

# fineartsfundsamplere



See many sculptures when Pyramid Hill Sculpture Park is open for free for four hours starting at 10 a.m. Saturday.

## This year's sampler weekend aims for young professionals

**RODNEY WILSON | CIN WEEKLY CONTRIBUTOR**

When making weekend plans, many of us don't peruse the fine arts listings. It can be hard to get excited about live theater when this year's must-see movie is opening at the local megaplex, or to appreciate Van Gogh when Van Halen is in town.

This year's Fine Arts Fund Sampler Weekend is making an effort to pull our generation out of the movie theaters and away from our HDTVs, to get the earphones out of our ears and introduce us to the sights and sounds of the arts. And with a cost of free for every event, the price is certainly right.

For those unfamiliar with the sampler weekend, which is now in its 22nd year, Scott Provancher of the Fine Arts Fund describes the annual festival as "a showcase of all of the arts organizations that are here and in the region." With 130 events spread out over seven counties, this year's sampler weekend has something for everybody, everywhere - or everybody who's willing to come out and have a look.

### CHANGING GEARS

By Provancher's own admission, young professionals haven't always been the targeted audience for the sampler weekend.

"Particularly, this year, we tried to focus on events that are geared toward ... younger

professionals," Provancher says. He points to Friday evening as being filled with non-family events specifically geared toward younger audiences, and events this year are arranged so that audiences can make an evening out of them without driving all over town.

"One other thing that we tried to do this year, which we didn't do too good a job at in recent years, is cluster events where you can go to one particular area of the city and be able to go to multiple events."

The push to get you out to enjoy the arts is more than just lip service - this year, the Fine Arts Fund has joined forces with an organization whose sole purpose is to get young professionals out to partake in our area's many cultural opportunities.

"We're planning the entire weekend in partnership with Enjoy the Arts, which is totally focused on this demographic and getting them engaged in the arts," he says. "This is definitely a new push that we're trying to get more diversity in the kind of programs we have. We've primarily been focused on family events on the weekend, and Enjoy the Arts has really helped us to bring kind of a different perspective and to program events that are geared toward young professionals, both with families and without families."

With 130 events, it's hard to highlight just a few, but Provancher points to some that are worth checking out.



Bi-Okoto artists, seen here in a past performance, have frequently appeared in Fine Arts Fund Sampler Weekend events. This year, the group will stage an African version "dinner theater" with short works of African dance, music, drama and more at 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9 at Bi-Okoto Drum & Dance Theatre in Walnut Hills.

### THE GREAT AMERICAN TRAILER PARK MUSICAL

- 5:30 to 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 8
- Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati  
1127 Vine St., Over-the-Rhine
- 513-421-3555 or [www.cincyetc.com](http://www.cincyetc.com)

**Provancher:** "On Friday, the Over-the-Rhine Ensemble Theatre is doing performances of various scenes from *The Great American Trailer Park Musical*, which is playing that weekend. After that, Lynn Meyers, the artistic director, will talk about the musical and how it all comes together."

The name of this theater experience alone should get you chuckling, but with a description that promises an exploration of such topics as agoraphobia, '80s nostalgia, spray cheese, road kill and more, this promises to be more "Best Week Ever" than Andrew Lloyd Weber.

### CONNEXIONS ENSEMBLE

- 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 8
- Know Theatre  
1120 Jackson St., Over-the-Rhine
- 513-300-KNOW or [www.knowtheatre.com](http://www.knowtheatre.com)

**Provancher:** "(It's) a casual jazz band and an opportunity to hang out and lounge, hear some good music and be in the Know Theatre."

This is a great introduction to the Know space, wrapped up in a Swingers-style package. Listen to some smooth jazz while mingling with fellow Cincinnati loungers. Get comfortable in this popular venue for alternative theater.

### JUST THE FACTS

**WHAT:** The 22nd annual Fine Arts Fund Sampler Weekend

**WHEN:** Feb. 8-10

**WHERE:** 130 events spread across seven counties in and around Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky

**PRICE:** Free

**CONTACT:** 513-871-2787 or [www.fineartsfund.org](http://www.fineartsfund.org); download the full schedule at [www.fineartsfundsamplere.com](http://www.fineartsfundsamplere.com)

### PYRAMID HILL SCULPTURE PARK

- 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9
- 1763 Hamilton-Cleves Road (Ohio 128), Hamilton
- 513-887-9514 or [www.pyramidhill.org](http://www.pyramidhill.org)

**Provancher:** "Pyramid Hill Sculpture Park in Hamilton is going to be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for free on Saturday, and that's just an amazing park and an activity that is great for any age."

Great for either strolling through with a sweetie or driving through in the comfort of your car, Pyramid Hill and its 265 acres of three-dimensional artwork is a great way to take in some art. If the regular \$5 admission has ever kept you away, then this free afternoon is for you.