancing has always fascinated me. The extreme twists and bends give the human muscle some idea of its maximum, full-throttle gyro-capabilities. Breakdancers seem to float a few inches above the floor at all times, curling in rapid, weird and impossible angles. The whole production must be some sort of time-warp trickery, playing with our minds; it seems to contradict the laws of physics that a human can move in those ways.

Not that breakdancing has a whole lot to do with this column, but there were two guys doing it last Friday at Art Bop, the newest addition to the FAT Friday Gallery Hop on Frankfort Avenue. Nestled in a small apartment above Curve fashion store, the gallery caters primarily to younger, lesser-known artists, and derives a particular energy from challenging the art gallery paradigm.

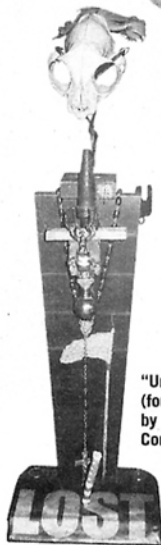
"I love to do all this stuff," said Braylyn Stewart, a 20-year-old artist and Manual High grad who arranged the artwork for the gallery. Stewart was one of the breakdancers, along with 18-year-old Chadwick Waite. "It's a chance for young artists to show what they have to offer to the community that's already respected," Stewart said.

Like his dance moves, Stewart's creative offerings challenge convention. He's a graffiti artist — you know, the stuff you see all over underpasses and spattered randomly on walls and such. Since the advent of spray paint, municipalities across the country have devised ill-considered plans to curb urban graffiti, using everything from community art initiatives to jail time in an effort to reposition graffiti and its creators.

By displaying his snapshot paintings of things you might normally see on the sides of empty warehouses on Main Street, Stewart is trying to engender a newfound respect for graffiti as an art form, not an aesthetic nuisance. He and a bevy of other local graffiti artists have taken to staging public graffiti-painting displays, one of which took place



"Mad Cow" by Matt Weir.



"Untitled" (found objects) by Aron Conaway.



Braylyn Stewart, who created this graffiti art for the Montana Spraypaint Co., would like Metro Government to commission graffiti art around town.



Kathy McQuade-Olliges showed her sculpture, "Martyr," at Art Bop, the latest venue to join the FAT Friday Gallery Hop on Frankfort Avenue.

last summer at the Forecastle Festival in Tyler Park. Stewart and company first set up large walls of white drywall, which they slowly (over the course of a whole day in the Forecastle case) fill with bubbly, exuberant and colorful tags and paintings.

The group paints weekly on the sidewalk in front of the Old Louisville Coffeehouse (Fourth and Hill streets), though they'll take off the winter months. Stewart said the group plans to reconvene when the warm weather returns.

Stewart also wants to proposition companies, and possibly Metro Government, to do some commissioned graffiti work around the city, although nothing has been suggested yet.

Aside from Stewart's graffiti, Art Bop showcased sculptures, paintings and some combinations thereof. Kathy McQuade-Olliges' "Martyr" is a sculpture of a woman with a score of nails penetrating her head and a single one stabbing her heart. McQuade-Olliges was there with her son, Jim James of My Morning Jacket.

Local sculptor Matt Weir's obtuse "Mad Cow" is a portion of a painted cow skull mounted atop a cylinder of concrete. Weir's other featured piece is a sculpted human brain laying in the center of a concrete rectangle in the middle of a side room, a glimpse of the delectable mix of sparse visual stimulation and thought-enticing void typical of much of Weir's work.

LAVA House curator Aron Conaway also had some found-object work on display, most

of a politically charged persuasion. Brook Tuttle's painting and several modern mixed media pieces from Jimmy Angelina rounded out the gallery.

Like at any self-respecting art show, there was red and white wine, beer (though it was low-minded domestic out of a poorly-functioning keg) and foliage in the bathroom. DJs Wolf and Lay Low provided tasteful tunes, although the DJ idea was a compromise.

Louisville musician/promoter JK McKnight, who came up with the idea for Art Bop after his neighbor mentioned wanting to make use of the vacant apartment above his Frankfort Avenue clothing store, originally envisioned a simultaneous art/music experience. He and fellow organizer Mike Foster booked The October, a U2-ish band on the verge of signing a major label deal, to play on a stage he and others would build in the parking lot of Panther Motor Imports, across the street. When the owner of the car shop bailed, McKnight was forced to move the show to Dark Star Tavern, which he said will not host the music portion in the future.

Although the art was for sale, none was purchased. At the mere risk of being wrong, I'd say no one really had that intent, as the crowd was largely young people who probably don't yet have the sort of money needed to buy art. But that doesn't diminish the idea, right? Art, for art's sake.

BY STEPHEN GEORGE
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