



FotoFocus Has New Ideas, Big Plans for 2014 Event

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STEVEN ROSEN - JUN 4, 2014 8 AM

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This sounds eyebrow-raising — why is this citywide celebration/festival of photography and lens-based art unveiling plans in New York? (It's at a trendy restaurant/whiskey bar called Maysville, named after the Kentucky city.)

But it fits in with the event's growing ambitions as it evolves from the first FotoFocus in 2012. FotoFocus was founded and initially funded by Tom Schiff, himself a photographer as well as a former *CityBeat* owner. Mary Ellen Goeke is the Cincinnati-based executive director.

"I think FotoFocus could become a highly regarded support group for great shows around the world, something like Tanglewood is famous as a great music festival," says Kevin Moore, FotoFocus curator/artistic director. "It will always be identified with Cincinnati."

Moore — a New York-based independent photography curator hired last year — represents one important element of FotoFocus' growing ambitions. In 2012, FotoFocus promoted the fact that it was primarily a supportive umbrella for all the local organizations and venues that wanted to organize photography shows at the same time.

That's still an important part of FotoFocus, and there are some exciting shows being planned, especially by Cincinnati Art Museum's new associate photography curator Brian Sholis. But it's not the sole thrust. The fact that "Biennial" is now part of the formal name, like Moore's hiring, symbolizes the changes.

"'Biennial' also suggests there's a focused selection," Moore said earlier this year, while in Cincinnati to plan for a key FotoFocus show he is curating — *Blockbuster* by the Swiss-born, Berlin-based team of Taiyo Onorato and Nico Krebs. (He added some additional comments later.)

"As two years ago, there will be a lot of photography happening around the city, but 'biennial' specifies we're going to offer a selection of artists, experiences and of works," he said.

This year, that selection will have a contemporary orientation.

"One thing happening this year ago that didn't happen two years ago is [FotoFocus] has a theme," Moore said. "Each two years there will be a focus on some concept or idea and programming will be created around that. This year it will be photography in dialogue with other mediums, or photography as a collaborative act."

The show with Onorato and Krebs illustrates the latter. It is at the Contemporary Arts Center Sept. 12-Feb. 15. While they are photographers, they also use sound, film and sculpture in their shows, and there is sometimes a humorous element. This will be their first U.S. solo museum exhibit. Among work to be featured are photos they took on a U.S. road trip loosely modeled on one that the Swiss-born photographer Robert Frank took in 1955 that resulted in his landmark book *The Americans*.

Moore also is curating a show called *Stills* at Michael Lowe's downtown gallery.

Other shows that FotoFocus itself is organizing, with Moore curating, will occur around Washington Park and Over-the-Rhine. Indeed, that neighborhood can be considered this year's FotoFocus hub.

At two adjacent Over-the-Rhine spaces, the old Woodward Theater on Main Street and Lightborne on East 14th Street, the Moore-curated show *Screenings* will occur Oct. 8-12. It features 12 shorter films by different artists and premiered in April — under the FotoFocus Cincinnati aegis — at the Paris Photo Los Angeles event. There, the films were shown in themed pairs, some making use of slideshows, at a

Paramount Pictures soundstage. The artist-filmmakers are mostly contemporary, with several older films — including one from the 1960s by the late Peter Roehr and Bruce Conner — to establish historic precedent. Conner's *Report* is particularly celebrated for its early examination of how media affects our lives. He matched found and gathered footage with radio reports of President Kennedy's assassination. Moore sees *Screenings* as a critically important FotoFocus event. "Nobody has attempted before to show the relationship of film to photography in this way," he said.

FotoFocus will use Memorial Hall Oct. 8-12 for performances, film screenings and lectures in the theater space with a pop-up bookstore, café and lounge on the first floor.

And architect Jose Garcia is designing a large multi-use yurt for Biennial events in Washington Park.

"It's our symbolic bricks-and-mortar building," Moore said. "It's a tent-like structure, two or three layers of parachute canvas and outside is like a curtain that moves in the wind. Inside is stretched taut so you can project onto interior of the space. At night it will light up and be luminous."

CONTACT Steve Rosen: srosen@citybeat.com