



MAGGIE VILLEGAS

Carly Bales is part of the EMP collective's vast multimedia project based on Eduardo Galeano's "Genesis" epic describing the creation of the modern world.

Inside the Fridge, a harvest of art

Month-long festival showcases a bumper crop of creativity

BY LAVANYA RAMANATHAN

This month, Barracks Row's edgy art space the Fridge is interrupting its regularly scheduled shows with something you can chew on: "Fresh Produce."

The name of the annual festival is a play on "the fridge" but also tells you what you'll find at the gallery all month: emerging artists whose work has yet to be presented in a gallery; intersections of theater and visual art; and films and projects that just needed the space to come to fruition. Last year's inaugural fest was strictly performance-based, but this year the festival has broadened its mission to include film and visual art. Every few days from Saturday through Sept. 2, a new troupe will move into the gallery, each working in its own media.

"These are the best artists working in D.C. today, in the sense of emerging art collectives," says assistant gallery director Emma Fisher, who helped put together "Fresh Produce." What gallery visitors should expect, she says, is a breadth of work that will include poetry, theater and performance art.

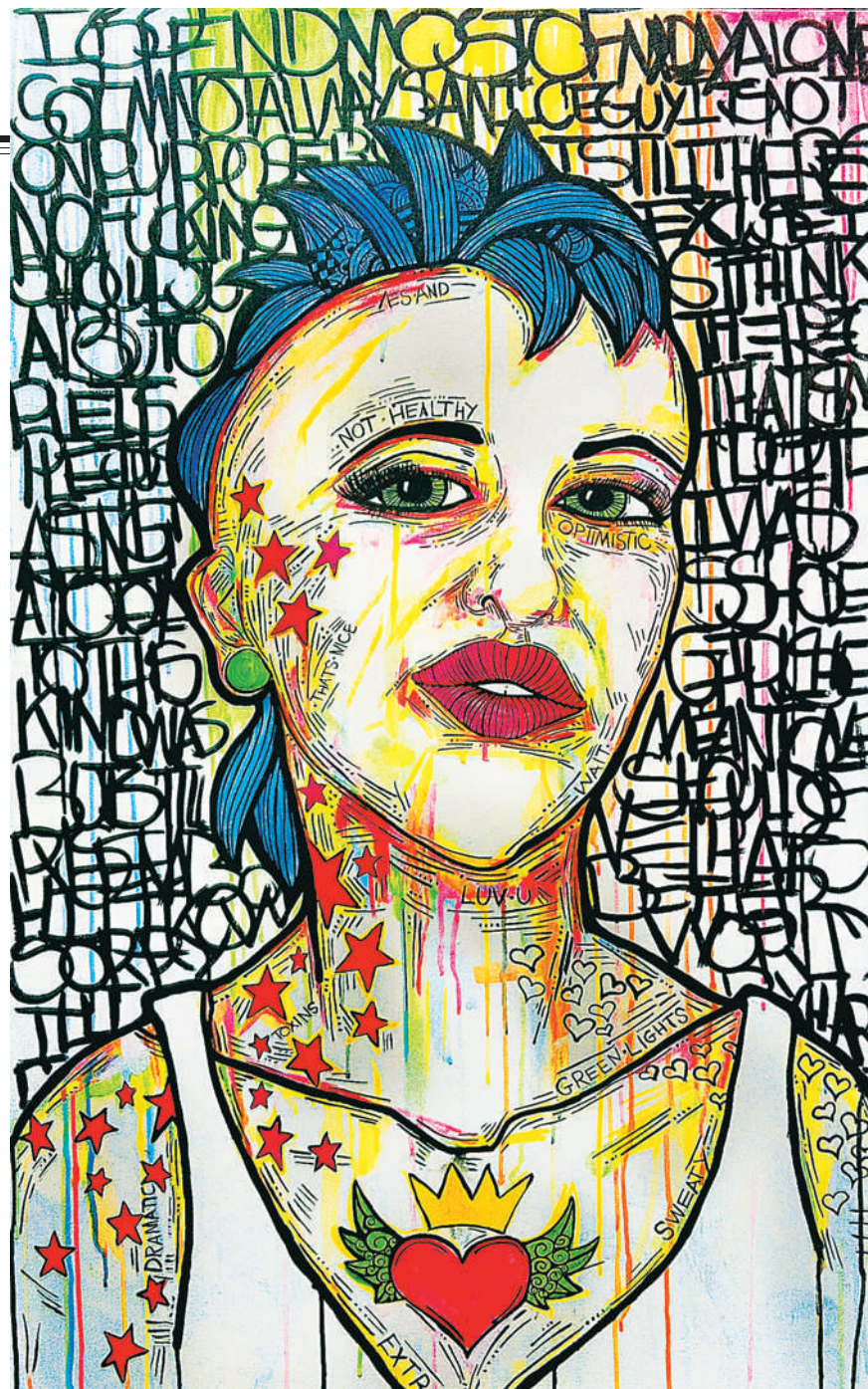
Opening weekend features budding artists culled by the blog/magazine Panda

