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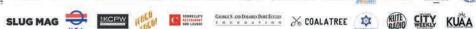




































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# SLUG MAG

SaltLakeUnderGround • Vol. 32 Issue #392 August 2021

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ABOUT THE COVER: For our 13th Annual Craft Lake City DIY Festival cover, Katie Mansfield of Tragic Girls delivered a craft tool-slinging cowgirl with scissors and yarn in place of six shooters. Read more about Mansfield's work in Avrey Evans' feature on pages 8-9.

### **Kassidy Waddell**

### **Contributor Limelight Contributing Writer**

Focusing primarily on music, Kassidy Waddell has been writing for SLUG since November of 2019. "I like the freedom I have to think and write how I want with the content," Waddell says.

We at SLUG take pride in Waddell's combination of humor, professionalism and a laid-back approach. Read Waddell's coverage of Craft Lake City Kid Row artisans on page 18.

### **Erin Sleater**

### **Contributor Limelight Brand Ambassador**

Erin Sleater grew up reading SLUG and has embraced the opportunity join the team, first as a Marketing Intern in summer of 2020 and now as a Brand Ambassador. "I'm always looking to expand my skill set ... and SLUG was the perfect place for me to grow both personally and professionally," says Sleater. We are grateful to have Sleater as a force on our team!

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### clever octopus:

### Creativity and Sustainability

By Bianca Velasquez | Bianca@slugmag.com

At Clever Octopus, Founders Sheri Gibb and Jen Lopez understand the value of art accessibility in Utah. Oftentimes, materials, classes and workshops can be financially out of reach for beginners, creating an imbalance between creatives who are able to explore their artistic goals and creatives who are held at bay by differences in income. In 2015, Gibb and Lopez created Clever Octopus, a "craft thrift store," along with their Creative Reuse Centers (CRC) that run on donations and a waste stream-reduction system to provide affordable and accessible art supplies, classes and community for beginners and tenured artists alike.

"We hope that people will see themselves as artists and creative people who can make small changes that prevent waste from going to the landfill by changing their habits and by extending the life of existing materials," says Gibb. Clever Octopus' first material donation drive collected 23,300 lbs of art and craft supplies, which led to the opening of their first official CRC in 2017. As the material donation cycle grew, Clever Octopus moved into their current location in South Salt Lake in 2019. "Our community is filled with families and individuals who are downsizing, decluttering or purging, which constitutes about 50% of our donation intake," says Gibb. "The other 50% comes from businesses and industries striving to decrease their carbon footprint."

Clever Octopus' operative method and mission have served our community in preventing waste, and the experience their storefront offers only amplifies their goals. With themed rooms, a consignment shop "Reuse Market" and a large warehouse full of treasures in the back of the space, creatives can indulge in the prospect of an artistic endeavor. "Some of the coolest items we have in the warehouse include donated materials from 3form, like massive panels made from environmentally conscious materials and small tiles that have ... natural fibers, shells and plants [pressed] in them," Gibb says.

Alongside this range in products and materials, Clever Octopus offers low prices, recurring sales/promotions and a Nonprofit Reward Program that gives back to other local organizations. "When a customer shops with us and spends over \$5 they get a bottle cap that symbolizes \$1 of value and can buy more tokens if they wish," says Gibb. "They then plop [the token] into a nonprofit bin of their choice on our wonky octopus collector. This value, consisting of community and Clever Octopus donations, is tallied at the end of the month and is awarded in materials by Clever Octopus to these nonprofits." Some nonprofit recipients include the Humane Society of Utah, Queer Spectra and Sewing For Lives.

Since 2019, Clever Octopus has been collaborating with fellow nonprofit Craft Lake City for the latter organization's annual DIY Festival to further enrich Utah's creative community. Gibb says, "We provide materials to CLC for decorating at the festival in exchange for booth space, as well as providing a \$50 gift card [and] a \$20 membership card for all five people in their Artisan Scholarship and Mentor Program." This year, they will have a booth at the festival featuring creative kits and products made from donated materials.

As the year goes on, Clever Octopus is looking forward to welcoming the community back into their space with in-person workshops and classes. Gibb says, "We have an exciting Reanimator Threadworks sustainable fashion series. This three-part workshop teaches people how to reimagine materials into functional uses like bags as well as instructs Octopeeps how to repair clothing. All skill-levels are welcomed!" Clever Octopus is also holding their youth summer camps through the end of August and hope to expand their store capacity to allow for more visitors. To learn more on how to participate in their workshops and classes visit, cleveroctopus.org or stop by their store!

Sheri Gibb aspires to make Clever Octopus the premiere "Creative Reuse Center" in Utah through discounted materials, programs and workshops.







# Tragic with a Twist

REIMAGINING VINTAGE ART
WITH KATIE MANSFIELD

By Avrey Evans | avreyevans21@gmail.com

At first glance, you might think a graphic T-shirt displaying a retro comic babe with swinging chainsaw tits is nothing more than it seems: A kick-ass design and one hell of a fashion statement. But like all works from art and apparel brand **Tragic Girls**, there is deeper meaning in the details. Each piece in Tragic Girls' art and clothing collection blends dark humor with a nostalgic style and just enough satire to make tongue-incheek commentary on social issues.

Tragic Girls was founded in 2017 by Katie Mansfield. A daughter of two creative parents, Mansfield was surrounded by art as early as she can remember. "I remember always drawing during school, after school, during work, after work, basically all the time—especially when I was supposed to be doing something else," Mansfield says. She named her first drawing "Faces with Legs on There," a very on-the-nose, poetic description of a preschooler's smiley face with legs.

From there, Mansfield's artistic endeavors progressed from stick figures to music. "Originally, I did want to go into music. I've been in several bands over the years," she says. Mansfield felt a particular affinity for jazz and began studying that style in her early college years. However, the affair with jazz was short and sweet, and in the end, Mansfield says it was graphic art that won her heart.

After getting a degree in film and media arts, Mansfield worked as a graphic design-





ed my style to look like that, but I didn't always have the technical abilities to pull it off," says Mansfield. Her early comics drew inspiration from Japanese graphic novels and included manga-esque characters. As Mansfield developed her skills, her drawings began to reflect film noir techniques. "My style turned into more black-and-white, cartoon-v comic book illustrations, and I only used black and red ink on white paper." Working her way toward what would become the Tragic Girls brand, Mansfield then switched over to digital illustration. She describes the adoption of a digital medium as a turning point in her creative journey. "I was able to achieve that retro comic book effect a lot easier," she says. "I'm [the] closest to the style I want [that] I have ever been."

tion to her brand led to what Tragic Girls is today—retro cool with pops of color. Most of her prints contain captivating vintage babes exuding femme-fatale energy. One print depicts a gaggle of ghoulish girls enjoying a slumber party; a dainty mummy snacks on popcorn while a glammed-up Frankenstein inspects the pedicure on her severed foot. Another Tragic Girls piece portrays a pin-up version of Snow White. She gazes at a blue-

Mansfield's creative journey and dedica-

bird perched on her finger while a group of Disney-fied woodland creatures look on in adoration. Framing the picturesque image is a bubble-font phrase reading "FUCKING BE NICE," a gentle reminder that we could be a little more like the fairest one of all.

"You Should Smile More," digital, 2019.

