

THE ORGAN REVIEW OF ARTS



FREE POSTER!
Broadside No. 2 presents
Justine Kurland's record
of an American utopia
insert

**REMEMBERING
SPALDING GRAY**
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No. 10 MARCH/APRIL 2004 FREE! Country Life

The History of Waterfowl Hunting on Wappâto

by Bryan O'Keefe

To Oregon hunter-gatherers, Sauvie Island has long represented sustenance, recreation and profit—long before the Endangered Species Act warned against species "overutilization." This winter has proved no exception. Hunters arrived once again at Sauvie, braving the icy rain and testing the seven-duck-daily bag limit. Plus ça change, plus la même. Or, to borrow a phrase from Ted Nugent: "Whack 'em and stack 'em."

Century 19
Captain George Vancouver surveys the land from the deck of the Chatham in 1792, but it is the Lewis and Clark expedition which ultimately brings European notoriety to Sauvie (Wappâto) Island. In their journals, the men record their contact with the island's teeming wildlife, document the abundance of the land and note the affluence of

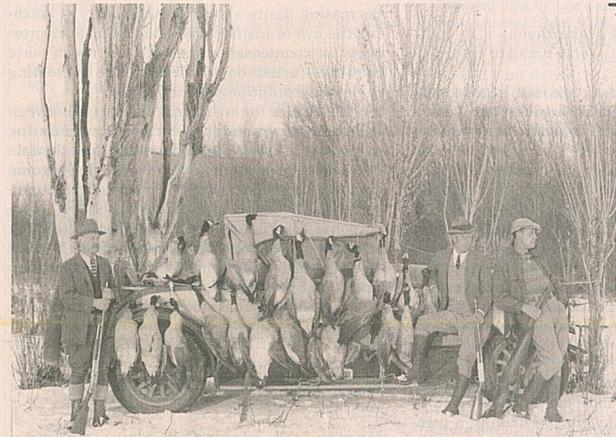


PHOTO COURTESY TOM ROBINSON

the natives. Lewis and Clark rely heavily on their civilian interpreter, George Drouillard, for much of the hunting. One day, not long after a bleeding/purging for pleurisy, Drouillard returns to the camp with several elk. Lewis' gratitude is profound. "I scarcely know how we should subsist were it not for the exertions of this excellent hunter," he writes.

The Corps of Discovery approaches Government Island on November 3, 1805. Once again, Clark documents the kill:

Cap L. and 3 men Set out after night in this Canoe in Serch of the Swans, Brants Ducks &c. which appeared in great numbers in the Lake, he Killed a Swan and Several Ducks which made our number of fowls this evening 3 Swan, 8 brant and 5 ducks, on which we made a Sumptuous Supper.

On November 4, 1805, they arrive at the populous Wappâto Island. They estimate almost 80 homes and lodges in the vicinity of the island containing 2,000 Chinook-speaking Native Americans. From Wappâto, Clark describes Mt. St. Helens as a "sugar lofe."

Shots ring out on the shallows; another requiem for the quarry:

Killed a Deer and Several brant and ducks. I saw a Brarow tamed at the 1st village to day. ...our hunters killed 10 Brant 4 of which were white with black wings 2 Ducks, and a Swan which were divided

Lewis and Clark depart. Some years later, the Hudson's Bay Company establishes a dairy outpost, renaming it after the old French Canadian trapper and acting dairyman Laurent Sauvé.

John McLoughlin begins hogruns, fishing and livestock operations, and Nathaniel Wyeth establishes the short-lived Fort William in 1834.

The people of the Willamette Valley die of smallpox, malaria, diphtheria, typhus, typhoid, whooping cough, measles and influenza, as European families settle the island.

Century 20
As private shooting clubs begin to pop up all over Sauvie Island, Theodore Roosevelt, General William Tecumseh Sherman, Gifford Pinchot and others found the Boone and Crocket Club, calling for ethical hunting and sportsmanship. The credo of fair chase is published by Roosevelt in 1898. Conservation efforts diversify in the new century. The federal Duck Stamp Act, requiring all duck hunters 16 years of age or older to carry an official stamp, passes in 1934, raising funds for the federal Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. Many Oregonians begin to debate the social function of hunting and the transgressive thrill of the sport.

Portland listens to Mel Blanc, the future voice of Elmer Fudd, on KGW radio. Oregonian columnist Ben Hur Lampman describes a pair of ospreys, protected from human predators by the Migratory Bird Act, in his 1942 "April Forenoon on Sauvies":

And earnestly I pray that nobody may come upon them with a gun to do them scath, and if by chance he should then let his aim be shaken with desire.

The state raises revenue through the sales of hunting and fishing licenses, which enables Oregon to buy out the private duck clubs on the north side of the river. It isn't until 1974 that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife comes up with a coordinated resource plan for dealing with wildlife habitat management on the island. That plan is updated to its present form in 1993, officially designating the Sauvie Island "refuge" of today.

Century 21
The "hook-and-bullet" set and traditional environmental groups struggle to collaborate in common conservation efforts. Governor Kulungoski, supported by the Oregon League of Conservation Voters, remains committed to keeping the Endangered Species Act part of his "Oregon Equation." The NRA and Oregon Gun Owners continue to donate money to primarily Republican candidates in Oregon.

Hunters meet the quota of five dusky geese in only three hunting days in the 2002-03 season.

Vice President Cheney, oil equipment/services CEO George Diamond and Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia hunt fowl along offshore-drilling sites in Louisiana's Bayou Beouf. They discuss Pax Americana and the immediate Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). Later, Cheney calls the event disappointing.

A Bonneville Power Administration ad in the Oregon Big Game Regulations pamphlet offers a reward. "We've never understood what motivates people to shoot at electric insulators," it says. "Whatever makes them do it, we've found a powerful motivation to make them stop. Cash."

Bryan O'Keefe is a writer who lives in Portland.

The Estacada Murals

A FORMER TIMBER TOWN PICTURES THE COMMUNITY AS IT WAS AND WILL BE

by Stevan Allred

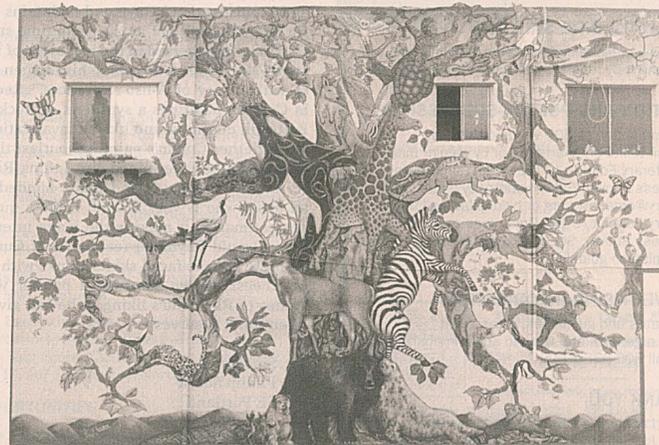
If you've ever stopped in the onetime timber town of Estacada, Oregon, population 2,460, chances are good that you ordered a drink at the Safari Club, a dark and cavernous bar with faux bush-hut architecture and dozens of taxidermed animals arranged in dioramas. As you sit there with a kamikaze in front of you, bears roar over the heads of muskrats, panthers stalk mountain goats and leopards carry freshly killed prey in their mouths, complete with drippings of faux blood.

For the city dwellers who stop here after a day fishing the Clackamas River or an afternoon dip in Bagby Hot Springs, the fading kitsch inspires smug amusement. But it also evokes nostalgia for a simpler time, a frontier culture where man's dominion over the natural world was unqualified. Big game was there to be shot, old growth trees were there to be cut down and the salmon runs were so thick no one could imagine a day when they might be threatened with extinction. A mere 35 miles southeast of Portland, Estacada guards the memory of this mythic time, which is both its charm and its strangeness.

But there's more to Estacada than kamikazes and kitsch. Right across the street from the Safari Club, on the 20-foot side of a building which houses the Estacada Insurance Mart, is a mural called *The Tree of Life*. The tree depicted is no old growth Douglas fir like the thousands which once covered the slopes surrounding Estacada. This tree has the spreading branches of an oak, and it is painted in a style derived from the 16th-century Italian painter Guiseppe Arcimboldo. The trunk and branches of the tree are composed of dozens of living creatures, from a squid to a whale to a bear to a zebra. Its image of the natural world's relationship to humankind is radically different from the dioramas in the Safari Club, and the mural implies an entirely different Estacada.

It's enough to make you think the whole town is having an identity crisis.

A half-hour stroll around lower Estacada, roughly a 20-square-block area, reveals a total of 10 large murals. One mural depicts the commercial cultivation of ginseng, which once flourished around Estacada. Other murals depict Estacada's history, its recreational possibilities and its legacy as a timber town. But a few blocks away from *The Tree*



THE ARTBACK, *THE TREE OF LIFE*, MURAL (FOURTH AVENUE FACING MAIN STREET, ESTACADA, OREGON)

of *Life*, on the side of a local cafe called the Harmony Baking Company, is a group of multicultural humanoids. Their hair springs from their heads in

whimsical curls, and they dance and frolic among flowers and ferns. There's a yahoo, anything-goes feel to this mural, with its penguins and its peace slogans in various languages.

The murals have been painted at the rate of one a year for the last 10 years by a group of Estacada artists who call themselves Artback. They are paid for by grants from the Portland-based Regional Arts and Culture Council and other organizations, and by small contributions from 80 to 90 local residents. The city government takes no active role in either funding the murals or determining their subject matter, but over the years the painting of the murals has become part of the city's annual Summer Celebration, a weekend festival that blocks off the center of Estacada's downtown and brings in dozens of

music acts to an outdoor stage. For a small town that was on the verge of dying less than 20 years

MURALS / continued on page 4

Blame it on the rain

IF PICA'S VISUAL ART PROGRAM WAS DOOMED, WILL PICA SHARE THE BLAME?

by Camela Raymond

PICA's visual art program, which blasted off in 1999 with great fanfare, has blown up before reaching its hoped-for zenith.

Founded in 1995 in the wake of the NEA's cuts to arts organizations, PICA was a new model for artist-based arts organizations, eschewing public funding in favor of developing relationships with corporate patrons. As the Andy Warhol Foundation's Pamela Clapp said, it is thus "doubly disappointing" that its visual art exhibition program surrendered to funding woes early this year.

The gallery PICA opened four years ago in the Pearl District's Wieden + Kennedy building has been shuttered, probably permanently. Curator Stuart Horodner sent out his farewell e-mail in late February, its brevity befitting his tenure.

It's not the only problem PICA's facing. The launch of the ambitious Time Based Art Festival last fall, which condensed PICA's performance season into a 10-day event that drew thousands of out-of-town visitors, ended in deep deficit, which rumors say far exceeds the \$120,000 that PICA has reported. Last month, founder and Executive Director Kristy Edmunds accepted a second job, a two-year post as director of the Melbourne International Arts Festival, which will put her on the other side of the globe for half the year.

The visual art program is not dead, says PICA, but on hiatus. A plan for a new form is being worked on by a secret advisory committee of artists, donors, members and others. Likely they will tender a cost-saving series of lectures, salons and residencies, sans exhibitions. PICA board chair and Nike lawyer Peter Koehler said the board's conclusion late last year was that, "in this economic climate, raising \$200,000, year in, year out, is not attainable."

What went wrong?

PICA leadership and staff offer a number of explanations for the program's failure, including public misperceptions about PICA's financial needs, rising costs of exhibitions, a problematic

gallery space, meager earned revenue on its \$3 gallery admission fee and a lack of marketing resources.

