

Gathering of the Bungalows

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July 23rd - August 14th

Rockaway still has bungalows from the 1920s where front doors face each other; private lives are bisected only by a small footpath. Other bungalows encompass my bungalow on Beach 73rd Street in three directions. Across from my front door was a vacant lot, unwanted since the gas station got leveled in 1982. For the previous nine years, I'd been fantasizing about this field transforming into a mini-golf course with every hole designed by an artist. But this summer, the peninsula's first Starbucks broke ground, and my fantasies succumbed to the reality that the historical gathering of bungalows will evaporate in the real estate heat wave. Perhaps my mini-golf dreams are better suited for the Gathering of the Juggalos.

This annual festival, now in its 22nd year, opens on August 3rd in Thornville, Ohio. There will be competitions for graffiti, wrestling, costumes, eating hot dogs, military tactics, best ass, Texas Hold 'em, and a Mr. Juggalo Pageant where 1st place will receive "a special sash, a super dope crown, and a crisp \$50 bill." There will be helicopter rides, free tattoos, a seminar on bigfoot, and a wedding ceremony. The climax is, of course, when Insane Clown Posse takes the stage, but you can also catch a 58-year-old Sir Mix-a-Lot prior to Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope.

In the Rockaways, you can simultaneously see airplanes descending for landing at JFK and A Trains taking off while you straddle your surfboard in the Atlantic Ocean. People sell sangria off their porch or rent their personal parking spaces by means of humble cardboard signage. Conservative firefighters sway to cover bands, beer in hand, on the boardwalk, while local high schoolers play pick-up basketball on the courts adjacent to the boardwalk. These kids call me "The Northman" when I play.

The Gathering of the Juggalos is also a temporary summer destination for a diverse population stoked on the activity menagerie with insider customs, many cloaked in mystery. Iconography and ritual lead us into the night's main event. Are we discussing contemporary art in Rockaway Beach? This six-person show also creates a fleeting community through a semi-private dialogue where symbols and metaphors reveal personal and regional mythology. These artists have different reasons for making work, influenced by their varied origin stories and locations: Romania, Tulsa, Pennsylvania, Roswell, the Indiana Dunes of Lake Michigan, and New York City. Yet we find common ground and even reasons to celebrate in the face of dark times. Speaking of faces, you should paint yours like a Juggalo with sunscreen. Today's expected high is 90.

Opening Reception: July 23rd, 6-8pm

Gallery Hours: Saturday 1-6 & Sunday 12-5 & by appointment

Closing Reception: August 14th, 5-7pm

For more information check walters.art or [@walter__elwood](https://www.instagram.com/walter_elwood) on Instagram. You can also contact Brent Birnbaum at brent@walters.art or at 646-736-9867.

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