Mansfield's vintage style is a nostalgic callback to an earlier era, but she's selective in what she revives. "There's a nice little phrase I like that goes, 'Vintage style not vintage values'," she says. Retro comics and pin-up art are iconic styles of the past, but Mansfield feels that it's important to recognize the often problematic messages intertwined within these art forms. Comic-like advertisements in the '50s regularly promoted sexist gender roles and reductionist racial stereotypes. In recognition of this relationship, Mansfield actively subverts the correlation between vintage art and prejudice ideas. "I like to juxtapose drawing in a vintage style by attaching a modern message," she says. "I try to include topics I'm very passionate about, including feminism, mental health and social equality among other things."

The Tragic Girls brand uses its artistic platform to speak about important issues, and its apparel line offers an opportunity to carry that message with you. "I love being able to

share my art and its message in such a tangible way," says Mansfield. Her unisex apparel line is size-inclusive and offers everything from long sleeve tees to beanies to sparkly enamel pins. The "Destroy Brutality" tee features a screen-printed image of a fuschia peaked cap and spiked bats arranged in a skull and bones fashion. The powerful image was created in a stand against police brutality, and a percentage of the sales have gone toward several organizations, including the ACLU and the National Bail Out. Other shirts illustrate alien girls, heartbreaking bikers and a certain chainsaw-chested figure. "My 'Chainsaw Tits' piece is the most iconic thing I've ever made," Mansfield says. "It's an utterly ridiculous concept, but it brings together my love of comic books, horror and feminism in a way I'm really proud of."

Mansfield's work has appeared in homes and on bodies across the country, and now it's gracing *SLUG*'s *Craft Lake City DIY Festival Issue* cover. Drawing inspiration from Utah's roots, Mansfield offers her interpretation of the wild west with a twist. "I thought that having a western theme would be a great way to showcase Utah's really awesome scenery and the

MAYBE SHE'S BORN WITH IT...

MAYBE IT'S THE
EXISTENTIAL DREAD SETTING IN.

"Existential Dread," digital, 2020.



red rocks we have here," she says. In honor of *Craft Lake City*, Mansfield's crafty cowgirl arms herself with a trusty set of scissors and knitting needles. Even the tumbleweeds are reimagined as handy balls of yarn.

Tragic Girls will continue to grow as a brand, and Mansfield adds new works to her site regularly. Along with her illustrations, Mansfield hopes to publish her own comic book in the future. "It's probably the biggest art aspiration I've ever had and I want it to be perfect," she says. "It might take a while, but I know it's something I've always wanted to do and I really want to make that dream a reality." Whether it's an entire comic book or a powerful print, Mansfield's work is a reminder you can be tragic and powerful all at the same time.

Keep up with Tragic Girls on their Instagram @tragicgirlsco. Browse unique apparel, prints and accessories at tragicgirlsco.com.

er for a local company. The position was a respectable entry into the industry, but like most corporate-employed creatives, Mansfield felt stifled by the work. To feed her inner artist, she began pursuing illustration on the side. However, balancing a full-time career and a passion project was no easy task, and Mansfield wasn't ready to make a bet on her creative endeavors.

Instead, the bet was made for her. By a stroke of bad luck, Mansfield was laid off from her job, although she reflects on the moment as the real jumping-off point in her career. "When I lost my job, I felt like it was my chance to really try to make art work," she says. "It was terrifying, but I knew I would regret it if I didn't at least try." Mansfield threw everything she had into creating her art and brand, visiting conventions and traveling to hone her style. Eventually, all that energy and determination turned into what is now Tragic Girls.

Tragic Girls' signature vintage comic style is instantly recognizable now, but flash back a few years and it looked a bit different. "I've always loved comic book art and I think I've always kind of known I want-

## OCINDER PIG

FUELING UP FOR FARMERS MARKET FUN

By Corinne Bauer | corinnejbauer@icloud.com



Cinder Pig's Pork Plate has all the fixings for a filling meal. Paired with their Han's Kombucha collaboration, this meal really hits the spot!

Late one Saturday morning, I made my way to the Salt Lake City Farmers Market to check out Cinder Pig, a barbecue staple in the long row of food trucks. I love the Farmers Market, but with the pandemic, I missed it all last summer. I was nervous and excited to face the crowds and heat again this season.

As I wove my way through happy shoppers holding cloth bags full of fresh-baked bread, sampled homemade barbecue sauce and walked by curious dogs, I felt simultaneously energized, anxious and hungry. The line for *Cinder Pig* reached into the walkway, turning deep into the sunshine but moving quickly. It was a pleasant wait which we spent reading the menu and getting enticed by other people's food.

With the sun beating down on my back, I was hot and easily tempted into choosing their collaboration with *Han's Kombucha*, Lemon Sweet Tea Kombucha. I'm always a sucker for fun drinks, but I'm new to the world of kombucha and can get scared off by the stronger varieties. I didn't have that problem at *Cinder Pig* as theirs was floral, sweet and cold. I was surprised and pleased by the slight bitter funk that hit at the end of each sip. My spouse and I traded swigs as we waited for our food to be ready.

Within a few minutes, our food was done and we walked to a shady area and took a seat on the grass. It was a bit before noon, so we decided to make it a true brunch and start with Breakfast Tacos (\$9.00). These tacos were pretty simple with scrambled eggs, pork and pico on corn tortillas, but they packed tons of flavor. The eggs were soft and lightly salted while the pork was tender and smoky. The bright red pico added wonderful spice and freshness and made every bite delicious, especially with the soft and crumbly tortillas. Little bits fell onto my lap, but I made sure nothing went to waste.

With the tacos tucked away, we moved on to the Pork Plate (\$13.00). You get to choose your own sides and I went with potato salad and the daily special, chicharrones. The potato salad was creamy with bursts of texture from crunchy pickles, onions and peppers. The eggs had bright vellow volks and the potatoes were chunky and rich. I used the chicharrones like chips, and their spicy sweetness was a crunchy vehicle to bring tender, wholehog pork and tangy pickles into my mouth. The plate also came with a choice of sauce. I went with the Lexington Dip, which was thin and tart but also slightly sweet. To top it off, fresh golden cornbread added sweetness and a homey feel.

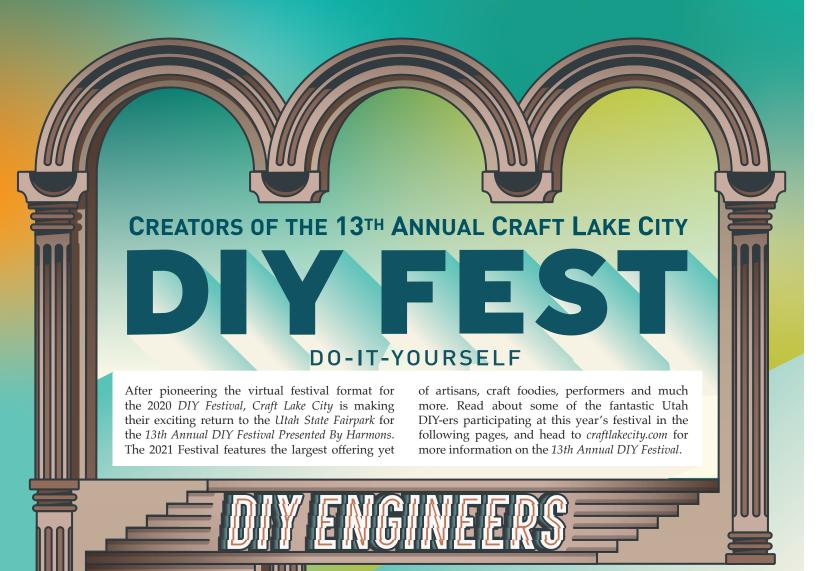
My sweet tooth wouldn't let me leave without dessert, so we ended our meal with Bread Pudding (\$5.00). The pudding came out looking toasty brown and was topped with a caramel drizzle. I took a bite and found the texture to be dense and custardy with a soft banana flavor and crunchy walnuts. I was transported to weekend mornings at home, eating banana bread straight out of the oven with salty butter melting on top. One of the regular problems with bread pudding is that it is soggy or dry, but this was moist and tender.