They lay the blame primarily on two factors: a dismal tradition of arts philanthropy in the region that further eroded with the terrible economic slide that, according to Managing Director Victoria Frye, "slammed" PICA in late 2000; and an often lackadaisical and overly judgmental public.

There's no doubt that economic conditions contributed to the destabilization of PICA.

It looked like picnic weather in 1999, when PICA launched a successful \$2 million capital campaign to build out a new, 2,200-square-foot gallery space, gifted rent-free for three years by Wieden +

program. Other grant awards—including a much needed two-year, \$200,000 capacity building grant from Meyer Memorial Trust that funded three new positions in development, marketing and event planning—were given with stipulations that PICA end the year on a balanced budget. If there were any light leaks in the coffin, that nailed it shut.

By comparison, in other parts of the country, institutions similar to PICA managed to stay afloat during the hard economic times. PICA's peers survived by cultivating individual donors, drawing in new audiences, paying more attention to marketing and being leaner.

Gabriele Riera, communications manager for the Miami Art Museum, a modern and contemporary art museum with a \$4 million budget founded

"PICA's peers survived by cultivating individual donors, drawing in new audiences, paying more attention to marketing and being leaner."

Kennedy, and provide the organization with three years of base operating support.

"Having founded the program in a boom economy, we were confident that by year three we would have ongoing support and a funding constituency to replace those funds," Frye said.

Instead, the economy tanked and funders balked. Adding to the challenge, other high profile arts organizations were simultaneously tapping local donors for capital campaigns worth \$124 million, according to Edmunds. By its third year, foundation grants for visual arts dropped from \$104,000 to \$19,000, and the program was pulling 62 percent of its revenue out of PICA's general fund.

As early as the summer of 2002, PICA's leaders started thinking about putting the visual art program on hiatus, Frye says, as some funders shifted support to the more successful performance

the same year as PICA, and Sara Kellner, executive director at Houston's DiverseWorks, a contemporary arts organization with a budget and programming structure similar to PICA's, report that although times have been hard, their organizations shielded themselves from significant cuts by planning in advance for the economic downturn.

Furthermore, Clapp said she knows of no similarly sized contemporary art organization that has folded or shut down an entire program since 1995.

Arts organizations in Portland followed the same strategy. Doug Stamm, executive director of the Meyer Memorial Trust says that many larger groups restructured staffing and programming to widen audiences and increase earned revenue in the late '90s, preparing for the possible recession.

In fact, if anything proves there is a surplus of PICA / continued on page 3

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Dear Editor,

If Jon Raymond doesn't care for John Currin's show at the Whitney that's his prerogative, but his review of the exhibit (*Organ #9*) struck me as a lazy piece of criticism. Raymond violates a fundamental rule of being critical, that of simply paying attention. First of all, he describes the woman in the painting *Park City Grill* as "middle-aged." That the woman is not middle-aged is apparent even in the fragment of reproduction provided in the paper. The man is middle-aged, sure, but the woman, this rosy-cheeked, smooth-skinned, buttery blonde and barely legal piece of arm candy exudes all the emotional depth of a cheerleader. A truly American scenario is played out here, and not even subtly, which Raymond fails to acknowledge, that of the older man wearing his midlife crisis on his sleeve. Is this just "perpetrat[ing] toxic yuppie sarcasm" even though he isn't young and she's probably not a professional anything?

We can argue the effectiveness of the portrayal, but Raymond seems uninterested in the story of the painting, and if you're not interested in the story, then you defy a critical element of painting.

Furthermore, when Raymond talks of the "thrill store test," it doesn't sound like he pays much attention in thrift stores either. He says Currin's paintings "would look annoying in the thrift store" because they are "gaudy, pretentious, preening and sentimental." Huh? Aren't those precisely the qualities you do find at thrift stores? The test Raymond should be employing is how the painting looks right before his eyes.

To further muddle things, this so-called test is supposed to validate an "equilibrium of naïveté and sophistication." Raymond maintains that Currin fails this test, but at the same time states that Currin is "well-versed in the iconology of the thrift store" and "careful to mingle his lumpen influences with plenty of A-list references." Recognizing in Currin's paintings a synthesis of Rockwell and Botticelli doesn't sound like an invalidation.

Whether Currin's paintings outlast their hype or not is to be determined, but I think Raymond's review is a bit nasty and heavy-handed towards an artist who is very skilled. If it's a question of subject matter, if making the inane interesting is taboo, would Raymond feel better if Currin were painting angelic-faced skater punks with skinned-up knees? Maybe someday a painter will paint scenes to Raymond's liking so he can give art the attention it deserves.

Sincerely,
Phillip Sousa
SE Portland

To the Editor:

Summarizing remarks made by Elizabeth Brown at a recent PICA panel discussion, you recorded in "Art Diary" (*Organ #9*) that Brown had "urged Portland artists to make work because they needed to, without foolishly expecting to make a living on sales."

Assuming that Brown was paraphrased accurately, I am compelled to suggest that this comment by the Henry Gallery's chief curator not only reeks of hypocrisy, but also reveals what I choose to call stupid-white-curatorial attitude. After all, Brown receives a salary of approximately \$75,000

for her services to art, while her curatorial assistants each receive approximately \$42,000 and the Henry's well-entrenched director takes down a cool \$105,000-plus. This sort of compensation is by no means atypical for the assorted curators, directors, gatekeepers and cultural pawnbrokers of art hierarchies in the United States and Europe. Academics, art writers and auctioneers for art galas expect to be paid for their labors. Only the working artist, even with the "track record" of achievement mentioned by Brown, is subjected to the uncertain hustle, whims, censorship and lottery of the trend-besotted art market.

As for Brown's remark that "one characteristic of provincial places is their sense of entitlement," she obviously is not aware that in the "provinces" of major German and Austrian cities, for instance, respected artists are automatically "entitled" to exhibitions that mark each late decade of their professional life.

However, I confess that I do think of Seattle, where I have lived and worked for quite a while, as a provincial place—a distinction confirmed, in fact, by Brown in an interview she gave shortly after coming to her post: "The city is absolutely ready for art that's hot . . . that goes to the edge" (*Seattle P-I*, December, 2000). The craving to appear "hot" is a sure sign of the wannabe yearning to prove that a town and its art have "arrived." Brown's prediction was followed by several years' worth of Henry brochures and announcements, mailed to thousands, boasting of the Henry's sublime "cutting edge" status: Who wouldn't want to visit, contribute and party down at the gallery, to breathe in the heated air of faux prestige and a place on the "edge"? The hotter the mainstream vanguard is, the more coveted its level of acceptance in the province.

But does any of this matter in the long term? Fifty years from now, what significant legacies will be honored and remembered from the curators, critics and directors who participated on the panel with Brown? What achievements will they have advanced into the future, transcending the limits of time and the morphings of culture? I suspect that whatever established rewards and insights they may have otherwise accrued in their positions, the sobering recognition of the need for an alert humility will not be one of them.

Unfortunately, the artists who have made art "because they needed to," and who have developed an intense humility in the face of that work, are ironically the same disdained artists rendered faceless and obscure by the art-feeding class of "arts professionals" who have long preferred to graze on the "name" (and the next edgy thing) that can sustain their career moves in the incestuous contemporary art scene—as aggressively as a Gagosian or a rising star curator at the Whitney—as calculating as a Charles Saatchi buying another art pet—as witlessly as the museum tribalists who mounted the forgettable *Baja to Vancouver*.

Yours,
Selma Waldman
Seattle

Letters should be sent with the author's name and address via e-mail to editor@organarts.org or by mail to 425 SE Third Ave., Suite 302, Portland OR 97214. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Core Sample was a conversation, not a debut

By Stephen Cleary

In Emily Hall's thoughtful survey of *Core Sample* (*Organ #8*), she discussed Portland artists' "formal announcement of readiness" to take their art to the outside world, as they professed exhaustion with working the feeble local market. Her ideas merit further consideration, starting with the question of what the (insider) art world has to offer the (outsider) artist and what it is exactly that artists are getting ready for.

Common wisdom says they're getting ready for disappointment.

From the start, would-be artists are faced with the question of whether it's worth spending tens of thousands of dollars for an education. Terri Hopkins, the director and curator for the Marylhurst Art Gym, has stated that it often takes five to ten years after graduating for artists to forget what they learned in art school and begin producing work worthy of the art market. Artists in Portland may find Hopkins' estimate overly generous.

"The age-old model of a new generation of artists rebelling against the establishment is obsolete."

Those who are lucky or talented enough to make it into local galleries will have the opportunity to show once or twice per year, hopeful of making a few sales or sparking the interest of a curator outside the region. Artists can use their spare time competing in the mystic rituals of public art-funding. Or, as Raymond Pettibon once wrote in a drawing:

Oh, kind Sir, for charity's sake, then!
Just one little sou to buy some bread to eat by!

As Hall mentioned, artists can instead take Dave Hickey's advice in "Romancing the Looky-Loos" by starting a rebel art movement making art for their own kind, but Hickey's vision also calls for artists to abandon their movement when it hits the museum to avoid the prospect of "sterilization." If an artist has no success by any of the above methods, it's most likely his own fault. Stuart Horodner, former PICA visual art curator, recently suggested that Portland artists fail because they don't read enough books or take the time to travel to important art shows (never mind that many of Portland's talented midcareer artists don't have health insurance, let alone the plane fare to Los Angeles).

When artists do speak out, they are reminded of their place. The art museum has responded to criticism of the Biennial not by making a com-

mitment to improve it, but by threatening to kill it. Lawrence Rinder professes an inability to understand artist Vanessa Renwick's exhaustion with the local scene (*Organ #7*); does that mean that Renwick should be content to bask in all its "energy"? Artists' expectations are often considered a sign of their provinciality and sense of entitlement.

Perhaps what has been exhausted is the language of the art world itself. After all, the age-old model of a new generation of artists rebelling against the establishment is obsolete. "Made" artists and their minders have become experts at putting off their own demise. Nowadays, even when institutions try to take chances they end up with tepid exhibitions like *Baja to Vancouver*, which had the distinction of being both a West Coast regional survey and not really a West Coast regional survey.

And then there's Hickey and the return of beauty, which might have had some legs if

it hadn't been instantly co-opted by the mainstream, the best of Hickey's writing abandoned by artists and curators for the painting equivalent of Cisco's "The Thong Song."

Stepping into this vacuum are artists and independent curators that have grown up in DIY subcultures and an increasingly leveled environment facilitated by digital technology. With a decreasing desire and little probability of catching the eye of institutions (and the meager prospects for compensation regardless of which route they take), artists have nothing to lose by creating their own exhibition networks.

The choice for artists and curators is between concentrating on ambitious art and concentrating on art world ambitions. In the end, *Core Sample* may have been more about Portland's ongoing conversation about the art that's made here than a "formal announcement of readiness." It was a response to a Biennial that was completely out of touch and the free-for-all ethos of the Modern Zoo. It revealed the community's continued interest in independence and desire for quality. The before and after that's becoming evident here is not inside or outside, but rather before and after artists were effectively able to challenge the myth of their own helpless disinterest.

Stephen Cleary is an artist and writer. He lives in Portland.

CORRECTION

In Jason Loeffler's review of *Uterior Motives* in *Organ #9*, we printed Michelle Ross' painting, *Farther Tender*, upside down. We deeply regret the error.

