

ENTERTAINMENT

SparkCon: An Itinerary Kristen Gallagher, Staff Writer



photo by Rachel Strombeck,
from <http://www.sparkcon.com/sparks/artspark/>

Beginning Thursday, September 16, SparkCon will be taking over downtown Raleigh. SparkCon, you say? What is that? Well, here's an overview.

This festival is the physical embodiment of an idea that the NC Triangle is "the creative hub of the South" – a phrase coined by many of the thinkers behind the first SparkCon in 2006. Even now, the organizers of SparkCon still refer to themselves as "a loose association open to any passionate individual or group who wants to get involved" (from the SparkCon website.) The event lasts three days every mid-September and pulls together all sorts of people for specific sections of the festival, called "sparks." There is a spark for everything - this year, there is even a CircusSpark. There is a great emphasis on grassroots organizational elements, and the uniqueness of each spark as well as the whole festival is proof of that.

SparkCon's goal of putting Raleigh on the cultural map hasn't gone unnoticed recently; North Carolina Art See, a new magazine just for NC arts, reported in its "Some like it Hot" article that SparkCon had "1,100 performers" last year. In the same article, Art Stone interviewed Aly Khalifa, one of the founders, about his work with the event. "Back in 2005, (it was) remarked that Raleigh wasn't developed around a river, but everyone thought we were a creative place to be, so why don't we claim that?" Khalifa noted. From then on, he was committed to making SparkCon one of the most diverse events for the arts in the country.

In addition to the new circus element, IdeaSpark will be unveiled. IdeaSpark is an offshoot idea based on Pecha Kucha, which is Japanese for chit-chat and refers to a speedy presentation style. Presenters will have six minutes and forty seconds to present an idea they have. Presenters this year are artists, architects, programmers, designers, and others in several more disciplines. The ideas haven't been released yet, but based on the presenter list and websites of the presenters, it looks like many ideas will focus on design, sustainability, younger generations, public relations, and Raleigh's development.

Meredith can also – and has for the past few years – get involved with SparkCon. Last year, then-junior Katelyn Moore participated in the street painting section of ArtSpark. During Street Painting, teams and individuals are invited to design and illustrate an asphalt square on Fayetteville Street using only chalk. Katelyn managed to snag an award with her design. This year, many students from Meredith's own Artists Alliance will be participating in the event. You can check out their work on Saturday the 18th and Sunday the 19th, as chalking starts on Friday, ends Saturday, and is shown until Sunday.

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Art Openings at Meredith College



Last weekend, three art exhibits opened on campus. **DIRECTIONS:** native clay opened in the Frankie G. Weems Art Gallery, featuring ceramics created from hand-dug local clay. **Living in a Gaze**, an exhibition of photographs by John N. Wall, opened in Johnson Rotunda. And **Digital Imaging in Italy** opened in Gaddy-Hamrick, featuring student work from this summer's study-abroad program in Italy. (Photograph by Izzy Bouchard.)

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