The next time you're at the Downtown Farmers Market, make Cinder Pig your first stop. It'll give you sustenance so you're happy and energized as you shop from local vendors and people-watch. Make sure to also visit them at the Craft Lake City DIY Festival August 13, 14 and 15 at the Utah State Fairpark. Check them out on Instagram @cinderpigslc to learn about specials and keep track of their schedule all year long.

SLC Downtown Farmers Market

Saturday 8 a.m.-1 p.m. 801.654.6564 • cinderpig.com





The items in Sergio Hernandez' shop, Brainstorm Gaming, are a wondrous collection that bridge the gap between gaming fantasy and hand-crafted reality. Hardcore and casual paper-and-dice gamers alike will find that Brainstorm has something in their catalog to suit their tastes, and Sergio helps this process by offering a range of customizations for many of the products he creates. "Honestly, the fun part is trying to match it to what the buyer imagines it being used for," Hernandez says. Some of these bespoke options include staff length, custom text in bound journals, and, "Soon," he adds, "color."

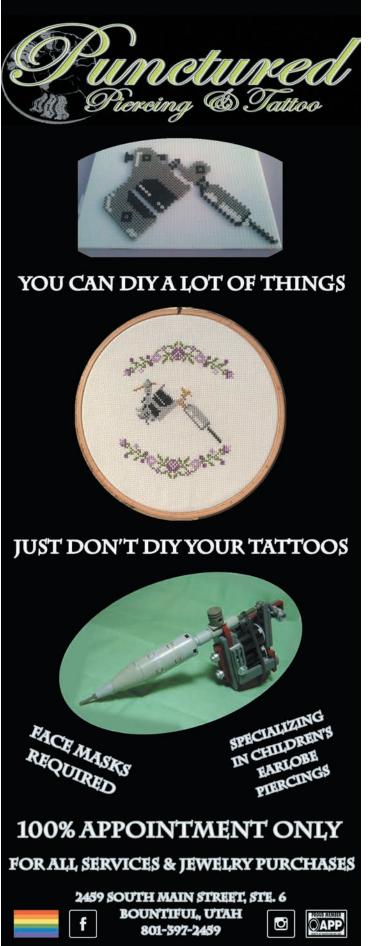
Brainstorm Gaming's Litchenberg Electric Walking Stick is of particular interest. Customization is primarily for comfort, since each staff is already different from the next. The Litchenberg process allows Sergio to create patterns

GAMING

of lightning-like channels along the length of the stick by running electricity from one end to the other during its genesis. The dark char of the process is set in stark contrast to the natural colors and highlights of the wood. Sergio says, "Without exaggeration, each pattern is as unique as the grain of the wood it's on—to try to control it would be impossible."

When asked about *Brainstorm Gaming*'s next move, Hernandez makes it clear that dedication to craft is a high priority. "I have thought of a few different directions. I'm very open minded—I just want to make sure I do the next idea justice," he says. Check out the Litchenberg Electric Walking Stick and more impassioned woodworking at *etsy.com/shop/BrainstormGaming*.

-Ben Bigelow









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Craft Lake City artisan and Owner of Etsy store ScarabDolls, Alexandra **Sheffer**, reimagines plastic dolls and gives them an updated look. These beautiful and fantastical dolls are given life through Sheffer's meticulous details and design work, from intricately glazed eye colors and makeup to miniature clothing and accessories that mimic the character the doll is based on.

With a background in art and sewing, Sheffer began making her dolls about a year and half ago after stumbling across a doll someone fashioned after Blue Diamond and Blue Pearl from Steven Universe. "I searched for where to buy it, and that's when I discovered someone had actually made it, [which is] what got me intrigued," says Sheffer.

Sheffer creates and models her dolls after television and film but takes

a special interest in ancient Egypt. One of her favorites she created was inspired by Nefertiti and showcases her iconic headdress. Other favorites include a faun doll with mint-colored skin, baby-pink fur and big blue eyes as well as an Egyptian mummy with gold jewelry, bandages and decayed flesh.

Though mostly coming up with her own designs, Sheffer takes custom work as well (just not recreations of other artists' dolls). The process to create a doll is about one to four weeks and includes removing the factory paint and hair, sanding down the body and finishing with multiple layers of sealant.

To view Sheffer's work and place an order, check out her Etsy shop ScarabDolls and Instagram

-Jamie Christensen





Mel Martinez's shop, Aqua Underwear, offers boxer briefs customized for every body. "[We] take into account your measurements and between-the-leg needs by offering a variety of gusset (crotch space) style options," says Martinez of their inclusivity mantra.

Concerning how the business began, Martinez says, "I'm pretty particular about the way clothes fit, especially underwear ... so I started experimenting with making my own. The more I got into handmade underwear, the more friends-many of them queer-shared their underwear frustrations with standard sizing and gendered underwear options."

Being a queer, Chicanx sewist, Martinez was determined to broaden inclusivity efforts, especially in lingerie. "Being a queer, Brown person myself,

having my own business gives me a beautiful opportunity to prioritize and highlight folks in that community," Martinez says. "We also have a 20% undie discount and even some pay-what-you-can options through the Aqua Underwear QTI/BIPOC Community Program!"

To place an order, go to aquaunderwearslc.com and fill out a custom form. Sizes range approximately from 3XS-5XL (with efforts to expand next year), and the briefs are offered in different colors of cotton. lace and mesh.

Martinez says, "eventually, we'll offer many different fun and exciting styles, like briefs, harnesses, thongs, absorbent undies, etc.—for all genders, of course." Stay up to date with their work through Instagram @aquaunderwear. –Jamie Christensen

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The Pho3nix Child makes music which affirms that all of life's struggles are unique opportunities for growth. Also known as Cassandra Houston, The Pho3nix Child is a rapper and poet based in Salt Lake City.

Though Houston began writing poetry and lyrics at 14, it took some time to confidently embrace their artistry. Along the way, family members—including hip-hop producer Martian Textilez—helped and mentored Houston as they became The Pho3nix Child. With their first official album, Vangrondelle, set to release on Aug. 28, The Pho3nix Child has grown into a source of strength and confidence for listeners who may need a reminder that the only constant is change. "One of my goals is to help make our scene more inclusive for femme artists, LGBTO+ artists and

artists who are considered taboo or alternative in the SLC hip-hop community," says Houston. "Unfortunately, some gender-based hierarchy still exists in the hip-hop scene." On recent releases, including the August 2020 track "Universe Song" and the April 2021 track "Obsession," The Pho3nix Child raps about being true to oneself and staying positive, always with a smooth and meditative cadence.

Vangrondelle is named for Houston's late grandmother. "She was my best friend and mother figure," says Houston. "This whole project will be dedicated to her." The Pho3nix Child's upcoming album is sure to emit the flowing confidence that comes with true acceptance of change. The Pho3nix Child's music is available at soundcloud.com/phoenixchildslc.