Head. Their work will be shown in "End of Summer Bummer," a one-night screening of 15 new short films.

Overlapping mid-month are productions by Impossible Theater, which is staging "[missed connections]," about finding fulfillment when the world is headed for doomsday, and a mini-exhibit, "Street Market," curated by the Fridge and featuring street artists who have worked with the gallery before.

And finally, there are wild cards, including the new group Vestibule, which is following its collaborative dance pieces at this spring's Cherry Blast bash in Anacostia with a heady work called "Taint," based on the lefty manifesto "Empire." What will be performed at "Fresh Produce," says Vestibule's Josef Palermo, is only the first part of the work, staged over two nights, Sept. 1-2. An installation of visual art by Joseph Hale, Joseph Orzal and HKS181 will be created as an effective backdrop for the piece, which Palermo says will explore "the mixing of culture as a means to revolution" and "the rise and fall of empires."

All events take place Saturday through Sept. 2 at the Fridge, 516½ Eighth St. SE. 202-664-4151. www.thefridgeedc.com. freshproducedc.tumblr.com.



FROM THE FRIDGE

The work of Astrotwitch reflects the broadening of the "Fresh Produce" festival from its performance-based inaugural lineup to one that includes visual art.

Here's what to see:

End of Summer Bummer

A screening of 15 short films about the end of the summer is paired with an installation of tiny photos and text called "Jenny's Story," by Morgan Hungerford West and Nilay Lawson.

Saturday from 8 to 11 p.m. \$5.

"[missed connections]"

Impossible Theater Company, which launched last summer at the Warehouse Theatre with "Macbeth," returns with an original work about the Apocalypse.

Aug. 9, 11 and 16 at 7 p.m.; Aug. 12 and 19 at 4 and 7 p.m. \$10.

"Street Market"

The sole visual-art exhibition of the festival is, naturally, the domain of the Fridge, which brings together its frequent collaborators, including Decoy and Jazi-Rock, for a show curated by Edwin Merino, who goes by the artistic nom de plume CHE.

Aug. 10-19. Reception Aug. 10 from 7 to 11 p.m. Free.

"Genesis"

The Baltimore arts collective EMP stages a vast multimedia project in which actors from Baltimore and Washington recorded excerpts from Eduardo Galeano's "Genesis" epic describing the creation of the modern world. Artists of various disciplines then took one excerpt each to inspire a piece of art. The resulting pieces will be presented both at EMP's Baltimore space (Aug. 17 at 306 W. Redwood St.) and at the Fridge on Aug. 24. After the performance, the visual pieces will stay up at the gallery for a couple of days.

Aug. 24 from 7 to 10 p.m. \$5.

"Taint, Part 1"

Vestibule has collaborated with visual artists to create the set and partnered with actor Catalina Lavelle and choreographer Jasmine Heiss in a work inspired by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt's "Empire." Like the book, the work will be a tome: The first part alone is divided over two nights. Expect audience participation, Palermo says.

Performance begins Sept. 1 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. and concludes Sept. 2 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. \$10 each night.

ramanathanl@washpost.com