

## ‘Art of the Brew’ Fuses Art with Beer

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Ask Chris Whiteburch and Austin Nelsen what’s so great about craft beer, and you’ll probably gulp down most of a pint before they finish enthusiastically rattling off some of their favorites. But don’t be fooled – they aren’t brewers.

Along with Sean Gaulager, they run a set of art galleries collectively called [Co-Lab Projects](http://co-labprojects.org/) (<http://co-labprojects.org/>) that on Saturday will combine two of Austin’s



(<https://bitchbeerdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/art-of-the-brew-logo.png>) most beloved things: craft beer and quirky art pieces. The inaugural “[Art of the Brew](https://www.facebook.com/events/1414132772133364/) (<https://www.facebook.com/events/1414132772133364/>),” at Co-Lab’s East Austin space, is a collaborative effort between several Texas breweries and brewpubs, a homebrewer and the local artists paired with each of them to create work that reflects their beer and their backstories.

While craft beer is often served at Co-Lab’s various events – a fun way to make an art gallery exhibit more accessible – the three directors of the nonprofit decided to give the beverage a starring role with Art of the Brew.

The goal behind the one-day-only potent mixture of art exhibit and mini beer festival is pretty simple: to integrate the Co-Lab directors’ passion for both art and beer into one big celebration of them.

Each of the artists’ works inspired by their respective boozy subjects will be showcased in the gallery starting at 4 p.m.; the participating breweries and brewpubs will host tastings out on the lawn. There will also be live music from John Wesley Coleman, Brazilian Space Program and others.

Whiteburch said they tried to match each of the brewers up with an artist they thought would be a good fit, but sometimes the pairing was a happy accident. It turned out that artist Pat Snow and the man who inspired [Adelbert’s Brewery’s](http://adelbertsbeer.com/) (<http://adelbertsbeer.com/>) beers, George Adelbert Hovey, are both colorful characters and storytellers.

Whiteburch and Nelsen are mum about the pieces each artist has created for Art of the Brew, a variety of sculptures, drawings and paintings that range from literal to conceptual. But they did hint that the ([512](http://www.512brewing.com/)) [Brewing Company’s](http://www.512brewing.com/) (<http://www.512brewing.com/>) collaboration might have something to do with

beer's version of the timeless chicken and the egg quandary: which came first, bread or beer? (Because both use yeast, that's a mystery.)

They also added that this project isn't just all fun for them. They noticed there are actually some striking similarities between art and craft beer.

"Just Co-Lab alone is sort of this parallel to many of the breweries in town," Whiteburch said. "It was just Sean (working there) for awhile, then just the three of us, and now it's a great art collective, a lot like the brewers who pulled their breweries up by their bootstraps."

"You can also see a correlation between taking basic materials and creating a new product with them – both art and beer do that."

Plus, Co-Lab has always embraced the non-traditional, the experimental, by providing a space for constantly rotating performances, installations and paintings. "We're okay with failure," Nelsen said. "You're a painter but you want to do sculpture? Do sculpture. We'll show it."

That willingness to take a chance is a trait found often in Austin's adventurous brewers who rarely stick to one particular beer style, making the collaboration in Art of the Brew a pretty perfect match.

Participating breweries/brewpubs/homebrewer and artists:

- Thirsty Planet with Matthew John Winters
- Adelbert's with Pat Snow
- (512) with David Culpepper
- Live Oak with Spencer Cook
- Hops & Grain with Nicholas Conrad Miller
- Black Star with Emily Cayton
- Jester King with Josh Cockrell (who designs Jester King's label art)
- Saint Arnold with Jeremy Johnson
- Blue-collar Brewing with Jeremy Burks

Note: Art of the Brew is free, but bring in two canned goods for admission that will be donated to the Capital Area Food Bank.

-Ari

- 512 Brewing
- adelbert's
- art
- Austin
- black star co-op
- craft beer
- Hops & Grain
- Jester King
- Thirsty Planet Brewing

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