-Austin Beck-Doss





For Jacob T. Skeen, the music-making process has two key phases: experimenting freely, then capturing the unadulterated results.

Last year the Salt Lake City-based artist released his first full-length album, Death, Thou Shalt Die. During the recording process, Skeen played multiple instruments, and is also credited as the album's Mixing Engineer. "I made some strange decisions," says Skeen. For example, on one track, he connected two guitar amplifiers to an older lighting controller switch and was able to alternate between them depending on which notes he was playing. "I had an enjoyable time creating sounds that are hard to replicate, even though this process may be looked at as improper," he says.

Though Skeen was unable to tour in Italy and promote the album as

scheduled in 2020, he now plans to release a new 7" later this year on Salt Lake City's International Society of Rock 'n' Roll label. These upcoming tracks, which may include elements of spoken word, represent another round of Skeen's perpetual experimentation. "It is too easy these days to seek perfection and leave a song sounding lifeless," he says. "The more raw, the more mistakes, the more real it sounds to me."

As Skeen continues to explore the boundless forces of his creativity, he is shedding yet another personal limitation. "I always think I have to be able to recreate the recording of a song when I perform live," he says. "I want to be more open to creating and worry about the performances later." Find Jacob T. Skeen's music at jacobtskeen.bandcamp.com. -Austin Beck-Doss





Dino & Luigi and FreeMason Productions Present:

Lavender Lathers was established by 14-year-old Utah native Elizabeth Ssejinja. After Ssejinja was diagnosed with cancer in 2018, her family began to create homemade gifts for each other. "I decided to make soap. [I then] decided to make soap to raise money to give back to the charities that did so much to support me," she says. Ssejinja learned to make soap from pure experimentation. "I experimented [with] melting shavings from other bars of soap, but it didn't work," she says. "So, I bought glycerin soap, molds, colorants and started learning from there."

The ingredients in her soap come from a variety of glycerin bases like goat milk, lavender, shea butter, honey and plain glycerin. Additionally, Ssejinja also adds essential oils and safe colorants.

Her supply of assortments is quite endearing, too. "I have nearly a hundred different scents and over 40 molds," she says. Scented or unscented tie-dye mixes and soaps with small toys or necklaces inside are all available for purchase. What makes this business truly altruistic is the fact that Ssejinja gives back to her community by supporting charities such as Make-A-Wish and Ronald McDonald House. She says, "I feel it's necessary to give back as often as I can ... To show my appreciation for the support I received when I was sick with cancer." A true giver, Ssejinja's plans are to continue to find more charities and participate in markets and fundraisers. For more info, checkout her Instagram page, @lavenderlathers.

-Kassidy Waddell





MAX

CRAFTS

The future is now, and MaxCrafts can prove it with a 3D Pen. 10-year-old Max Moore uses a 3D pen to create an assortment of objects with the hopes of someday making his very own video game. Moore describes himself as a savvy gamer, and it shows through his creative energy and young consistency. A goofus like myself needed an explanation for how one would describe a "3D pen." Moore says it's similar to a 3D printer: "A 3D printer is a machine you can use to make objectsut [a pen] is artistic and crafty because you're the one doing the artwork instead of telling the machine what to do."

Moore began this project because he genuinely enjoyed the attention of his craft. He likes people admiring his work and wanted to share. "It costs money to make, so I started selling," he says. "3D pens interested me because it's like you are drawing and crafting at the same time—you draw in 3D and what you draw appears as a figure." Moore has always been an avid originator, even if it's disassembling pens to make custom straws as his toddler self did. He relishes other outlooks to use his passion like drawing, sewing "plushies" and making clay figurines. "I design characters for my video game I'm planning to make, too," he says. Check out Moore's website for his work (maxcrafts.bigcartel.com) and be sure to come down to his booth at the Craft Lake City DIY Festival! -Kassidy Waddell



With Aziza SLC, Menna Rashwan shares the culinary lineage of her Egyptian home. After learning that "sharing food is love and feeding people is a way to show love and care" from her mother and grandmother, Rashwan brought that gastronomic goodwill with her to Utah. "We couldn't find any authentic Egyptian food here!" she says. "It all started with the idea of bringing the same food experience we used to have in Egypt."

Now cooking out of Square Kitchen, Rashwan has evolved her love for Egyptian food into a unique blend of ideas and influences. She prepares classic dishes such as koshary (a rice-and-lentil dish with a tomato sauce), fattah (layered meat and bread) and pastry desserts like kunafa and baklava, honoring the traditional cooking processes while also updating the flavors and ingredients of each dish. "Koshary back in Egypt can be a heavy dish," she says. "It involves more deep frying, [and] mine is on the lighter side. I ... also add some spices to the koshary tomato sauce that aren't typically used, like cinnamon, which suits the American taste."

Along with the koshary, Aziza SLC's most popular item remains their kunafa cups. "I was so surprised by how much people here loved kunafa," Rashwan says. "Kunafa is one of the most famous Middle Eastern desserts, made with shredded phyllo dough, filled with custard and cheese and drizzled with orange blossom syrup. It's sweet and crispy and gooey."

Follow Aziza SLC on Instagram @azizaslc for more information on product availability and ordering.

-Audrey Lockie



THE CURVY SPOON

The Curvy Spoon is a small-batch, artisanal mustard company owned and operated by Valerie Koonce. "People either love it or hate it," Koonce says, "but mustard is a little magical too." With simple ingredients, she is able to create a wide range of options, from her personal favorite, the ALTA (with red wine, cranberry, and shallots), to the best-selling LOUISVILLE (with horseradish). Her husband's experience in the beer industry helped them experiment with different blends using beer, cider and wine. "The flavor possibilities are endless," Koonce says.

What started as a hobby to make fun vinaigrettes for lunch quickly grew into a crowdfunded operation that had people ordering from around the world. With the help of her family, Koonce was able to keep her passion project going. For the Craft

Lake City DIY Festival, The Curvy Spoon will feature the SUGAR-HOUSE (a sweet honey blend) and the ALTA. Koonce proudly uses local Utah honey, and as she uses small jars, she is also able to create special order blends by request.

The creative chef knows mustard can be used in anything. "My favorite recipe is grilled honey mustard salmon using our MONTEREY flavor that is made with fresh herbs," Koonce says. Though a small local company, there is no doubt that Koonce's mustard will someday join the over six thousand mustards on display at the National Mustard Museum in Wisconsin. You can find The C urvy Spoon online at thecurvyspoon.com or on Facebook @thecurvyspoon and Instagram @the.curvy.spoon.

-Kara Dempsey

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YOUNGASSNICO

PHOBIA THE GREATEST

MOD

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In the eastern suburbs of Salt Lake City lies an unassuming shopping strip, and within it lives a time machine that takes you everywhere you could want to go at once—Abode Vintage. It's an organized mix of the old, the used and the magnificent. Abode was established 19 years ago when the owner, Miriam Sabir, fell in love with the tangible gifts of yesterday and chose to share her passion with her community.

Abode Vintage started as a passion project between Sabir and her sister and originally sold only home goods products. But after Sabir's sister amicably left the business, Miriam evolved the shop into one that sold not only home products but also clothes, jewelry and accessories. Abode's transformation gave way for the store

to become the eclectic and unique shop it is today. Furthermore, Sabir says the transition resulted in her customer's ability to finally "dress as fresh, bold and exciting as their home decor!" Today, the Abode Vintage time machine remains in the same place with the same impactful intention of finding "carefully curated vintage with an inclination towardsthe fun, funky and functional," says Sabir. By supporting stores like Abode, you are carrying on someone else's story. As Sabir says, "Vintage accessories have something to say about the owner and lend an interest that can be passed through generations." Abode is a treasure box full of the items you never knew you wanted—perhaps I should say "needed."

