

# WELCOME TO THE PICNIC

Local fiber optics company Ants On A Melon lights up festivals across the country

With all the hoopla of Eugene Celebration and Kaleidoscope Music Festival this past weekend, you probably laid eyes on a whole slew of inexplicable sights. And if you saw a giant glowing jellyfish bouncing around Mount Pisgah, don't fret — you weren't having a crazy trip; those dancing tentacles were just the far-out fiber optic artwork of local company Ants On A Melon.

"I found the music festival scene and it just completely changed my view of the world, and I found different ways to connect with people," says Ants On A Melon founder Joel Pinkham. The idea came to the UO grad after shining a flashlight on a decorative beaded umbrella in his living room; Pinkham was inspired to string colorful fiber optic silicon strands inside an umbrella and send it out over the crowd at Re:Generation Festival at Horning's Hideout in North Plains, Ore. "I thought it'd be cool to contribute and to bring something that was different and brought joy to people in a really cool way," he says.

Since then, Pinkham started experimenting with fiber optics, constructing his own flashlights and sharing his illuminating creations with festival-goers across the country. After traveling to major festivals Shambhala, Electric Forest and What The Festival, Ants On A Melon was invited to showcase its art for hometown festivals Faerieworlds and Kaleidoscope.

In the last six months the company has made headway operating out of a small studio in Springfield and launching a website where fans can buy Pinkham's smaller creations like lightsabers and fiber optic whips and tails. He says the sale of the smaller toys helps fund his larger creative projects, like the jellyfish. But for Pinkham it's the interactivity, not the money, that makes his artwork worthwhile. "There's so many people who see what we're doing, and they come to us with ideas and then we can work with that idea and make it come to life."

As day turned to night at Kaleidoscope, the giant glowing umbrella jellyfish swayed above the starry-eyed crowd. Pinkham let people take turns spinning the umbrella, hypnotized by the printed nebula and neon fiber optic veins stretched across its underbelly. For the artist, this is the ultimate way to connect. "Not through words," he says, "but through light." ■

Visit [antsonamelon.com](http://antsonamelon.com) for more info



THE FIBER OPTIC JELLYFISH BY ANTS ON A MELON AT KALEIDOSCOPE MUSIC FESTIVAL

PHOTO BY TODD COOPER

# ARTSHOUND

Sniffing out what you shouldn't miss in the arts this week

With the 2013 spring release of Baz Luhrmann's seemingly Thomas Kinkade-inspired version of *The Great Gatsby*, flapper culture is all the rage, including the once-taboo dance the Charleston. Learn to kick your heels and swing your knees like it's 1925 with Celebration Belly Dance and Yoga Studio's four-week **Great Gatsby Dance Workshop** beginning 6:45 pm Thursday, Aug. 29, as part of the Create! Eugene series.

It's the last **Last Friday ArtWalk** of the summer Aug. 30 with stops all over the Whit. **Michael DiBietto's** dreamy, atmospheric etchings are this week's editor's pick. Stop by his cozy studio at 201 Blair Blvd.

All over the world anarchists, activists, rebellious teens and, of course, hipsters wear T-shirts emblazoned with the two-tone image of Argentine Marxist revolutionary **Che Guevara** sporting a steely stare beneath a beret. It is said to be one of the most duplicated images in the world, right

up there with the Mona Lisa. The late Cuban photographer Alberto Korda snapped that portrait in 1960, and the original will be on display, along with other intimate political photographs by Korda, for **Korda and the Revolutionary Image** exhibition at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art through Jan. 26, 2014.

While at the JSMA, stop by the recently opened **Transatlanticism** exhibit featuring works by Spanish contemporary masters **Joan Miró** and **Pablo Picasso**.

KWA deejay **Josh Sands**, aka spinladen, is moving his work into The Wave Gallery (547 Blair Ave.) for **Eugene Contemporary Art's Public Process** six-week artist residency. Sands is versed in mixed media, painting, drawing and glassblowing and focuses on the "intersection of graffiti, anthropology and nature." Watch the artist at work during open studio 7 to 8 pm Aug. 29, Sept. 5, Sept. 12 and Sept. 19.



ALBERTO KORDA'S ICONIC SHOT OF CHE GUEVARA ON VIEW AT JORDAN SCHNITZER