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My first painting will be "The Accuser"
A tawn of bats & conch shells
ebulate, letted - finger toss
the wheel and the answering to the wheel.

matched vatic, before any horses
the heavens are an open and land, or not me.
we did that to the totems. It will be round from here
a red in the corner to barely discern
painted over w/cricket marks and E.

did then the dead packed in cylinders
sinking at the center or also in flames,
rising? andere fleeting purples
what are northern lights made of
and who their makers?
This sacred spot and infinite dots

(said hello to Mars who was so close
and paid for it ("into this hole like a puzzled panther, waiting")
made something more infinite than was there before
Hydra gave birth in that harbor. done made cages out of it
and then look in, "we", at the picture of us making cages
thru the automatic camera remotely snapping and framed..)

the background, all mountain animated, frenetic
soak w/animals. ("what can be undone in a second
can also be made in half the time." doubtful)
Pine or Eagle Orcas
ripple sky prickle electric eyes made of metl poles
rods to lightening shots and body voltage.
Vertiginous craggy shale schist or vale
more matters matted a yawning wax
a muted watercolor walks
in verified harbors.

—Phillip Jenks

Phillip Jenks is an assistant professor in the University Studies program at Portland State University. His first volume of poems, *On the Cave You Live In*, was published by Flood Editions in 2002. A second volume of poems, tentatively titled *Hydra*, is due out in 2004 from Zephyr Press. He is currently teaching the poetry-writing workshop *What Happened to the Muse? Experimental and Avant-Garde Visionaries for Mountain Writers Center*.



Captain Couch was sent by Cushing & Co. to the Willamette in the hopes of trading goods for salmon. Unfortunately for the enterprise, the Indians were not especially interested in trade, and the *Maryland* had to be sold in Hawaii to fund the crew's return back to Massachusetts. Couch's entry into the Columbia was legendary at the time due to the difficulties of navigating the Cape and the Columbia Bar. Please direct all questions, comments, complaints, etcetera to khrisoden@comcast.net

A Little Bird Said . . .

EVENTS

Artstar: radio interviews with artists hosted by Eva Lake, featuring Jonathon Brand (Mar. 7), Mike Rathbun (Mar. 14), Sidney Rowe (Mar. 21), Melody Owen (Mar. 28), Sundays at 1pm, KPSU 1450 AM.

Cinema Project: *Public Housing*, Frederick Wiseman's portrayal of the Ida B. Wells housing project in Chicago, Mar. 9-10; *The Texture of Memory*, 10 films by Phil Solomon, Mar. 25-26; *City Slivers and Fresh Kills*, 10 films by Gordon Matta-Clark, Apr. 6-7; *Near and Far*, two films by Johan Van der Keuken, Apr. 21-22; Robert Fenz's *Meditations of Revolution I-V*, five films exploring the tension preceding revolt, May 4-5. All shows 7:30 pm, Million, 120 NE Russell.

Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center: Passinart performs Samuel Kelley's *Pill Hill*, Fri-Sat, 8 pm, Sun. 3 pm, through Apr. 10, 5340 N Interstate Ave.

La Palabra: The Sniffy Linings Two Hour Comedy Hour with Paul Ash, Frayn Masters, Marissa Madrigal, Tiffany Lee Brown and others, Mar. 7, 7 pm, \$3-5.

Lewis & Clark College: 23rd Annual Gender Studies Symposium, "Gender in Conflict." Events daily from 9 am to 4 pm, Mar. 10-12, Templeton Student Center.

42nd Annual International Affairs Symposium, April 5-7. Opening lecture, "Global Humanitarian Intervention," 3:30 pm, Templeton Student Center. "The Politics of the Global Economy," talk by Fareed Zakaria, journalist for *Newsweek*, Apr. 20, 7 pm, Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, \$20.

Literary Arts: an evening with poet Paul Muldoon, Mar. 16, 7:30 pm, Wieden and Kennedy Atrium, 224 NW 13th Ave, \$5-18.

Nye Beach Writers' Series: Molly Gloss and Charles Goodrich, plus open mic with prizes, Mar. 20, 7 pm, \$7. MOFM contest entries unveiled, 6 pm (see below).

The Mr. Otis Fata Morgana Contest: submit artwork related to Northwest writer Stewart Holbrook, details at www.writersontheedge.org, deadline Mar. 17.

Calyx 28th anniversary celebration with Margarita Donnelly, Janice Gould, Beth McLagan and Donna Henderson, Apr. 17, 7 pm.

All events at The Dogwood, 162 NE 10th St., Newport.

ORLO: ORLO Political Puppet Festival, Apr. 3 through May 1. Documentation of political puppetry in the gallery. All shows 8 pm, 2516 NW 29th Ave.

Pacific Northwest College of Art: lecture by Alfredo Jaar, copresented by Plazm. Story on page 4. Talk by sculptor and woodworker Christian Burckard, Mar. 29, 12:30 pm.

William Jamison Lecture: production design consultant Michael Curry, Apr. 2, 7 pm.

Pacific Switchboard: The Radical Art History Symposium explores the 20th century avant-garde, Mondays, 7-9 pm, Mar. 3 through Apr. 26. \$35 suggested donation.

Rhizomatica: An Occasional Cabaret, with David Abel, Matt Marble, Linda Austin and others, Mar. 6, 8 pm. 4637 N Albina.

Performance Works Northwest: *The Wild Child*, puppet performance, Mar. 5, 6, 18-20, 25-27, 8 pm, \$7-10.

The Constitution Project, theater inspired by the Declaration of Independence, Mar. 12-14, 8 pm, \$12.

Holy Goats! improvisations, Mar. 14, Apr. 11, 2 pm. All events at 4625 SE 67th Ave.

PICA: *Via Los Angeles*, multimedia "essay" on ill-fated 1976 PCVA exhibition by Brad Adkins and Christopher Buckingham of Charm Bracelet, Mar. 16, 6 pm; Resource Room Open House, Mar. 20, 12-6 pm; slide show-and-tell by artist-critic Chas Bowie, Mar. 24, 6 pm; all events PICA Resource Room, 219 NW 12th Ave.

ART AND ACTION

Drawing Resistance hits Portland in the second of the political art show's five-year run through dozens of North American cities. Work by Carlos Cortez, Seth Tobocman, Peter Kuper, Domitila Dominguez and others engage with globalization, police brutality and the Zapatista liberation movement. Opening night (Mar. 5) features videos by local artists Vanessa Renwick and Bill Daniel. Kevin Sampsell's "Word Circus" shuts it down on Mar. 14. Most events are \$5 and all start at 8 pm. The exhibition is free and open from 6-8 pm, March 5-14. All events take place at Liberty Hall, 311 N Ivy St.

Portland Art Museum: Celebration honors retirement of Donald Jenkins, Curator of Asian Art since 1980, Mar. 28, 12-5 pm, 1219 SW Park Ave.

The Portland Documentary and eXperimental Film Festival: films from around the globe by Jacob Ocada, Torsten Burns and Darren Martin; locals Andrew Dickson, Melody Owen, Aaron Valdez, Zack Margolis, Trevor Fife and others; visiting artists Jem Cohen and Dee Dee Halleck (of Paper Tiger Television), Apr. 15-18, Guild Theatre. Schedule TBA, see www.peripheralproduce.com

PSU: *Most Dangerous Women*, staged documentary of the International Women's Peace Movement, Mar. 21, 3 pm and Mar. 22, 7 pm, Lincoln Performance Hall, \$10-13.

Spare Room Poetry Series: Nico Vassilakis and Robert Mittenhal, Mar. 14; Leonard Schwartz, Zhang Er and Joseph Bradshaw, Apr. 16. Both readings 7:30 pm, Mountain Writers Center, 3624 SE Milwaukie Ave.

Reed College: Reed Arts Week (RAW). All events free unless otherwise noted.

Mar. 4: Films by Lee Krist, 4:30 pm, Grey Campus Center; student films, 6 pm, Psychology Auditorium; "Hip-Hop, It's Meaning and Purpose," lecture by KRS-One, 7:30 pm, Kaul Auditorium, \$10.

Mar. 5: Graf Battle, 12:5 pm, the Quad; *Ghosting: The Hamlet Incident*, poetry-performance by student Ashley Edwards; *Sketchy Attempts and Wired Interludes*, performance by Bill Shannon, 8 pm, Kaul Auditorium, \$10; MC Battle, 11 pm (10 pm sign-up), Student Union, \$4.

Mar. 6: Tours of exhibitions, 11 am, noon, 1 pm. Lee Krist, damali ayo and student work, departing from Hauser Memorial Library; *Disposable*, group show presented by the Modern Zoo, departing from Vollum Lounge; Red 76's *Building Batteries*, departing from Old Paradox Café; lecture by Red 76, 2 pm, Psychology Auditorium.

Mar. 7: Basketball skirmish with Red76 and visiting artists, 4 pm, Sports Center Gym; *Love Letters*, student performance of A.R. Gurney play, 5 pm, Eliot Hall; video screening and discussion by MK Guth, 7 pm, Psychology Auditorium. *Three Lectures and a Funeral*, lecture/performance with Mike Wilder, Dick Anderson and Charles Mudede, presented by The Lecture Series, 9 pm, Student Union, \$2-5.

Mar. 6 and 7: *Scribe*, performance by Dave Ekhard, campuswide.

Ongoing installations: Lee Krist, through Mar. 7;

damali ayo, through Mar. 17.

Reed College: Portland Palestinian Film Festival, Mar. 22-28, Vollum Lecture Hall.

White Bird: Batsheva Dance Company, March 16, 7:30 pm, Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

Chunky Move from Australia, Apr. 8-10, 8 pm, Lincoln Performance Hall, PSU.

BodyVox and Third Angle New Music Ensemble present *Water Bodies*. April 22-23, 7:30 pm, Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

EXHIBITIONS

Augen Gallery: encaustic paintings by Wendy Franklund-Miller, paintings by Sally Cleveland, through Mar. 27, 817 SW 2nd Ave.

AVA Gallery: Tim Dalbow, Brandon Hoffman and K.A. Hughes, Mar. 13-31, 160 10th St., Astoria.

Capitol Hill Arts Center: *Numerosity*, site-specific works by Corrie Greening, in association with Static Media Factory, through Apr. 30, 1621 12th Ave., Seattle.

Center Space: *Carbon Dreams* collaborative installation, through Mar. 31, 420 SE 6th Ave.

Cooley Gallery: Installation by Michael C. McMillen, Apr. 10-Jun. 13. Artist's talk 6:30 pm, Apr. 10. Reed College, 3203 SE Woodstock Blvd.

Elizabeth Leach: paintings by Carlos Estrada-Vega, photographs by Amanda Fin and Inga Dorosz, through Mar. 27, 207 SW Pine St.

Froelick Gallery: Tom Prochaska, through Mar. 25, 817 SW 2nd Ave.

GOSSIP

With all the secrecy surrounding 12, the new advertising school housed in Wieden + Kennedy, you might imagine initiates were greeted with a draught of warm goat's blood. But director Jelly Helm says the puzzling online application process only served to cull 2,500 applicants with the problem-solving skills to compete for entry into a program that, beginning April 1, will "serve as a laboratory for the industry's best practices and newest thinking." With tuition at \$13,000 and a license from the Oregon Department of Education, 12 is a certified school. But the hope is that WK workers, slogging away for Nike and Miller High Life, will learn as much from the students—who will spend a year working together on real ad campaigns for four unnamed clients—as students will from them. The anointed range from a stand-up comedienne from New Jersey to Portland welder and artist Chris Rhodes. Says Rhodes, "I applied for an alternative advertising school and I want to find out how alternative."

—Sophie Ragsdale

Gallery 500: Bob Vergara, through Mar. 27, 420 SW Washington St. #500.

Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center: drawings and paintings by Susan Sumimoto, abstract paintings by Laura Foster, through Mar. 26, 5340 N Interstate.