-Theadora Soter





KISSING

Kissing Whiskey Vintage is nothing if not a labor of love. Kristen Wolfe, the Owner of the shop, has had a passion for re-used goods practically their whole life. Wolfe attributes their career aspirations to their two "frugal" grandmothers who refused to buy anything at full price, causing Wolfe to spend a hefty amount of time "combing yard sales, thrift bins and highlighting newspaper ads," they say.

As time went on, Wolfe got a full-time job and transformed their love for vintage into a "side hustle," but soon it became more than that. They say, "I decided Kissing Whiskey Vintage wouldn't be a side hustle ... I was going to really dedicate myself to making it happen." Over the last year, Wolfe has created a

noteworthy social media presence for themselves featuring their carefully curated portfolio of unique glassware and "maximalist" clothing. The one caveat that applies to all of Wolfe's findings is one of age: "If it's 1999 or older, it's vintage. My saying is, 'If it can legally buy a drink, it's old enough'," they say. But beyond that, anything that's shiny, unique and has an artistic flair goes.

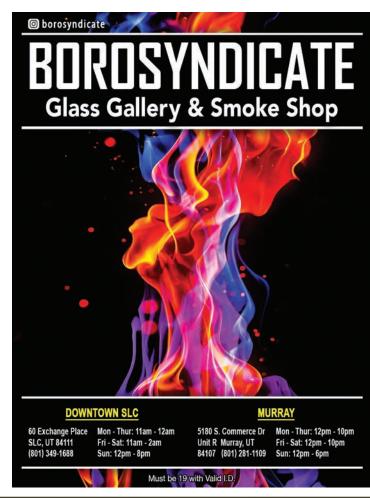
Currently, Kissing Whiskey Vintage is selling a variety of treasures through social media and at pop-up markets across the Salt Lake area. Wolfe plans to open a physical Kissing Whiskey Vintage shop in Downtown SLC in the fall of this year.

-Theadora Soter





PARTICIPANTS AT THE UTAH ARTS FESTIVAL



# 2021 AVENUES STREET FAIR SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 PTH AVENUE BETWEEN D AND I STREETS 9:00A.M. TO 6:00P.M. UTA STREETS SCHEDULED TO PERFORM: Emily Hicks • Gaylen Young • High Nowhere • Music & Arts Collective • SLAM: Salt Lake Academy of Music • The Silver Tongue Devil's Band • Wasatch Music Coaching Academy • Strange Medicine • Twisted Brother • Lisa & The Missing Pieces FREE ADMISSION and free all-day Children's Activity Area CANS BANK FEATURED ARTIST MARK WALTON http://arrofmarkwalton.com/

# SLUG picnic

### By Kelly Fernandez kf830513@gmail.com

August's *SLUG Picnic* lineup features youngassNICO, **Phobia the Greatest** and **MOD**. The show takes place on Aug. 28 at 230 S. 500 West in Salt Lake City. Tickets are \$5 with picnic seating at 5 p.m. and music from 6–9 p.m. *SLUG Picnic* is sponsored by *Daily Rise Coffee, Dented Brick Distillery, Gem City Fine Foods, GREENbike, Les Madeleines, Sparrow Electric and Squatters.* 

youngassNICO grew up near Baisley Park in South Jamaica, Queens, the home of the artist's love for music. He started listening to music in '98 thanks to \$5 bootlegged CDs from the Rite Aid parking lot. Nico grew up in the era of Angie Martinez, Funkmaster Flex, DJ Kay Slay, Jay Electronica and more. He would walk around the block and immerse himself in the music pouring out of apartments and cars, spreading the word that 50 Cent was making it big. "As much as I like the new shit, I am so knitted in that gritty New York rap where your bars have to mean something," he says. "I remember freestyling in circles back in the day where if your bars were not correct, you couldn't hang."

Nico opened an AOL CD his mom got in the mail and discovered **Outkast**'s *Stankonia*. Nico wrote down **Andre 3000**'s verses and replaced the words with his own, forming a personal collection fraps.

Nico relocated to St. George around his senior year, where he met **Josh** and **Ethan**. A mutual friend linked them up after recognizing their shared drive to



make and love music. After a few life changes and a few awkward open mics at *Jazzy's*, the trio made their way up to Salt Lake City. They maxed out a *Best Buy* card with a CD burner, a laptop and a mic and began making music in the city as **Swell Merchants**.

Nico likes the way he could go to the gas station for beer and run into friends—gallivanting around the city, checking out what's happening at *Urban Lounge*, getting \$0.50 wings at *Poplar Street Pub* and all of the other B.C. things (before COVID, before child). "Doing stuff around town like little, local bullshit shows, doing arts fests, just doing the grind of trying to make it in an untapped city is what inspired the music," he says.

youngassNICO set the bar high in 2021 with his single "MICHAEL FLIGHT," his EP 2RIPE and a music video for "WISHLIST." After experiencing major life changes in 2019 and 2020, he says, "I just had to get it out. Once Ethan passed, I was just in my head and trying to work my way back to normalcy. It felt good to listen to those songs again, to think about the music from a different perspective."

A part of Nico was left behind in Ethan's game room, the spot where the

two would outrap each other as they played video games. With the loss of that driving motivation, Nico found support through his friends checking in with him, making sure he knew that he was still wanted out there and he could still make it happen. He is now motivated by making Ethan proud: "If he were here, what would make him make that nasty face?" Nico says.

Of working through the grieving process, Nico says, "Just keep going, take the advice of the songs." "NO QUESTION," "RELINQUISH" and "FEAR" from 2RIPE include spoken clips from various media that supported him through his time of loss. As you listen to this EP, notice the cover art beautifully displaying a collage of Ethan.

If you can't get enough of youngassNICO's fresh content, you can look forward to a new music video for fan-favorite "MONEY MIND," written during the 2020 summer protests. You can see youngassNICO at *SLUG Picnic* on August 28 at the *SLUG HQ*. If you miss it, you will most likely find youngassNICO spending time with his friends and family, playing *Super Smash Bros*. and listening to **Victoria Monét**.



Phobia the Greatest walks into the studio and listens to a beat. In 10 seconds, she knows if she can record to it. "I get in the booth, I get on the mic, I sing how I feel," she says. Her craft, once manifested as poetry in composition books, has now erupted into an art form that leaves behind writing and comes up with songs on the spot. The contagious confidence of her high-spirited sound reflects the energy of this musical process.

Years ago, you would have found the independent musician around Salt Lake City, mainly in the West Valley area. Now you can find her playing pool party shows near the ocean in L.A. or filming a music video with Royal & The Serpent, seizing the opportunity to collaborate within the capital of artistry and networking. She got a new car and a new apartment and continues to take initiative to make everything around her the greatest. "I like having creative control and having control in general," she says. "Having control of what music sounds like, what image is, what it's like when I drop something. I like the control to drop things and make videos when I want to instead of depending on a label."

She and her team put in all the work on their own. There is no label, no management and no investors—everything put out by Phobia comes from her own time and money. The extra work pays off, giving listeners the raw flavor of Phobia the Greatest as she intends it. "I do what I want," she says. "I don't like being told what to do—I don't want to be told how to dress [and] I like to be myself."

