

Time Out

New York

Last-minute V-Day plans

Trendy shoes for
any budget

The big gaming fest

NYC'S GREATEST

BEER



The very best of what's new—
adventurous brews, top bars, shot combos,
the Scandinavian invasion and...doughnut ale?



FEBRUARY 14-20, 2013 ISSUE 895 \$4.99 TIMEOUT.COM/NEWYORK

“They’re Baaack!”

Staten Island Museum pays homage to the unyielding cicada. By **Kenny Herzog**

Magicalcica Septendecim, also known as 17-year cicadas, are a bit like head colds: occasional but unavoidable nuisances whose presence must be endured (a high threshold for ickiness also helps). After gestating in underground tunnels for nearly two decades, a readied swarm of the clamorous species takes flight to mate and drain life from fragile tree twigs by feeding and laying eggs en masse. The result is that familiar, escalating summer buzz generated by millions of male Magicalcicas vibrating their abdominal membranes (we know, gross).

Although smaller hordes do pass through annually, the flying black-and-orange tenors are set to unleash their white noise above our parks for real around May this year. Until then, we can all enhance our preparedness by touring the Staten Island Museum’s upcoming exhibit, “They’re Baaack! Return of the

17-Year Cicadas,” opening Sat 16, which showcases various real specimens, interactive displays and even cicada-inspired art. As a primer, here are three facts you may not have known about the beady-eyed bugs.

Don’t call them locusts

The sheer number of simultaneously arriving Magicalcicas, combined with their aggressive mating song, may lead to some confusion with their noisy, swarming locust cousins. The primary distinction is that, while irritating and icky, cicadas cause relatively little harm—and they certainly don’t constitute crop-destroying Biblical plagues. Besides, locusts belong to the insect order

Orthoptera, while cicadas are Hemiptera. A-duh.

There’s safety in numbers

Cicada populations are absurdly large; each 17-year cycle can produce up to 1.5 million of them fluttering about per acre. These overwhelming counts—along with the critters’ sporadic rate of appearance—mean individuals are more likely to survive threats from other species, a trait known as “predator satiation.” If the insect kingdom is a battlefield, Magicalcicas have a Mongol-resistant defensive tenacity.

Magicalcica as muse

For centuries, both Chinese and Greek philosophers have heralded

cicadas as a symbol of strength, longevity and rebirth. Jade replicas were placed inside dead men’s mouths during the Shang Dynasty, and in Athens, golden cicadas were incorporated into hairdos and depicted atop the goddess Athena’s spear. Some Ancient Greeks and Chinese enjoyed the insects’ “singing” so much that they kept the males in cages. We can think of worse things to listen to (like another rendition of “Gangnam Style”).

“They’re Baaack! Return of the 17-Year Cicadas” is on view from Sat 16 at Staten Island Museum, 75 Stuyvesant Pl at Wall St, Staten Island (718-727-1135, statenislandmuseum.org). Mon–Fri 11am–5pm, Sat 10am–5pm, Sun noon–5pm; \$5, seniors and students \$3, members and children under 13 free. Opening reception: Fri 15 6–9pm; \$25, members \$15, R.S.V.P. required.

IndieCade East



The preeminent independent gaming festival, previously a West Coast-only affair, brings a lineup of talks, workshops and playable games to the Museum of the Moving Image. Visitors will get to meet influential creators, present their own homemade programs and play more than 20 games, including stylish adventure *Thirty Flights of Loving* and workaday drone-pilot simulator *Unmanned*. The museum’s current exhibit, “*Spacewar! Video Games Blast Off*,” is also open, and competitive button-mashers can sign up to test their skills on ten arcade classics during a festival-long tournament. 36-01 35th Ave at 37th St, Astoria, Queens (718-777-6888, indiecade.com). Fri 15 4–8pm, Sat 16 noon–10pm, Sun 17 noon–8pm. \$9–\$30; three-day pass \$60–\$80.—Andrew Friscano