Marylhurst Art Gym: recent work by Harrell Fletcher and Maria T. D. Inocencio, through Mar. 31. Talk by Inocencio, Mar. 9, 12:15 pm, 17600 Pacific Hwy.

Motel: For the gallery's first birthday, 1-square-foot works by 100 artists, through Mar. 28, NW 5th Ave. and Couch St.

programming and keeping audience constituencies on board.

PICA representatives said Horodner's programming was excellent and outreach efforts were strong, but that various factors contributed to their usually empty gallery: a toney, second-floor space that was slightly off-putting and difficult to find; an audience that gravitates toward events and does most of its art viewing "in diminished capacity" on First Thursdays; and a lack of marketing funds.

But the underlying challenge, stated and implied, was a close-minded public, unwilling to support programming once PICA had evolved from a young grassroots organization into an established institution.

As might be imagined, many in the community see it differently.

Artists' reactions to Horodner's shows over the past three years have ranged from positive to hostile. Many who frequented the gallery, including one past board member with whom I spoke, criticized his curating as unexciting and unoriginal.

Artist Tom Cramer's comment is typical: "There has been good work there, but my word for his curating is 'boring.'"

And if PICA thinks artists are giving them the cold shoulder, the criticism is reciprocated. "Elitist" and "egotistical" are words that frequently crop up. Artist Cynthia Lahti, a longtime observer of PICA, says, "There's no one I know who doesn't roll their eyes at PICA. Portlanders have a way of being very quick to criticize things they see as

"I don't see it as a failure in fund-raising or artistic leadership."

—PICA board chair
Peter Koehler

elitist. It's a provincial insecurity. It doesn't take much for an organization like PICA to get a bad reputation."

Local artists also complain that Edmunds has repeatedly not followed through on promises she made to help promote their work, and that Horodner failed to take account of local talent and include it in his exhibitions.

The latter criticism may be unfair, since PICA's mission is to engage Portlanders with contemporary art from a global context, not to showcase regional artists, and a review of Horodner's exhibitions reveals a reasonable share of local and

regional work. Horodner says that he reached out by teaching at local art programs, and while he might have made more studio visits, artists rarely asked for them.

But both complaints indicate the institution's failure to uphold the goodwill of one of its primary constituencies, something Clapp says is crucial.

"You make studio visits and connect with [artists] through professional development, lectures, all kinds of things. To be successful, you have to be rooted in your community."

Said another longtime supporter of PICA regarding PICA's local-artist relations, "Stuart didn't manage that situation well."

PICA doggedly deflects these criticisms of its leadership, pointing instead to an unsophisticated public and a tight economy.

"It wasn't economically sustainable and wasn't reaching its core audience," Koehler said of the visual art program. "I don't see it as a failure in fund-raising or artistic leadership."

According to Frye, "Our strategies have been strong, thoughtful and well-planned. It's actually a very small community that's interested in contemporary art. We're serving a very narrow field, purposefully. I'm not certain there's a lot we can do about it."

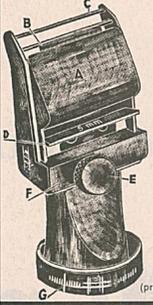
Or as Edmunds said, "If I was doing a Dale Chihuly exhibit, I could probably find sponsorship for it."

Is Portland willing to support more than one institution devoted to contemporary art? Is the art-going public willing to support PICA when it's financially healthy, not just when it's the underdog? Perhaps, perhaps not. But as PICA tries to dig itself out of its financial hole and put a positive spin on the fact that Edmunds will soon have one foot out the door, its leaders might think about what they can do to increase the odds the next time around.

The crash and burn will turn out to be a blessing if it helps PICA renew itself. It will be a tough mission, perhaps impossible, but not unimaginable, as long as plans don't rely on Edmunds' legendary ability to produce miracles. PICA can build on the reservoir of goodwill among its remaining core supporters, as evinced by December's Studio 333-sponsored fund-raising event that brought in over \$30,000 for the organization. But it must take responsibility for its failures, as well as give audiences and donors something undeniably worth supporting.

As Weber said, "You can only levitate for so long. Then you thud down and figure out how to defy gravity again."

Camela Raymond is the editor and publisher of the *Organ*.



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PICA / continued from page 1

money for art, it was *Willamette Week's* revelation last week that Portland Art Museum Director John Buchanan earned \$429,000 last year—enough to operate PICA's entire visual art program for more than two years.

It's one thing to find patrons for contemporary art in foundation-rich Houston, or to fund a safe, longtime arts institution like the Portland

"There's more money in those hills than anyone recognizes."

—Bruce Guenther

Symphony. But how hard is it to find supporters for challenging contemporary art in Portland? Opinions differ.

John Weber, the endowed Leanne and George Roberts curator of education and public programs at SFMOMA, was Bruce Guenther's predecessor at the Portland Art Museum and a colleague of Edmunds when she ran the museum's Art on the Edge program. Before working at PAM, he ran the Northwest Artists' Workshop and curated what was then Reed's Vollum Art Gallery.

Weber says arts philanthropy is "laughable" in Portland, due to its dearth of corporate headquarters and a traditionally penny-pinching patron class. In 1996, he considered Edmunds' achievement of getting PICA off the ground "miraculous."

Guenther agrees in part. "There's a wonderful sense of pride in the community," he says, but from Intel and Nike to wealthy families, a lack of "major players engaged in serious ways with contemporary art."

Yet while PICA's visual art program was tanking, PAM's contemporary art program was buoyant. PAM aggressively tapped patrons' pockets during the hard economic times, raising \$32.5 million since 2002 for endowments and the renovation of its north wing, which will house the new Center for Modern and Contemporary Art.

And Guenther is finding money not just to house innovative contemporary art, but also to pay for operations. In January, the museum announced the receipt of a spectacular \$1 million endowment from Sarah and Andrew Meigs for year-round contemporary arts exhibitions, "in particular, exhibitions that focus on new ideas, artists and mediums."

That's not to say such windfalls come easily,

even to an institution with the history and clout of PAM. As Guenther readily admits, the Meigs endowment is "so rare, it's like hens' teeth."

But he adds, "There's more money in those hills than anyone recognizes."

There is near-unanimous accord that Edmunds is a powerful fund-raiser and constituency builder who exudes warmth and charisma. Director of Development Jennifer Jacobs is considered by most people with whom I spoke to be adept and savvy.

But prior to last fall's hires with the Meyer Trust's grant, PICA's development staffing was light for an organization of its size. Perhaps this is why PICA was unable to shed its reputation as "a place that didn't call you back," as one high profile curator commented. Members of PICA have frequently complained that they are not given notice of programs and events—poor mood music for a donation pitch.

"I believed that patron support was pretty much intact. I didn't even have a budget to take them out to lunch."

—Stuart Horodner

It is typical of organizations with charismatic leaders to have weak leadership elsewhere. Some evidence suggests that PICA's board does not have its eye on the financial ball.

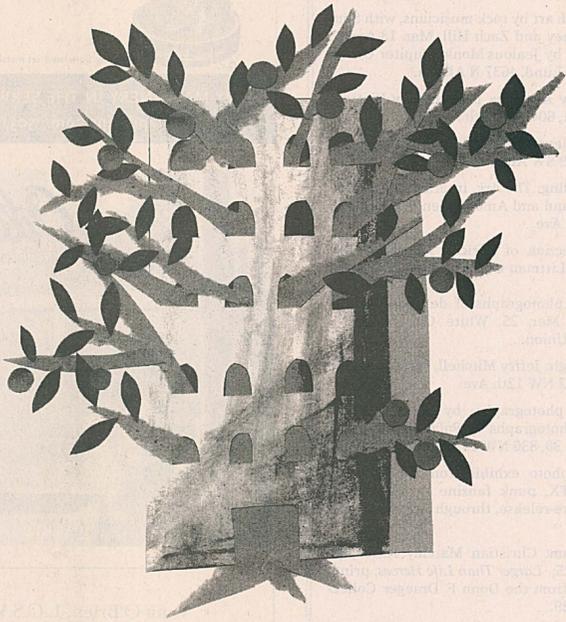
Off the record, a longtime PICA supporter and advisor referred to PICA's board as a "cheerleading squad." Uncomfortable with making critical comments, board members fail to exercise real leadership or provide responsible financial oversight, and cost overruns for events and programming have been frequent, the source said.

Statements from Horodner are perhaps the most surprising, indicating lax planning and coordination and a low set of expectations toward his fund-raising responsibilities.

"We didn't have a conversation about fund-raising when I came. Kristy wanted to give me a free hand and relieve herself from having to do everything. I was introduced to lots of patrons and past patrons, but not in terms of affecting future giving. I believed that patron support was pretty much intact. I didn't even have a budget to take them out to lunch."

Money isn't everything, though. PICA also had a hard time drumming up interest in its pro-

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At the limits of mourning

ALFREDO JAAR'S ART DOESN'T ADDRESS TRAGEDY, IT SELLS IT

By Jason Loeffler

In early 1994, against the promise and prosperity of the most expansive and penetrating worldwide economic boom in modern history, within the borders of a small, central African republic, a medieval violence was taking place. In one hundred days, nearly 800,000 people would die under a silent cloud of evil in Rwanda.

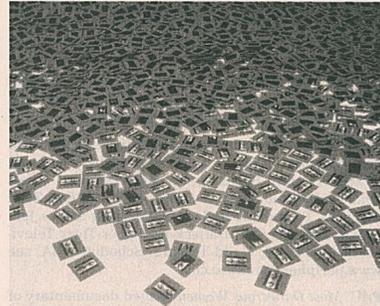
By the time the story surfaced in international news bureaus, the killing had in large part ended. The few photographs published by mainstream news outlets were taken from the vantage point of an overhead helicopter, from faraway hillsides, from across the border. These mostly depicted throngs of refugees fleeing the violence, only to meet their deaths by dysentery and cholera far from home.

It is amidst this tragedy that Alfredo Jaar's most recognized and celebrated photographic investigations unfolded. Jaar, representing no news bureau, photographic agency or corporate interest, and at great personal risk, traveled to Rwanda to reckon the lives and deaths of the Tutsi minority and Hutu majority and document the bloody chaos and devastation that swirled through them both. In less than a month, Jaar took thousands of photographs: the hatcheted bodies of the murdered, the faces of their survivors, the tattered remains of the shattered capital, Kingali, and the verdant, radiant central African countryside within which so many mass graves and killing fields would later be discovered.

After a period of reflection and recuperation, Jaar set down to the work of making art. He developed 550 photographs, entombed each of them in an 8-by-10-inch black box and inscribed a caption on the cover detailing the miserable and banal contents of each photograph. These boxes then were stacked in rows and cubes—reminiscent of Donald Judd's *Primary Objects*—softly, funereally lit from above. In this work, *Real Pictures*, Jaar allegorizes our alleged inurement to the facelessness of genocide. Jaar believes it is better to bury the images altogether and hand the work of mourning over to the written word.

The Eyes of Gutete Emerita presents a queerly architectural testimonial to a particular story of death and survival. One million slide reproductions of a single image—a tightly cropped pair of eyes looking right back at the viewer—are piled

on an enormous light table. These are the eyes of Gutete Emerita, a 30-year-old Tutsi woman who witnessed the murders of her husband and son by Hutu *interhamwe* while attending Sunday mass. Jaar narrates her story through the simple repetition of her eyes, a terrible, spectacular synecdoche for the enormity of the Rwandan genocide. Jaar tests every strategy of representation to give presence to the horror of genocide: the room-sized and site-specific installation, kinetic forms, video projections and, especially, the photographic light box. But by the conclusion of Jaar's Rwanda project we are left with his disappointing admission that in the strange, heightened context of



ALFREDO JAAR, *THE EYES OF GUTETE EMERITA*, 1996 (COURTESY GALERIE LELONG, NEW YORK)

mass death and pain, images are meaningless.