As Phobia proceeds to go harder than ever, her music continues to set her apart from one single genre and attracts different audiences. Although she feels her rap music is more popular, there are nothing but good things for herself and musicians alike who create within multiple genres. "That's the thing about making art—each genre is a different emotion. My music is a reflection of how I'm feeling," she says.

Phobia's newest single, "Love Me," portrays her intoxicating and explosive feeling of pure rage. This song reads like a love letter dripping with the good energy Phobia sends off to one of her main inspirations: all of the haters. "When people do something different, [other people] hate on it, but they have to understand that's their art," she says. What Phobia's haters neglect to comprehend is that their energy of downplay has only fueled her path of purpose. She aims to make people feel good and get back into their groove. She says, "I want to lift others' energy up and have a positive impact in the time that I have here."

Hate is just an outlier in life, which is ultimately what inspires Phobia. With all of these new and invigorating changes, it may be no surprise for listeners to learn that "Love Me" is just a sample from her next EP, called Taking What is Mine. "This next album is going to go even harder," she says of the release.

"Love Me" prepares you to show up bossed up and is just the beginning of the adrenaline pump to be anticipated with the new album. Fans can expect Phobia to share different sides of herself and different sounds than what listeners are used to. In the meantime, be looking out for Phobia's music video for "Love Me," coming sometime this month.

You can see Phobia the Greatest at SLUG Picnic on Aug. 28 at the SLUG HQ. If you miss it, you may likely find Phobia listening to her own jams as she eats out at all her vegan favorites, wearing her new jeans with that to-die-for vertical split at the ankle.



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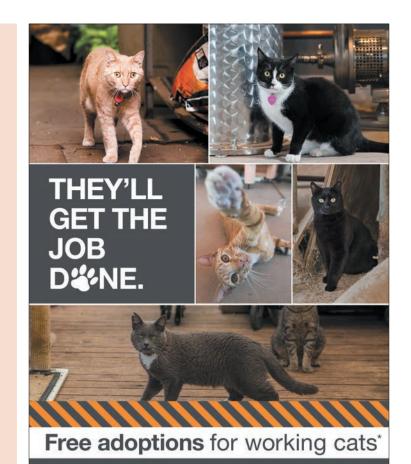
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-Amanda MaKay Stephens Skinworks Client, Google Review

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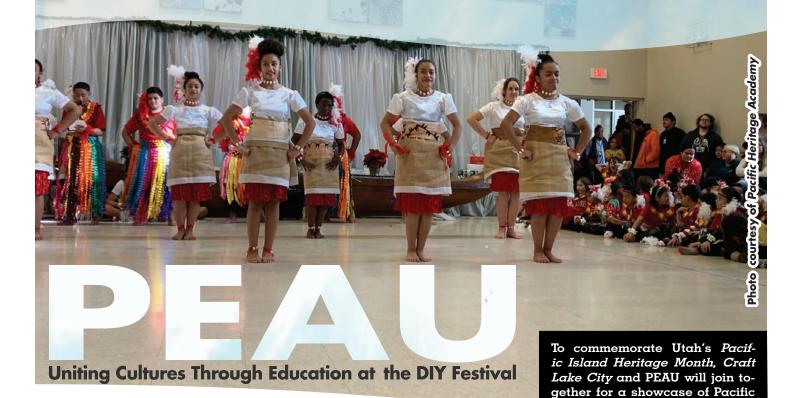
# HELPER

ARTS FESTIVAL

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### By McCall Mash • mccallmash@gmail.com

With nearly 50,000 Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) residing in Utah, Salt Lake City has a larger overall proportion of NHPIs than any other city in the continental U.S. Despite this fact, Susi Feltch-Malohifo'ou, Co-founder of Pacific Island Knowledge 2 Action Resources (PIK2AR), says many NHPI community members face negative stereotypes and perpetual, harmful cycles.

All of this factored into the founding of PIK2AR in 2015 to help combat violence, create an economic impact and preserve culture in Utah's NHPI communities. Years later, after an experience that Feltch-Malohifo'ou says helped her realize many Pacific Island artists "didn't know any of the mainstream art resources," the PEAU (Pasifika Enriching Arts of Utah) was formed as a subsidiary organization of PIK2AR. It assists artists of all media types—including both traditional and modern styles—in achieving their goals and provides them with development opportunities. Additionally, PEAU hosts the Utah Pacific Island Film Series and PEAU Literary to highlight the written word; it's also exploring fashion and music opportunities.

"We are naturally dancers, singers, guitarists," Feltch-Malohifo'ou says. "It was much more positive than trying to be an NFL player or gang member and all of these negative stereotypes, so [PEAU is] really to ground ourselves and our community and our future to something positive in being Pacific Islander."

Now, during Utah's Pacific Island Heritage Month, PEAU has partnered with Craft Lake City for its 13th Annual DIY Festival. Amy Stocks, Craft Lake City's Community Inclusion Coordinator, says the two organizations worked together to recruit "artisans, makers, performers and foodies" from the NHPI community for a Pacific Island Heritage Day (Sat. August 14). Festival-goers will be able to participate in cultural stations—including performing artists, traditional food and other arts and crafts/DIY projects—that represent 10–12 cultures from Salt Lake's diverse NHPI community.

"Pasifika Enriching Arts of Utah and Craft Lake City have been wanting to work together to highlight creatives within the robust Pacific Islander community in Salt Lake for years," Stocks says. "This year, [we were] able to come together through many brainstorming sessions and creative solutions from both organizations. As Craft Lake City grows its diversity and inclusion efforts, they wanted to include more representation from different communities in SLC. August is Pacific Island Heritage Month, so this collaboration made perfect sense and everyone was on board!"

Feltch-Malohifo'ou added that it provides an opportunity to educate Salt Lake City's non-NHPI community members about the Pacific Islands' different regional cultures including Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia—all of which are present in Utah. She goes on to say that she believes education

will help unite people and reduce issues related to racism, and the DIY Festival was the best place to do it. "When we find commonality in art and music or anything in crafts, then our differences melt away, and that's really been our [goal]—let's find these commonalities and let's build on those and bring our communities together and get to this humanity together."

Island culture and art at the 13th

Annual DIY Festival.

And for Craft Lake City, this collaboration with PEAU is part of a larger goal to better represent all cultures within the city. "It is important for arts organizations like Craft Lake City to be diverse, inclusive and accessible to all communities that make up Salt Lake City," Stocks says. "By collaborating with organizations who represent specific cultures, Craft Lake City is able to reach creatives and community members that they might not otherwise."

Feltch-Malohifo'ou says she knows the partnership will continue to grow in the future, and as it does, it will only become a better tool in uniting people. "We want to take you back to finding these commonalities, to reduce the race issues we have, so there are multi-level reasons that we wanted to participate [in the DIY Festival] and why this is a good fit," she says.

For more information about the Pacific Islander Heritage Day at the DIY Festival, please visit craftlakecity.com/diy-festival.

