



# Focus on This: FotoFocus Biennial

This month-long themed event celebrates lens-based art at venues all around town.



Fotofocus (photo: Ryan Elliott)

If you have an eye for photography or a great appreciation for lens-based arts, you will definitely want to add [FotoFocus](#) to your list of things to do when you're in town! I got the inside scoop from FotoFocus Executive Director, Mary Ellen Goeke, who is sharing tips and the heart behind the event that happens every other October.

## What is FotoFocus?

FotoFocus is the largest photography and lens-based biennial in America, creating a collective and collaborative experience between museums, artists, curators, and educators. The event

encompasses more than 90 projects at museums and galleries across Greater Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky, Dayton, and Columbus throughout the month of October.

## How did the event get started?

FotoFocus is a Cincinnati-based nonprofit arts organization that presents and supports photography exhibitions, symposiums, and lectures that was founded in 2010 by Tom Schiff, a Cincinnati-based photographer and the Curator of Photography at the [Cincinnati Art Museum](#), James Crump. The first FotoFocus Biennial was held in October 2012 and over 60,000 visitors attended the 50 exhibitions that were held in and around the Cincinnati region.

## How has the event evolved over the years?

Since its founding, FotoFocus has continued to grow and each of the subsequent Biennials has grown in attendance. Our last Biennial in 2016 had over 150,000 visitors!

## What makes this event unique?

FotoFocus is unique in that it partners with the many arts venues in the city (over 80 for this year's Biennial) and provides funding so that the venues can put together exhibitions and programs built around one theme.



Fotofocus (photo: Ryan Elliott)

# What advice would you give to someone attending FotoFocus for the first time?

My advice would be to look closely at our website [www.fotofocusbiennial.org](http://www.fotofocusbiennial.org) which provides a list and description of every exhibition. If you go to our site and click the “See Art” link you will see very diverse photography projects – historic and contemporary, regional artists and international artists – ideally something to appeal to anyone’s interest.

# How can someone make the most of their experience?

FotoFocus is fundamentally an educational organization. I think that attending the evening lectures and the day-long discussions allow someone to really become immersed in what is happening in photography today. Additionally, it allows an individual to meet the artists, curators, and educators who are participating in the Biennial.

# What is the advantage of purchasing a FotoFocus Passport?

The FotoFocus Passport provides free admission to all of the museums and art venues. So, for example, the cost of admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum or Taft Museum of Art would normally be \$12 for each, but by buying a \$25 passport you receive unlimited admission to those venues throughout the Month of October.

Participating venues include [Contemporary Arts Center](#), [Taft Museum of Art](#), [Mercantile Library](#), [Weston Art Gallery](#), [Washington Park](#), [21c Museum Hotel](#), [The Carnegie](#), [Northern Kentucky University](#), and more.

Additionally, the passport provides access to all the opening events at the Contemporary Arts Center and the day-long program of panel discussions and the performance at [Memorial Hall](#) on October 6, 2018.

You will also receive a catalog and map brochure detailing all of the events.