News photographs seem contentless and contextless, politically innocent, transparent things that artlessly convey the facts of an event. A rudely dismantled body, a hatcheted corpse, a tightly framed image of the eyes of survivors, these pictures elicit a faint emotional response and do not comport agency. We silently bear witness but are not necessarily galvanized into action much less motivated to comprehend. If these documents, through which we apprehend the far side of the world, can no longer elicit an emotional response in a viewer, if we really don't "see" them at all, if they are "meaningless," as

MURALS / continued from page 1

ago, the murals are a remarkable sign that life can go on after the primary economic engine of a place quits running.

Estacada owes its existence to two forms of resource extraction: the harvest of old growth trees and the construction of dams to produce hydroelectric power. The town was founded in 1904, at a time when the richest men in America were in oil and railroads. The smart money was looking to the spread of the electrical grid to guarantee its continued dominance. The Clackamas River, with its large volume of water running through a relatively narrow canyon, provided ideal sites for dams, and the town's founders were affiliated with Oregon General Electric Company—now PGE. Oregon General Electric bought up all the interurban and outlying railroad lines in the Portland area, ran a railroad line out to the Estacada town site and built two dams on the Clackamas within a few miles of where the town now sits.

It doesn't take many workers to run a dam once it's been built. The railroad made agriculture profitable by providing access to markets, but for most of the 20th century, the jobs in Estacada were primarily logging jobs. That all changed when the spotted owl controversy shut down the timber harvest in the mid-1980s.

On the side of the Napa Auto Parts store at the east edge of town is a large mural titled *The Cycle of Wood*. On its left edge, two loggers cut down a large tree at the border of a forest. Moving to the right, the mural presents a sawmill, a pulp mill, a house under construction, a pile of milled lumber and a group of products derived from wood that include explosives, ammonia, disposable diapers, a variety of paints and varnishes, paper and fungicides. On the far right a hillside is covered with houses.

Lead artist on this mural, the third in the series, was Artback member Joe Cotter. Cotter is a balding middle-aged man with a luxurious snowy beard, a veteran of the communal hippie life that was common around Estacada and nearby Eagle Creek until the '80s. He says he thought carefully about how to handle the controversial subject.

"I was trying to represent accurately what's going on in the timber industry," he says, pointing out that "we're all using this stuff that comes from trees." He researched his subject carefully, tagging along with a local logging crew and taking lots of photographs. While he was painting the mural, loggers would sit in their trucks across the parking lot at Sluggo's, a local hamburger stand, and offer suggestions. He repainted the tool that one of the loggers in the mural is using to drive a wedge because a logger told him he hadn't got it quite right. Rick Fridell, a local logger, says "Logging was the foundation of this community," and calls the mural "a great expression of the culture of Estacada and how it was founded."

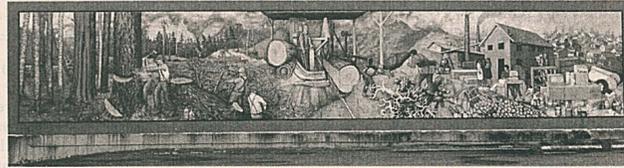
Cotter is quick to point out that it's impossible to please everyone; some environmentally conscious viewers have accused him of being a tool of the timber industry.

"People bring their own point of view with them," he responds. "I tell those people they should take a closer look at the mural." He points out that his mural takes the viewer from a pristine

forest to a housing development.

"Public art is for everybody," he says. "The mural's accurate, and I wasn't editorializing."

Local history is the subject of two other Estacada murals, *Early Trains of Estacada* and *The Ginseng Story*. *The Longhouse Mural* on the side of the local Thriftway portrays an idealized prehistory to the town, a Native American village with totem poles and a ceremonial canoe with a shaman standing in the prow. Four others, including *The Cycle of Wood*, portray civic-minded aspects of the local area. For example, *A Day on the Clackamas* is a very cham-



THE ARTBACK, *THE CYCLE OF WOOD*, MURAL (ON THE NAPA BUILDING, 213 SE MAIN STREET, ESTACADA, OREGON)

ber-of-commerce friendly mural depicting happy people, tourists one presumes, fishing, boating, swimming and camping on the Clackamas River, which is the southern boundary of Estacada. *Fishing the Clackamas* is nostalgic, featuring men and women in pre-WWII clothing doing exactly what the title says. The most recent mural, *All the World is a Stage*, has upwards of 90 local residents who are involved in the arts. There are painters, potters, sculptors, dancers, singers, actors, musicians, writers, poets and jugglers, and the mural is, among other things, a statement about how large and diverse this part of the Estacada community is.

None of those murals have been controversial in the local community. The general feeling in the town is that the murals are a positive addition that makes Estacada a special place. However, *The Tree of Life* and *Celebration '98*, the mural on the side of the Harmony Baking Company, left some of the community's more conservative members scratching their heads. Pastor Brent Dodrill of the First Baptist Church of Estacada says "I think the murals are a good thing, but there's two that don't really have a connection to the town. I don't understand what the idea behind those two murals is. It's kind of vague."

Celebration '98 was designed by Artback member Kolieha Bush. Bush has lived in the Estacada area since the 1970s. Back then, she says, "This is what my life was like. We all frolicked in the ferns. I think of Eagle Creek when I look at that one. It's a different history, a social history, one that some people don't see. We wanted to do something more universal, something uplifting and fun, rather than a straight historical mural."

In 2002 Bush collaborated on *The Tree of Life* with two other Artback members, Reeva Wortel and Emily Hyde. In addition to the menagerie of animals depicted in the mural, several humans grow out of the tips of branches. Their skin is patterned like the bark of a tree. It is the presence of these human figures that upset a small but vocal minority in Estacada's Christian community.

Pastor Dodrill says "Someone could look at that mural and say man is depicted as equal with all the other animals. From a Christian perspective, man is God's unique creation. It comes down to creationism versus evolution."

Local antique dealer Cliff Gavic, whose shop

Jaar himself has asserted, then what is it about fine art that lays a special claim to articulating the meaning (or nonmeaning) of genocide?

Are we truly desensitized, our faculties deluged by a relentless cataract of images? Perhaps it is not the fault of the images themselves, but rather due to deeper, structural problems. After all, advertising and marketing draw upon the latent power of the image with simplicity, precision and mastery. Advertisements *move* us to act. It is not that we have reached the end of images; rather, we are at the nadir of imagination.

With regard to the political and emotional complexity of genocide, ought we not then turn our intellectual integrity—our critical senses—to identifying and interrogating the real psychology of obedience that makes weak men and women feel strong by oppressing others, as Martiniquan political writer and activist Frantz Fanon compellingly argued in the dawning days of postcolonial thinking?

Jaar's work is not about catastrophe. It's not even about genocide. Instead, Jaar redresses the semiotic imprecision of images. He attempts to exceed the rational form of the photograph but founders at the limits of mourning. Despite the appearance of penetrating engagement, Jaar eschews a presentation of Rwanda that is structural, political, social, psychological and historical. His is deeply personal and, as such, not very useful for engaging these global, tragic events. We are instead left with a series of academic, affectless Benetton advertisements that enrich and ennoble the moral authority and reputation of the artist. Ultimately, his work drowns in the selfsame system it set out to critique.

Though Jaar's work is a peerless demonstration of compassion, it does not invite a practical ethos or didactic dimension. It does not promote or exemplify an understanding of the intellectual and psychological forces that fomented murder and repression in Rwanda and elsewhere on a very precedented (and predictable) scale. Ethics are the seat of action. Jaar's works are weak ciphers that signify our failing. We stand, see, consume the nightmares of others, and then turn away, back into the daylight of free markets, liberal freedoms, the protection of jurisprudence and the warm and safe places we call home.

Alfredo Jaar will give a lecture titled "It Is Difficult" at 7:30 p.m. on March 10 at PNCA, 1241 NW Johnson.

Jason Loeffler is a writer and associate editor of the *Organ*.

is around the corner from *The Tree of Life*, says that the "small controversy" over that mural "has not overshadowed the positive effect" of the murals as a whole. But "from the Christian perspective," Gavic says, *The Tree of Life* is a "New Age evolutionary type of thing." In his view, "The New Age religion is tied in to crystals. God is taken out of the picture, leaving an anything-goes morality. It all comes down to evolution. With random selection there's no order. It's an unknown, primitive, beastly type of thing."

The controversy grew heated enough while the mural was going up that Joe Cotter spent the night in his camper at the site to protect it. He was approached as the mural was being finished by two local Christians who were upset by "the monkey people" on the ends of the branches. They told him that people were praying for the mural's removal.

In the end, there was no vandalism, and the controversy has died down. "The murals do more to bring people together," Gavic says. "The controversy gets put on a back shelf over time."

For the first time in more than a decade, every storefront on Broadway, Estacada's main commercial street, has a business in it. There used to be two hardware stores in Estacada, but in a change that is emblematic of how the town is evolving, the Ace Hardware which used to be on Broadway is now a brewpub. Sluggo's, the hamburger stand where loggers hung out while they watched Joe Cotter paint *The Cycle of Wood*, has been torn down, and the site awaits redevelopment. A builder from Sandy is building the first new building that Estacada's downtown has seen in many years. The Safari Club was sold recently, and is now Hong's Chinese Restaurant. Former owner Glen Park's collection of big-game trophies is in the process of being transferred to a museum in Tillamook.

Estacada has survived the end of logging companies and sawmills as the town's major employers. During the late '80s and well into the '90s, the town felt like a place that might collapse in on itself. It feels less that way today, in part because of the murals. The murals signal a shift from an economy based on resource extraction to one that is more diverse, one in which the arts will perhaps play a larger role. It would be going too far to say that art saved the town, but the murals have given Estacada a source of civic pride. And while there is a feeling in some quarters that maybe 10 is enough, Artback is planning a new mural for next summer. It will be designed by Artback member Am Griswold and will celebrate the 80-year history of quilting by a local quilting club called the Skip-A-Week Quilt Club.

Kolieha Bush's bronze sculptures are represented by the Lawrence Gallery. Her paintings and sculpture are also found at the Spiral Gallery at 341 S. Broadway, Estacada.

Joe Cotter's paintings, as well as those of other Artback members, may be seen in many McMenamin's establishments, including the Crystal Ballroom. Cotter is also represented by the Spiral Gallery in Estacada.

Stevan Allred lives near Estacada. He is shown reading from a book in the *All the World is a Stage* mural on the back of the Hi School Pharmacy. Allred is Head Kitten Herder for Dangerous Writing and can be reached via their Web site, www.Dangerouswriting.org

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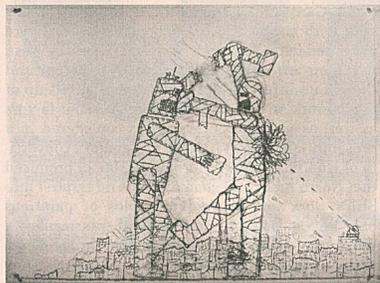
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REVIEWS



ED STUCKEY, GIANT MUMMY VS. MECHA MUMMY, 2003, CHARCOAL AND PASTEL ON PAPER

DRAWN FICTIONS

Marylhurst Art Gym

January 12-February 13

Like many shows before it, *Drawn Fictions* grafted onto territory already charted by MOMA's sprawling 2002 survey *Drawing Now: Eight Propositions*. In her essay for that exhibition, MOMA curator Laura Hoptman noted a tendency among contemporary artists to redeploy techniques from scientific illustration, architectural schematics, design and commercial illustration to create a refined end-product, discarding the previous generation's fetishistic attachments to process and mark-making.