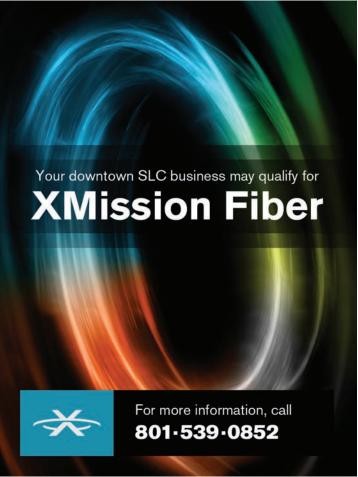












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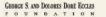












# CRAFT LAKE CATUS DIU FEST

### LUNC CITS S DIS FC

### **ARTISAN WORKSHOPS**

By SLUG Staff | info@slugmag.com

From the art of coffee tasting to bookbinding to metalworking, there's a workshop for everyone at the 13th Annual Craft Lake City DIY Festival—yes, even if you don't think you're artsy! Sit down with a variety of talented local artisans and get ready to

soak up their creative knowledge on August 13, 14 and 15. Read below to find a workshop that strikes your fancy, and make sure to sign up for these and other workshops by visiting the *Craft Lake City* website at 24tix.com/venues/diy-festival-at-the-utah-state.

### My Leather Legacy Hand-Bound Leather Journals Workshop with Amanda Parramoure

*SLUG*: Have you taught a workshop before? If so, tell us about your previous workshops!

Parramoure: I've been teaching bookbinding for almost five years now. I moved leather into my workshops quickly because of how classy and luxurious it is. I'm also branching out to teach the visually stunning "caterpillar binding" this year and am so excited.

*SLUG*: What project will you be teaching at the *DIY Festival* this year?

**Parramoure**: This will be our longstitch binding "artisan journal." We interweave

some gorgeous papers that will personalize the book to the maker and then stitch them into our leather covers. Attendees will be equipped to make more journals in their choice of materials going forward or refill the cover from this book in the future.

*SLUG*: How would you prepare individuals interested in taking your workshop?

**Parramoure**: Come with a hungry and observant mind, as it is somewhat detail oriented, but not overwhelming by any means. Be ready to connect to your project, with other makers and with the awesome but lesser-known world of book arts!





### **Coffee Tasting with Brandon Despain of Caffe Ibis**

SLUG: How would you describe Caffe lbis? Despain: Caffe lbis is a coffee roasting company focused on sourcing and producing specialty coffee in a socially conscious and sustainable way. That framework has been instrumental in focusing my creativity and passion for coffee. Through that lens I have learned to create amazing coffee for all tastes.

*SLUG*: What will you be teaching at your workshop?

**Despain**: I will be teaching the basics of tasting coffee. Knowing how to taste and what you are tasting can open a whole new world and allow you to explore new coffees and flavors with intention.

The World Coffee Research Foundation has created a sensory lexicon that objectively defines flavor. Using the lexicon, we will cover several of the basic flavors and [a] few specific ones to apply that knowledge while tasting coffee.

*SLUG*: How is this workshop approachable for beginners?

**Despain**: Tasting notes and communicating specific flavors can be intimidating because it is subjective. This workshop will help folks unlock their innate ability to describe what they are tasting by objectively defining basic flavors.

### Forged-Metal Ginkgo Leaf Earrings Workshop with **Cynthia Wainscott**

SLUG: How would you describe your work and your brand as an artist?

Wainscott: My designs are a reflection of my self-awareness, an interpretation of my culture and traditions and the way I have to connect to nature and tell stories. I am a metalsmith who incorporates forging, sculpting, carving and lots of experimenting that result[s] in jewelry made with silver, copper, bronze and ethically sourced stones, many from my country, Peru.

SLUG: What project will you be teaching at your workshop?

Wainscott: I'll be showing the hammering

techniques to help create forged ginkgo leaf earrings.

SLUG: What about this project makes the workshop approachable for beginners? Wainscott: When I started making jewelry I didn't have much to start-just a few materials and almost no tools, so I had to get creative. That's what I want to teach everyone who ventures to take this workshop—you don't need much to create something beautiful ... that you can be proud of! I want them to explore and to be open to unconventional ways that will help them start their journey into jewelry making.





### Botanical Bundle-Dyed Silk Bandanas with Roxanne Vigos of Sago Adornment

SLUG: Have you taught a workshop before? If so, tell us about your previous

Vigos: I have been teaching natural dye workshops since 2016. I have learned so much from my students about how they absorb information. I always aim to give a fully immersive experience as an instructor because that's my favorite feeling in workshops, too.

*SLUG*: What project will you be teaching at your workshop?

Vigos: I am teaching one of my favorite methods for dyeing cloth called "bundle dyeing." We will be making beautiful, naturally dyed silk bandanas.

*SLUG*: What about this project makes the workshop approachable for beginners? Vigos: In the bundle dye workshop, we will be using a variety of materials that give color [to] cloth. A bandana is a perfect size to learn how to wrap and bundle as it's very manageable. You will get a peek into understanding mordants, dyestuff and different fiber types. It's a great invitation to explore natural dye in a bite-size piece.

### **Botanical Burn Wands with Carli Miller of Wild Meraki Creations**

SLUG: How would you describe your work and your brand as an artist?

Miller: Wild Meraki is a small-batch plant potion and paper studio offering ritually crafted products and workshops/ ceremonies to integrate more intention into your life. I hope to offer safe spaces for the community to cultivate creativity, love, connection and education in purposeful ways to interact with the beneficial aspects of plants.

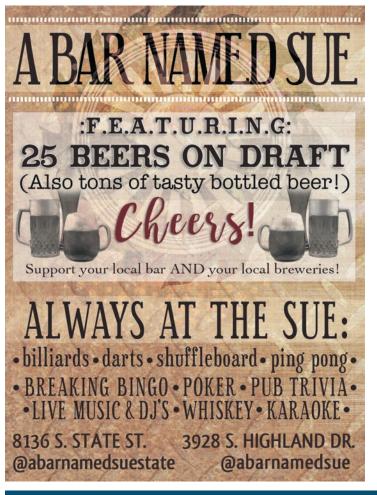
*SLUG*: What project will you be teaching at the *DIY Festival* workshop?

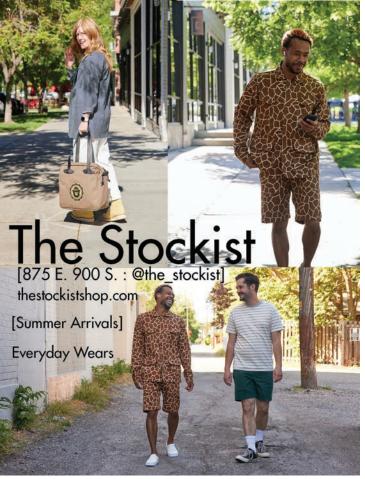
Miller: I will be teaching a botanical burn wand workshop. I will be guiding the class and assisting in tying their intentions into a beautiful wand of sacred plants, flowers and crystals. They will learn about the sacred art of smoke cleansing, clearing your home and aura [and] the different properties and benefits that each herb offers.

SLUG: How would you prepare individuals interested in taking your workshop?

Miller: The best way to prepare is to come with an open heart and mind. There is no wrong way to create a botanical burn wand—it can be used no matter what it looks like.







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his year, local hard rock/metal festival *Crucialfest* will celebrate its 10th anniversary with *Crucialfest* 10 at *Metro Music Hall*, Aug. 26–29. The festival has become an institution, a behemoth that welcomes everyone. This is especially true this year. "I want to get people out—we've been stuck at home with cabin fever," says Jarom Bischoff, founder of *Crucialfest*. "[With it] being year 10, I wanted to make it free. People can just come and check out the festival to see what it is."

