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## **Goldfish on bikes, unicorns with trumpets—it must be Artscape**

**Arts festival expected to draw 350,000 over three days**

By [Julie Scharper](#), The Baltimore Sun

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A man bicycled up Charles Street, towing a platform on which balanced a goldfish in a bowl.

Children tossed dice the size of coolers, skipped across an oversized hopscotch course and flung rings onto the necks of dinosaurs in an apocalyptic diorama.

In a garage, as incense smoke curled up from a skull, a man in a unicorn mask mournfully played the trumpet.

It is Artscape time in Baltimore.

The city's 33rd annual free arts festival began Friday with a mixture of sculpture and paintings, aerial acrobatics and ballroom dancing, experimental music and dreamlike games.

Artscape is believed to be the country's largest free arts festival, drawing some 350,000 visitors over three days — perhaps even more this year, as the weather is, for once, expected to be pleasant.

For artists such as Scott Pennington, Artscape provides a chance to share a creative vision.

"SuperGame! Come and play," called Pennington, a tall man with mutton chop sideburns, as he stood beneath a brightly striped canopy. "Be a champ and get a stamp!"

For the past two months, Pennington, his friend Adam Franchino, girlfriend Melissa Webb and several dozen others have been working on SuperGame, an arty take on classic carnival games.

Children and adults plucked ducks from the Battleship Duck Pond, lobbed bean bags at the Black Hole Corn Hole and tried to knock down stuffed busts of politicians.

Laniyah Fisher, 9, steered a red ball past a shipwreck, a tidal wave and the gaping mouth of a killer whale in a game called Danger Beach — a sort of wooden version of pinball.

"It's free — that's the best part," said Laniyah's grandmother, Denise Mason. "Grandma doesn't have to do anything but buy something to eat."

Pennington said it was thrilling to see scores of people playing games he had invented and built with friends at his studio near Greenmount and North avenues.

SuperGame! was one of several hands-on works with the loose theme of "Field Day" that lined Charles

Street near Penn Station. Groups of children took turns jumping across a hopscotch court that artist Graham Coreil-Allen created in an intersection.

Farther up the street, the parking lots typically frequented by patrons of the [Charles Theatre](#) had been transformed. Rows of pots with feathery purple flowers made the flat lot feel like a meadow. The garage hosted a mixture of visual and conceptual artists as the Baltimore Alternative Art Fair.

Artist Dustin Carlson rested near his Bicycle Gallery, a pair of bikes that haul artworks on white wooden platforms. One, titled "Cycle of Life" featured a live goldfish swimming in a glass bowl.

Carlson said he and a friend took turns pedaling the works through the festival. The bikes bring art to people who would never step into a gallery, Carlson explained, his words nearly drowned out by the man in a unicorn head playing the trumpet.

Outside, Guy Hollyday sat scribbling in a notebook. The 85-year-old's eyes darted back and forth behind wraparound sunglasses.

He was observing the crowd — girls holding hands, mothers carrying babies, kids whizzing by on bicycles — and preserving it all in a poem.

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If you go

Artscape runs 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday at areas surrounding Mount Royal Avenue and North Charles Street. Free. For a complete schedule, go to [artscape.org](http://artscape.org).

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