Taking a similar approach, Art Gym curator Terri Hopkins presented works by eight West Coast artists whose drawings are built around fictive narratives and mapping systems, borrowing from the vernaculars of children's books, comic books and other sources. Unfortunately for *Drawn Fictions*, Hopkins didn't overcome the handicap of starting with a stale idea.

Among the more interesting works was Jay Stuckey's *Three Large Airplanes*, in which the planes are situated on a white ground, locked mid-flight in a triangle of destruction. Smearred, staccato charcoal marks both represent a rain of bullets and reveal the process of wrestling the image into existence. The powers animating Stuckey's drawings—which also feature fighting mummies—are the wickedly elaborate disaster fantasies acted out by adolescent boys. Ed Coolidge's maps of cancerous urban spaces, bursts of jumbled cubes, splayed arteries and scattered planes are similarly linked to childhood reverie—e.g., the poetics of Legos. The poorly balanced compositions spilling off their pages echo Stuckey's nervous but conscious refusal of mastery over line.

Joseph Biel's small graphite drawings depict anti-heroic characters amidst dire (and somewhat corny) predicaments: a man wading through an ocean of bombs, a snowman riddled with lit matches. Unfortunately, the potential force of Biel's surreal narratives is dampened by his overly cautious, contained-but-not-controlled line. By contrast, Tom Prochaska lays down his absurd and slightly grotesque street scenes with a jerky and broken line that's expressive. Likewise, Joseph Park has a way of invoking moody scenes with apparently effortless gesture in his brushy, monochromatic, oil-on-mylar drawings. His dark portraits of an elephant living a sad life as a man of leisure are simply cool.

Pat Boas' meticulously rendered pigmented ink-and-acrylic drawings depict twisted and striped forms—tails or penises—covered in feline furs. Most terminate in a rounded pink nub suggesting fetal growth or grafting. Isolated on plain buff grounds, the shapes also reference letterforms and decorative symbols, resulting in fuzzy confluences of flatness and form (a tension that could have been heightened if the compositions had played more with pattern relationships).

Inevitably, as with any survey, one begins to ask, "Why this? Why now?" Like Hopkins' prior exhibition, which cataloged the plural forms of regional abstraction, this is more of a late-night Taco Bell run than a thoughtfully prepared meal. By now, the idea of "drawing as a noun," in Hoptman's terms, is rote, so why not seek out a newer or narrower nexus? Coolidge grouped with Los Angeles' Adam Ross and the Flash collaborators Anna Fidler and e*Rock might form one kernel around eros and simulation. Or why not stick with the idea of drawing as narrative illustration, but don't settle for less than powerfully unsettling examples that speak to each other? How about Park alongside Erik Stotik's Tarkovsky-like visions of lost faith and redemption? Victoria Haven's shambling anti-architectural drawings with graphic tape on carbon paper remixed with collaborative Kozyndan's crazed Hokusai-meets-Escher street scenes? How about anything by Henk Pandter? *Drawn Fictions* had plenty of compelling characters, but they didn't belong in the same story.—Jayla Ros

YSA!

Howard House, Seattle
December 6-January 31

It's an unremarkable shot: a generic moment at an urban café. In the background, patrons order coffee from the espresso bar, pay at the register, walk in, circulate and walk out. Students seated at tables and engaged in unmannered conversation occupy the foreground. This projected video loop is one half of a double-vision diptych entitled *Café* by Peter Mundwiler. At right, a nearly identical video projection screens an alternate universe: the actions and locale are the same, but the actors are different and they move at a different pace than their counterparts. The effect is somewhat mesmerizing: my eyes shift, left-right, left-right, tracking the differences in timing between the two scenes.

Mundwiler videotaped two and a half minutes of a typical day at the University of Washington's Parnassus Café and then scripted out every action, notated every event on a master timeline and enlisted volunteers to reenact the scene. The result encourages a heightened awareness of the gestures and rhythms that we filter out of every-

day life. In this age of hyperreal dramatizations, such as "reality" television, Mundwiler's piece is powerful and poignant, an updated twist on the age-old artistic game of representation.

Mundwiler is one of 32 artists featured in the recent exhibition *YSA! (Young Seattle Artists!)* at Howard House in Seattle. *YSA!*—a playful riff on the rubric for iconoclastic Thatcher-era artists who came up under media mogul Charles Saatchi's patronage—is a remarkably engaging survey of the more innovative side of the current Seattle scene. Howard House Director Bill Howard asked 14 of the artists he represents to contribute work as well as invite an emerging artist to submit one or more works. In addition, the show had work by four artists newly inducted into Howard's stable.

The media and sensibilities ran the gamut. Video was well-represented by Gary Owen's *Backhoe Painting #1*, which documents the artist painting an abstract landscape using the arm of a heavy-duty excavator. Juniper Shuey's *Chapter II: Surrounds Us Without Knowing* deploys a video floor-projection that vividly produces a simulation of the artist floating in a sealed water tank. Shuey's movements are ambivalent—neither panicked nor still—but continually flowing, suggesting a merg-

tion's nifty density ("plenum," in Stoic philosophy, proposed that all of space was filled with matter), is to have the viewer re-perceive the room itself. A rather awkward rectangular build-out on one side of the space holds a bathroom; across the room the artists have re-created this shape in the negative, with strings cut away to just above head-height, an empty space that balances the filled one opposite (and gives the viewer a place to stand that is not occupied by strings). All the strings between two large parallel openings in the long walls have been made the bright unreal green of an LED screen, so that a sightline becomes not quite solid, but no longer theoretical. The inversion of these two elements—the bulky space projected into emptiness, the theory embodied—is philosophically satisfying, and presents the space as a series of interactions that without the strings would still happen, but generally go by quite unnoticed.

Linear Plenum reminds you that the room is both gallery and hallway, a space dedicated both to transition and to lingering, and by making it both empty and full, the artists preserve the paradox. It is, as it happens, wonderfully specific.

—Emily Hall

FOUND IN TRANSLATION

Bullseye Connection Gallery
February 5-March 20

Showcasing the research and education arm of Bullseye Glass Company, the young Bullseye Connection Gallery has, somewhat surprisingly, continued paying its rent on a sprawling Pearl District loft as established galleries have closed or moved to more affordable ground. Although Bullseye has been manufacturing art glass since 1974, the medium hasn't caught on with many local artists. Add to that our avoidance of anything from Seattle (land of Pilchuck and Chihuly) and a gallery devoted to showing 12 months of high-quality glass art in Portland is a bind.

Bullseye is working its way out of this problem with an admirable good-neighbor policy. For years it has invited local artists into the factory. For the artists, it's a chance to play in a very expensive sandbox. In return, Bullseye gets free R&D and creates a market where there was none.

The current show, unfortunately named (no matter how much I love Sofia Coppola) *Found in Translation*, is the most recent to display the products of such residencies. Four Northwest painters and printmakers, Judy Cooke, Mark Zirpel, Eric Stotik and Martha Pfanschmidt, worked at Bullseye under the direction of Head of Research and Education Ted Sawyer, whose pieces are also being shown in the upper floor of the gallery.

If you've seen the exhibit, chances are your impetus was something like, "It would be interesting to see what Erik Stotik does with glass." Given that, the works are surprisingly good; the experiment helped by the fact that the artists have strong and diverse voices that carry over into the new medium.

Stotik's offerings, in four distinct series, are the most exuberant, each featuring his recognizable ominous mood and figures. Judy Cooke's

JESSE PAUL MILLER, CELL PHONE LANDSCAPE NO. 1/MERRIT ISLAND, FLORIDA JANUARY 25, 2003 5:45 PM, INKJET PRINT

ing of the self and the environment. In most cases, the nominating artists' works are not displayed near their corresponding nominees, hence knowledge of who-picked-whom is privileged information. Once you have this information, however, certain connections appear: Donnabelle Casis and her nominee, Margie Livingston, are both "painter's painters," working with organic forms. While Casis' *Untitled 21-04* offers a mysterious scenario entangled with almost-abstract fleshy entities, Livingston's *Structure (yhw vlt)* transforms trees and branches into matrices that hover at the threshold of abstraction, yielding wonderful layers and planes whose depths unfold after prolonged viewing. Jesse Paul Miller's *Cell Phone Landscape no. 1/Merrit Island, Florida January 25, 2003 5:45pm* is a framed inkjet print with an image of a cell phone and a phone number. Dial up the number and you'll hear a field recording (of cell phone fidelity) of what sounds like a walk on the beach. Like Mundwiler's *Café*, the piece is a timely twist on the idea of representation.

Howard envisions the gallery "working as a conduit for established artists and emerging artists to meet and begin an exchange of ideas." *YSA!* is evidence that the connections between artists—personal, aesthetic and otherwise—are creating quite vibrant exchanges in Seattle, resulting in an interesting array of work.—Thom Heilesen

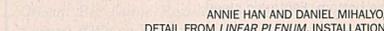
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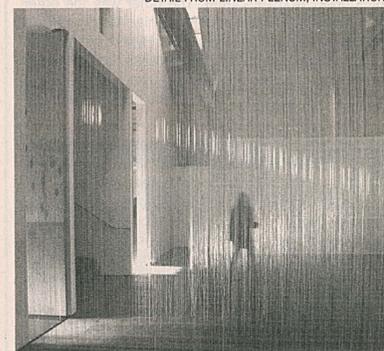
The idea of the site-specific work has become so overfamiliar that the real thing can take you quite by surprise. Such as in *Linear Plenum*, an installation by Lead Pencil Studio—the architects and artists duo Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo. With a few simple sculptural gestures the artists return body to such abstract architectural terms as volume and symmetry, and engage a space that has become familiar unto invisibility.

The space, frequently given over to art exhibitions, is a light-filled room which sits between two halves of an architect's office. Han and Mihalyo have filled the room with lengths of industrial monofilament that hang from the high ceiling nearly to the floor, spaced regularly but staggered. The strings completely fill the room, and your field of vision; they shimmer like a heat mirage, and looking at them too intently brings on the kind of slight craziness that op art does. The ends of some of the strings have twined together, which gives the feeling, as you look through the neat regimented lines, of stray pencil marks, and saves the installation from a too severe visual (and intellectual) effect.

What the artists propose, beyond the installa-



ANNIE HAN AND DANIEL MIHALYO, DETAIL FROM LINEAR PLENUM, INSTALLATION



ERIK STOTIK, UNTITLED 21, 2003, KILNFORMED GLASS (PHOTOGRAPH BY B. BACHHUBER)

minimal, layered pieces, the ones you saw on your drive-by down NW Everett Street, are engaging. To make the inevitable comparison with the artist's usual medium, Cooke gains the most in the transition to glass. Stripping away the brush stroke, she proves her mastery of composition. Seattle printmaker Martha Pfanschmidt, whose work on paper relies on layer and pattern, probably had the most natural transition to composing with glass, and her collection shows it.

Yet only Mark Zirpel's work, perfectly lit in the dark back room of the gallery, made me forget the experiment. His lunar studies, silvery white topographies of powdered glass, would stand alone in any context. Zirpel, a native Oregonian living in Seattle, is not a newcomer to glass. His pieces transcend the medium while at the same time optimizing its qualities. *Lunar Observation* hits this note dead on—a delicate 19-inch-square piece slumped over a slowly rotating metal stand, a magnifying glass fixed so that one can observe the changing light and texture of the surface as it turns.