Over the years, Bischoff's perspective on curating the event has evolved. "I want to have fun and relax, talk with friends and make [new] personal ... friends. I want to watch bands without distraction," Bischoff says. "Running around setting up with artists [and] dealing with securities left me craving a simpler experience." Nevertheless, his intentions are still to offer a monster of a show each night with bands that deliver high-energy performances. "When I book bands, I don't mess around," Bischoff says. Crucialfest will unleash eight bands a night, "bands that have ties here, also bands that have a solid showing when they come here."

Friday will highlight women-fronted bands such as Witch Mountain, Blackwater Holylight and Hippie Death Cult. "Any way to increase diversity is a good thing and an important pillar of *Crucialfest*," Bischoff says. He's also excited for Thursday night for some local reunion shows, which include the bands Eons and Reviver.

Everything has an origin story. Bischoff's *Crucialfest* story comes simply from a love of music and the culture that surrounds it. "After being in a touring band [and] starting a family, I wanted to bring the adventure here, bring my friends here," Bischoff says. After putting on a festival for 10 years, some of his satisfaction comes from simply how much the festival means to people and how vendors are still 100% supportive.

Crucialfest 10 is upon us, and along with a free fest and killer bands, Founder Jarom Bischoff is excited to introduce the new Crucialfest merch line, Crucialthreads.

Bischoff heralds that there's a particularly salient community of show-goers at *Crucialfest* and encourages people to make friends while there. Moreover, Bischoff's best advice for the festival is to "have fun, enjoy yourself, be festive," he says. "Come with an attitude of respect. Respect artists, respect staff—tip your bartenders. Anytime you come with an attitude of respect, it elevates the event."

Of *Metro Music Hall*, Bischoff says, "The sound system is amazing, the lighting is amazing, the hospitality amazing. We will be opening the patio to the parking lot to have food out there and take your drinks." Additionally, Bischoff underscores the incredible vendors attached to the event. "At the *Metro*, on the left where all the booths are, we will have vendors like *Graywhale* music. We will also have other vendors selling everything from local art [to] hot sauce to underwear."

A new element of this year's event is Crucialthreads, a clothing line that will run year-round. "All the money from Crucialthreads will be put back into the festival to help sustain the event," Bischoff says. "I want to work with local artists, bands, nonprofits, and partners to create unique merch that supports everyone involved." Artists Paden Bischoff, Kevin Bowen and Brandon Voeller will contribute, as well as other local artists. "Expect to see shirts, hoodies, hats, shorts and more, along with show posters and merch from past Crucialfests." Bischoff will also be launching a web-store through Huge Brands, which will be a big part in helping Bischoff with his year-round goal.

Bischoff encourages people to show up early. He says, "Food will be available, so come hang out and get ready to enjoy the show." *Crucialfest 10* happens Aug. 26–29 with doors opening at 5 p.m. VIP tickets will also be available with guaranteed seating to see the show. "The VIP experience will be worth the money," Bischoff says.

Go to *crucialfest.com* for tickets, lineups and other information. "Every person that comes out matters," Bischoff says. "It's going to be a fucking party! It's going to be awesome."



# THE NEW SCENE

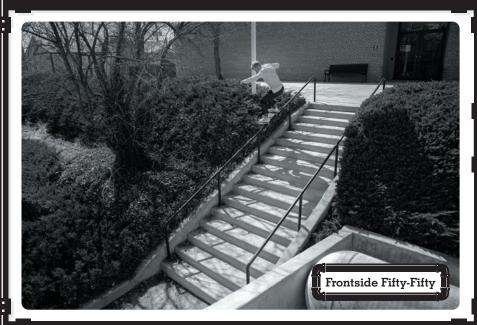
By Steven Goemaat @stopandgoemaat

**Photos by Weston Colton** 



There is a new skateboarding scene sweeping the nation—health and wellness, self branding, social media promotion and overall style are all part of this new culture. Jacob Taylor is a perfect representation of this shift in the skate world. Being a fitness fanatic and athlete, Taylor represents a new breed of skater in the scene. While maintaining a high level of physical fitness and a hard work ethic in the plumbing trade, Taylor is a powerhouse on the skateboard as well—powerful 360 flips are usually a warm-up trick for a burly front feeble or backside lipslide to follow. Taylor mixes technical grace with demanding board control to make up a style that is uniquely his own, representing hard work and dedication on and off the board. Read the full feature at SLUGMag.com.









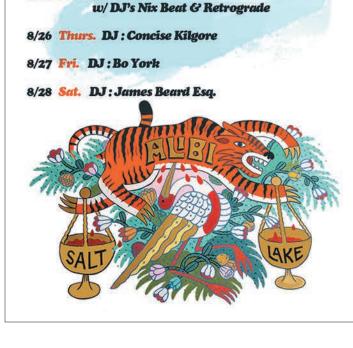




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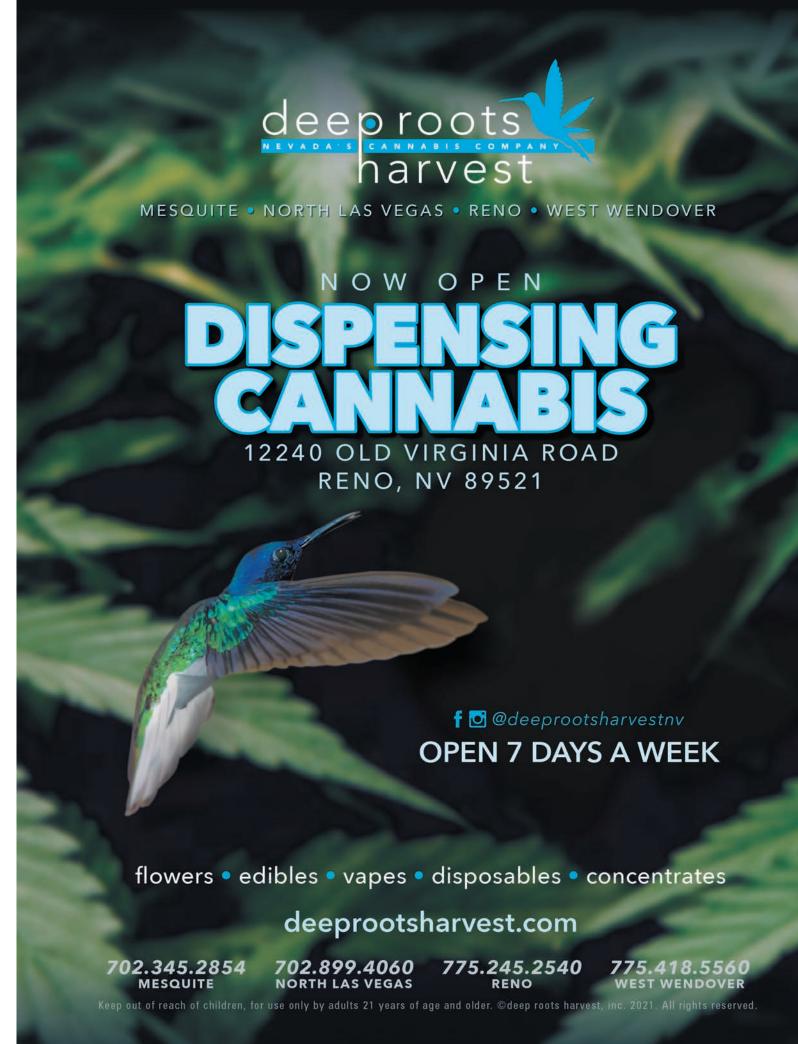
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