



(Photo by [Colleen Allison Barjas](#))

## Sunstock Solar Festival 2018 lights up Los Angeles

On Oct. 20, Los Angeles residents celebrated clean energy at the third annual Sunstock Solar Festival (SSF). Musicians, artists, and environmental activists gathered along Gramercy Place to raise money for a solar energy project that would benefit low-income communities. The event was entirely solar-powered.

The Sunstock Solar Festival is the brainchild of the members of Trapdoor Social, an alternative-rock group that advocates for environmental and social activism. In the past, Trapdoor Social has toured across the country and performed live using solar power energy generators. Inspired by their core values, the group members have worked together each year to organize a festival in LA that celebrates clean energy and raises funds for clean energy initiatives.

Since kickstarting the SSF in 2016, Trapdoor Social has aimed each year to strengthen the Los Angeles sustainability movement through artistry and community participation. This year, the festival team worked with local volunteers to organize a block party-type event free to the general public.

Skylar Funk, Trapdoor Social's guitarist and lead vocalist, served as this year's SSF Creative Director. In preparation for the event, he made it a priority to involve as many artists and musicians who promoted positive change.

"[My team and I] have always felt a strong desire to be a part of this conversation," Funk said. "Sunstock is a positive space in finding a solution to achieving a sustainable future. This could be a place where people can get really excited about clean energy."

The 2018 SSF kicked off at 3 p.m. with live musical performances by indie punk-rock band One High Five and experimental-pop duo Valley Hush. Denver-based, alt-rock group The Epilogues reunited on the Sunstock Solar Festival stage after a two-year long hiatus. Later on, Top Shelf Brass Band joined Trapdoor Social onstage for a brass-filled performance of Trapdoor Social's "Fine On My Own." The musical lineup also included performances by El Mañana, Kinney, Karmic and Cayucas.



Valley Hush captivates festival attendees with melodic riffs and eccentric sounds. (Photo by [Colleen Allison Barjas](#))

In between sets, environmental nonprofits and festival partners took the stage to promote and publicize their groups, which were tabled out along Gramercy Place.

The Sunstock Solar Festival also showcased zero-waste art installations.

"The art installations were so compelling," said Colleen Allison Barjas, a festival attendee. "There was a man making art [using the sun](#), which was super fun to watch. I loved walking around and seeing all the pieces that took what used to be trash and made it art."

The music and art installations were powered through solar power energy generators provided by Trapdoor Social, as well as by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.



Sunlight artist Michael Papadakis (AKA [Sunscribes](#)) uses the sun to etch the Sunstock Solar Festival logo. (Photo by [Colleen Allison Barjas](#))

Amidst the music and art, festival-goers also enjoyed themselves to an array of food trucks, a beer garden, and a kid's corner for the younger attendees.

Entry to this year's Sunstock Solar Festival was free to the public with a suggested donation of \$15. Proceeds went to [GRID Alternatives](#), a nonprofit that provides solar power energy to low-income communities across the United States.

Funk attributed much of the festival's success to committed volunteers, sponsors, and nonprofits.

"We worked with a lot of new volunteers this year, including new graphic designers and social media coordinators," Funk said. "They were a huge part of what made this festival run."

Although the event ended in success, the festival team and members of Trapdoor Social have decided to hold off on pursuing a Sunstock Solar Festival 2019. With more attention and resources, they hope the SSF can return in future years and project a more meaningful impact on LA.

Until then, Trapdoor Social aims to work on creating new music to promote their positive message for the future.

"It's a first big step towards a future that uses positivity and activism to find solutions to today's problems," Funk said. "We're proud of the work we've done."

By: EMMA SADLOWSKI