There are a handful of names that I could suggest to Bullseye for their next show, and probably years' worth of artists whose reputation would compel you to stop by and see the results. In a town that sometimes lacks a spirit of experimentation, it's worth experiencing a little awkwardness to support artists' attempts to branch out.

—Meagan Atiyeh

ROY MCKAMIN

Henry Art Gallery, Seattle
February 7-May 9

Roy McMakin began his career in the 1980s as a painter and sculptor, creating objects that, in his own words, "happened to be in the shape of furniture." Shortly after, he received commissions

to design functional furniture for private homes, offices and institutional spaces—including the Getty Center in Los Angeles—and, since then, he's added architecture to the mix. As clear distinctions between disciplines weaken, McMakin finds ample opportunities to deploy his self-described "hillbilly-modernist" aesthetic. In the redesign of an industrial space slated to open as a gallery, the entry doors are installed into a gigantic double-hung window that also works as a sculptural addition to the front of the building.

Curated by Michael Darling of LAMOCA, *A Door Meant as Adornment* is Roy McMakin's first midcareer survey. The exhibition features 80 works from the past 20 years and includes a number of commissioned, site-specific pieces. Like his modernist predecessors (Charles and Ray Eames, Arne Jacobson, Verner Panton and others), McMakin succeeds at the intersection of art and design, with furniture that is both functional and elegant. McMakin's suite of six coffee tables, *Light Coffee Tables*, is precious in its simplicity. Each table stands no taller than 2 feet, and is constructed of varying woods and metals and dressed in browns and yellows. Other pieces, like the neon, cotton-candy colored *Writing Table and Chair and Small Petal/Wong Server*, built of maple and enameled in cream, are so subtly crafted that attention is called to the work's design and not to its message.

McMakin strays (and strains) when he overburdens his work with conceptual winks and nods, forcing the viewer to acknowledge its humorlessness. Such is the case with *Roy McMakin's Charming Homes for Today*, which includes a series of pencil drawings introduced with a cloying "Once upon a time..." story, and a wool carpet with a lengthy quotation about decorative furniture stitched into it. Laid out at the exhibition's entry, viewers are unsure whether or not to walk over it.

Since he lives in Seattle, McMakin worked closely with Henry Art Gallery curator Elizabeth Brown on the exhibition layout and installation. Despite this collaboration, the show is overcrowded and any clear articulation of McMakin's process is absent.

"Survey," to me, means a comprehensive overview of completed works, as well as maybe an accident or two or a work in progress. McMakin's doodlings (*A month drawing in the cursive style!*), sketches (*Roy McMakin's Charming Homes for Today*) and renderings (*Architectural Projects, 1989-2003*) are there all right, but I was nagged by the false suggestion that McMakin perfected his ephemera as he created it, thereby depriving the viewer of the opportunity to see how an art student evolves into a renowned artist.—Katie Kurtz

MERCÉ CUNNINGHAM

Citywide 50th Anniversary Celebration

On a Saturday afternoon in February, choreographer Mary Oslund stands in front of a group of dancers in the Reed College gym, preparing them for their performance. They'd learned three phrases in 10 minutes and she was about to teach them a fourth. The process is stripped down to essentials: although the performance will include music, lights and props, the dancers are rehearsing with none of these. They are in Merce Cunningham territory, where none of the usual rules apply.

Fortunately they have the highly gifted Oslund whose own style was partially formed by her studies with Cunningham in New York and at Cornish College in Seattle. Oslund explains that the dancers will perform the phrases not by linking them in patterns or narrative but by the technique that Cunningham is famous for using: chance.

Cunningham embodies the modernist values of fascination with process, a stripped-down aesthetic and an almost religious devotion to experimentation and change. He brought the ego-effacing trends of that movement to the ego-driven arena of dance. The result is that his technique stands as a touchstone of what we understand as modern dance. In a master class at Oregon Ballet Theatre, Cunningham's assistant Robert Swinston gave Portland dancers a taste of that technique's rigors, marrying classical grace with an unclassical emphasis on the continuous line down the back, neck and torso. In class, Swinston pulls the pigtail of a dancer to lower her head into the rounding curves that the choreography requires. Swinston, who's been with the company for 20 years, demonstrates the fruits: a powerful grace.

But technique is a lifetime commitment of training and back at Reed they have the lifetime of a fruit fly—one day. For the performance, the gym has been transformed with fabric, lights, mirrors and video. This is in further homage to Cunningham's collaborations with composer John Cage and artist Robert Rauschenberg, which were based on artistic independence. Cage composed his scores knowing only the number of dancers in the piece; on their first European tour Rauschenberg made the sets from bits and pieces he found backstage wherever they performed.

What are we going to see? The audience and the performers are equals now because neither one knows. For 20 minutes the dancers cross the floor in twos and threes, executing the phrases they learned the day before. The audience is distracted by the lights and the sounds; the music hardly seems connected to what is happening on stage. We're accustomed to an organizing principal but there is no center here. The lights go up and we rub our eyes, unsure of what just happened. A crazy experiment? A moment we were constantly missing? Something boring, or fleetingly cool?

Then the piece is performed again. The use of chance to decide entrances and sequences means we see an entirely different piece. "I always feel that movement itself is expressive, regardless of intentions of expressivity, beyond intentions," Cunningham once said. His work is imbued with the value of pure movement. You wait for something to happen, and at the same time nothing does and everything does and it's dance.

—Merridawn Duckler

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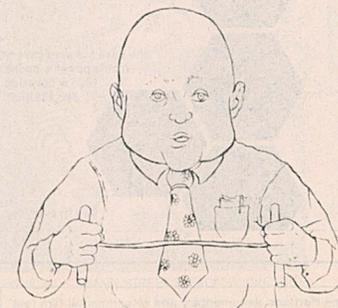
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REVIEWS

michael c. mcmillen

RED TRAILER MOTEL

april 10-june 13, 2004

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a walk-through with the artist begins at 7 p.m. in the gallery

vanessa renwick

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april 10-june 13, 2004

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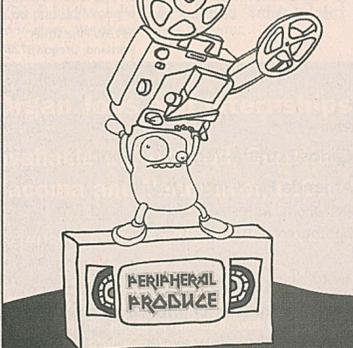
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GREGG RENFROW
Elizabeth Leach Gallery
February 5-28

With the advent of photography, painting's bond to representation loosened. Painting became an autonomous art form rooted in the qualities inherent to its materials, flat unprimed canvas impregnated with pigment and paint. Nowadays, painters working in this tradition often find themselves caught in a complex dance with the "ideal," codified by critic Clement Greenberg; the "spiritual," a lingering side effect of abstract art; and the relentlessly "material," the slick and colorful extrapainterly surfaces that are ironic counterparts to contemporary abstract painting and which dominate visual and consumer culture.

Bay-area artist Gregg Renfrow paints by pouring a mixture of pigment and polymer over transparent, cast-acrylic panels. On display at Elizabeth Leach Gallery, the panels hover about an inch from the wall, allowing bright, even, gallery lighting to strike the front of the panel and simultaneously reflect off the wall through the back of the piece, electrifying the ultrathin washes of color. With the exception of the sinuous streams and diffused color of *Cerulean-Pthalo Blue with Orange and Magenta*, Renfrow's new work emulates, perhaps unintentionally, the supersaturated color of a high-definition display as much as the photon glow of midcentury television.

It is difficult to look at Renfrow's paintings without tracing the arc of abstraction. A practice which began as a remove from representation, abstraction now emulates the medium it set out to eschew; Renfrow's work morphs into the representation of blank, colorful video screens. Perhaps this jaunt into "low culture" is a move in the right direction. As a badge of high culture, abstract painting too often relies on defenses either overly simplistic, presumptively spiritualist or mind-numbingly oblique to be of any use to those who believe art is made not only to be seen, but also to be talked about. Abstraction's "fall from grace"—into the realm of superattractive, technological consumer products—communicates a revelatory vision of what we place our faith in and where we seek solace. Perhaps Gregg Renfrow's works are an ambivalent homage to painting's ever querulous engagement with the world as it is, not as it might be.—Stephen Cleary

WHITFIELD LOVELL
Cooley Gallery
January 28-March 3

The artist Whitfield Lovell unearthed an ugly incident in American history—buried for 80 years and almost forgotten—and created a moody installation that was both nostalgic and haunting. *Whispers from the Walls* transformed the Cooley Gallery at Reed College into a walk-in diorama of an early 1900s African-American community. "Rising River Blues" played continuously on an ancient Victrola, the lights burned low, the walls murmured and laughed and people who had been dead a long time were back again.

While a visiting artist at the University of North Texas in Denton, Lovell discovered that there had been "a thriving African-American community called Quakertown, in the center of Denton, from 1875 until it was forced to disperse in 1924." The community was perceived as a threat to a neighboring women's college, and the Ku Klux Klan forced the residents to sell their property for almost nothing so the city could develop the land into a park. "I decided to build a house to commemorate those people who had been displaced and pushed away." The installation was first shown in Denton, in 1999.

Not a strictly interpreted period piece, the assemblage of old furniture and personal effects bypassed the intellect and went right for the heart.

SPALDING GRAY disappeared in January this year. His prolonged, severe depression and previous suicide attempts are well-known. The police investigation suggests that he drowned himself, slipping unnoticed into New York harbor from the deck of the Staten Island ferry. Many things will eventually be said about Gray by the mainstream press. But when the *Organ* asked me to write a remembrance for him, I decided to acknowledge his earlier, often unheralded work in theater, which shaped his autobiographical and monologic style.

Gray cofounded the Wooster Group in New York City in the mid 1970s with Jim Clayburg, Willem Dafoe, Ron Vawter, Peyton Smith, Kate Valk and Elizabeth LeCompte. The Wooster Group's shows were rigorous, precise and critical performances that forced audiences to re-examine their perceptions about society and human existence. *Three Places in Rhode Island* (three separate plays developed between 1975 and 1979) featured Gray portraying his past and present self while other actors presented fragments of text and action drawn from multiple sources, including Gray's history, popular play texts, found props, tape recordings and whatever else resonated in LeCompte's directorial framing of the work. The first play of the trilogy, *Sakonet Point*, immediately established the Wooster Group as an innovator in American theater. As for Gray, the "Spalding" we know from *Swimming to Cambodia* and *It's a Slippery Slope* emerged in these early performances as the character that he would play throughout his career to convert his private life into public narrative.

The Wooster Group subjected commonly understood cultural and theatrical signifiers to intense scrutiny. When they broke the rules of theater by implying (and sometimes literally saying), "Okay, now I am going to show you this thing and you decide what to make of it," audiences were no longer passive spectators, but engaged witnesses. The Wooster Group did not endeavor to solely entertain, mollify or allegorize. When they projected an image of Spalding's mother onto an actor in *Rumstick Road* (the second play of the *Three Places* trilogy), they blurred the distinction between a face and a mask. When they juxtaposed scenes from Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* with Timothy Leary's recording, *L.S.D.*, they questioned their responsibility as artists to uphold the moral attitude of a canonical work and to respect the "ownership" of words. When they re-presented Thornton Wilder's seminal *Our Town* in blackface, they provocatively interrupted their audiences' secure views about race, racism and righteously held cultural stereotypes. Through their work, the Wooster Group invited audiences to question the

TOLLBOOTH

Tacoma, Washington

First you have to find it.

Billed as the world's smallest wheat-paste and experimental film and video gallery, Tacoma's Tollbooth is cleverly disguised as nothing special.

Even when looking at it, you might (if you don't know in advance what it is) mistake it for a concrete hump of good intentions, a kiosk built by the city to broadcast cheery tidbits of Tacoma lore.

That's what it was originally, more than two decades ago, which explains why it rusted in place like the Tin Man. People don't live in Tacoma because they're seeking lightening and brightening tips from a talking head planted on the sidewalk.

They want to be alone. Don't we all? The rap is, we're nice but distant. We have our own friends, and you're not included. We're the nicest people you'll never know.

Some say it's because there's a strong Asian influence, meeting up with a heavy draft of cold-country Europeans, immigrants from the northern edge. Edvard Munch's *The Scream* is an internal portrait, after all. If you'd met him at a dinner party, you'd have thought he was just fine.

Years ago, when photographer Joe Bartscherer lived in Seattle, I was standing with him in Pioneer Square when he turned to me and said, "Nice town you got here, Regina. There are towels in the bathrooms and cars in the street. Where are the people?"

He high-tailed it back to New York, where undoubtedly he belongs.

I thought of him when I drove down to

Tacoma to see Tollbooth. Terrific videos are being screened there, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The art's tip-top, but the people are missing. I hung around on a Saturday for several hours, all alone at Tollbooth, where Broadway meets 11th Avenue.

Maybe my presence scared off others. I was hovering, waiting to share the wonder of it all. In the Northwest, that's deadly. If I saw myself hanging around with that eager expression, I would avoid me too.

It's public art without the public.

On the other hand, the Museum of Glass on the Tacoma waterfront is packing them in, and why not? The museum's plaza is fabulous. The waterfront it rests on happens to be a Superfund site, but why bring up the bad news? Under the fey of the audience, corrosive poisons continue to mutate, not that anybody's touching the topic at Glass Inc.

Art that is eager to wrestle with reality can be found at Tollbooth.

Funded by the city and created by artists Michael Lent and Jared Pappas-Kelley, it opened in December with the Pappas-Kelley and Corey Lund video *She Lost Her Head*, a comic look at cultural isolation.

Now running is Bill Daniel's video *Seadrift Texas*, through April 10. It's about pollution in a small seaport town. You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows, but you can pretend the wind's not there at all.

—Regina Hackett

Tollbooth features work by Bill Daniel through April 10; and Denise Smith, April 11 through June 2. Visit Tollbooth at www.artrod.org

Regina Hackett is the art critic at the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

THE COLLEGE ART ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
Seattle, February 18-21

Thanks to a press pass and the proximity of this year's College Art Association Conference, I finally took in one of those gargantuan annual get-togethers of art professors, historians, scholars, artists and others with serious connections to academia, publishing and exhibiting. There are 14,000 members of CAA, and 900 were registered for the conference. Seattle's convention center housed the activities on three levels, and my tote bag was filled with brochures and directories concerning 180 panels, plus various events, that ran from 9 am to 10:30 pm over three days.

If your first choice turned out to be disappointing, you could try something else, and that was often what I did in order to escape a monotone reading of a boring paper. Unfortunately, no training in elocution, much less performance, is required for advanced degrees.

That said, a few panels were terrific. Jeanne Siegel, the first panelist on "Eva Hesse Today," traced Hesse's style and content in relation to Jackson Pollock's paintings. During the 1950s and '60s Hesse saw 10 Pollock exhibitions and was impressed by his activation of space. Process, layering and chaos—all prominent in Pollock's work—became important to her. Jane Blocker offered a psychoanalytic view, relating the trauma in Hesse's life (she was a German Jewish refugee; she was divorced; she worked during an era of "paternal achievement"; she died at age 34 from a brain tumor) to her death-defying creative drive. To conclude, John Weber presented a DVD produced at SFMOMA on the Hesse retrospective of 2002.

"The Northwest School: Far Beyond and Deep Within" recognized the centrality of Mark Tobey within the Seattle group now acclaimed as the Northwest School, but also discussed two artists,



WHITFIELD LOVELL, DETAIL FROM WHISPERS FROM THE WALLS, INSTALLATION

The one-room house, which was the centerpiece of the installation, was built from salvaged lumber and furnished with rough antiques Lovell found in flea markets. The exterior was a patchwork of clapboards. The front door stood wide open. From hidden speakers, the sound of laughter and quiet conversation filled the small room. Inside, charcoal portraits emerged ghostlike from the water stains and wood-grain patterns of the walls. Lovell looked through thousands of archived photos to find models for these drawings, which boldly declared what small photos could have only quietly requested: "We were here once. Don't forget us." —Brennan Conway

validity of the facts presented and to consider the actors' subjectivity as a critical part of the performance.

Spalding Gray and his partners at the Wooster Group changed the meaning of theater. Speaking personally, they influenced what theater means to me, and they constantly remind me of why I work to resist and confound the conventions of the stage. While I only met Mr. Gray once, briefly, I am grateful for his creative influence and artistic legacy.

The following text contains facts from my personal history arranged with Gray's words and history. To activate these sentences, you must use your memory and imagination.

I'm missing. An onion floats by the ferry hull. Fantastic sleep.

I'm missing. Alveoli absorb salinity. An onion floats by the ferry hull. In Jerusalem, Rhode Island. Fantastic sleep.

I'm missing. Alveoli absorb salinity. An onion floats by the ferry hull. A tangram taped onto a garage floor breaks. In Jerusalem, Rhode Island. Sand in the bottom. Fantastic sleep.

I'm missing. A red tent tumbles down Wooster Street. Is my "witness-self" out of sync? Alveoli absorb salinity. An onion floats by the ferry hull. A tangram taped onto a garage floor breaks. I cradle a cup of gray tea for the talking man behind the door. In Jerusalem, Rhode Island. The entire bed is rocking. Sand in the bottom. Fantastic sleep.

I'm missing. A red tent tumbles down Wooster Street. The other was the other within me. Is my "witness-self" out of sync? Alveoli absorb salinity. An onion floats by the ferry hull. How small a thought it takes to fill a whole life. Hypertonic nicotine fix with a talking head. A tangram taped onto a garage floor breaks. I cradle a cup of gray tea for the talking man behind the door. In Jerusalem, Rhode Island. The entire bed is rocking. Sand in the bottom. Fantastic sleep.

I'm missing. A red tent tumbles down Wooster Street. The constant witness whittles a new soul from an old source. The other was the other within me. Is my "witness-self" out of sync? Air sacs absorb salinity. An onion floats by the ferry hull. I see myself suspended in a banyan tree performing *Mother Courage* under a fall moon. I investigate my actions. How small a thought it takes to fill a whole life. Hypertonic nicotine fix with a talking head. A tangram taped onto a garage floor breaks. I cradle a cup of gray tea for the talking man behind the door. I'm sleeping like a kid again. In Jerusalem, Rhode Island. The entire bed is rocking. Sand in the bottom. Fantastic sleep. I see myself sinking. Wrapped in the arms of the sea.

Bryan Markovitz is a cofounder and the director of Liminal Performance Group.

Emily Carr and Clyfford Still, not usually associated with the Northwest School. They, too, were grounded in the land and environment of the West, but their art took the spirituality and cultural themes in different directions. The relationship of Carr's work with British Columbia's social factors as well as symbolic imagery was considered in a presentation by Gerta Moray of Canada's University of Guelph. Panelist Herbert R. Hartel reminded that North American shamanism is integrated into Still's work and showed examples of paintings based on spirit flight and physical transcendence plus others depicting shamanistic implements, such as rattles and bones.

Finally, there was "Untidy Minds: Current Problems in Intermedia Historiography," which wasn't as esoteric as the title implies. It had to do with the problems writers have in analyzing, interpreting, evaluating or even documenting new media, collaborative multimedia, real-time based work, online presentations, etc. The panel's lead discussant was Judith Hoffberg, a former librarian and specialist in artists' books. Having been involved in advances in documentation and art for more than 50 years, she brought the valuable perspective of time to the issue. Because digital technology, in itself a new medium, has speeded up not only the transmission, but also the amount of information at loose in the world, the problems for writers and theorists become magnified. So what's the solution? The panelists didn't know, but they're working on it.

A highlight of the conference was running into people, mostly former Portlanders, I hadn't seen for a while—among them, Weber, Sue Taylor (on sabbatical in New York), Susan Fillin-Yeh and Mike Taylor (now sculpting and teaching at the Institute for American Indian Arts in Santa Fe).

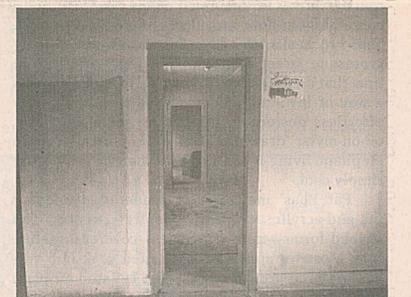
Next year's conference will be in Atlanta. I probably won't be going, although Atlanta in February has more appeal than Seattle in February.

—Lois Allan

KEN ROSENTHAL • STEVE FITCH
Blue Sky Gallery
February 5-28

Ken Rosenthal's work is a meditation on the convergence of the past and present within the photographic frame, as well as on photography's inherent ability to inspire false memories. His blurry, wistful photographs in the series *Seen and Not Seen* closely resemble staged, vintage family photographs. Taken as a group, however, they fall flat, as each photograph repeats the same blurred effect, muting the exhibit's promising thesis.

Steve Fitch more successfully articulates the thematic content of nostalgia, documenting abandoned and dilapidated Great Depression-era houses, churches and roadside joints from the long-forgotten corners of the American West. Fitch's



STEVE FITCH, FROM THE SERIES GONE: PHOTOS OF ABANDONMENT FROM THE HIGH PLAINS, 1991-2000

color photographs are meticulous surveys of these architectural relics. They trace the evidence of humanity left in the wake of forced expulsions of indigenous populations, bad economics, drought and the repressed failures of Manifest Destiny.

Sunday School in McAllister, Eastern New Mexico presents a small stage set with empty chairs and a music stand under a remarkably intact paper sign that reads "Jesus Christ, the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever." The school's charges are long gone and nature is now sculpting complex dioramas, strangely leaving certain ephemera untouched while paint peels, roofs collapse, walls buckle and sag all around. This is a fitting monument for a country that is one part honky-tonk, one part religious revival. Perched on the edge of the West, we question the trail we've trod upon as the opportunities that brought us here move to distant lands.—Stephen Cleary

Broadside No. 2

Broadside is a series of free, mass-edited prints featuring commissioned and recent work by artists we like. This issue features *Breitenbush* (2003, gelatin silver print) by Justine Kurland.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Justine Kurland lives in New York City. Her work has been shown at Gorney, Bravin and Lee in New York, Galerie Rodolphe Janssen in Brussels and Emily Tsingou Gallery in London and has been featured in art and photography magazines as well as *Vogue*, *Elle* and *The New York Times*.

During extended road trips, Kurland has visited and lived among hippie communes throughout America. This photograph was taken at Breitenbush Hot Springs in Oregon.

Kurland writes that "early 19th-century photography rendered the colonization of the American landscape in epic expanses, aestheticizing the wilderness as a receptacle for a new, self-made civilization and its utopian impulses. The communities I visited are a continuation or remnant of the pioneer dream, and these photographs operate inside of the American tradition of picturing a more perfect world."

BROADSIDE SUBMISSIONS:

Broadside is managed by interdisciplinary artist and curator Brad Adkins. Those interested in submitting work or offering a curatorial proposal can send a note of intent to broadside@organarts.org.



BROADSIDE NO. 2. *Breitenbush*, Justine Kurland, 2003, gelatin silver print. Edition of 7,000. Published by *The Organ Review of Arts*, March 2004.