

THE ORGAN

VOLUME NUMBER 1 ISSUE NUMBER 5 MAY JUNE 2003 FREE TO YOU

A LITTLE BIRD SAID

Gallery closings and openings in the Pearl – Two years into its reign as Portland's swankiest gallery, Savage closed its doors on April 15 due to financial setbacks. Founder Tracy Savage reports that she's searching for a smaller venue downtown or in the Pearl District, tentatively scheduled to open early this summer. At the end of June, Margo Jacobsen will close her 11-year-old eponymous gallery, which specialized in glass art, to move to Singapore with her husband. Meanwhile, just blocks away, Asian sauce tycoon Junki Yoshida and his wife Linda shelled out \$600,000 to open a 5,800-square-foot art gallery/bistro selling high-priced Asian antiques and furniture along with the sappy art their established Troutdale gallery has become known for. The Yoshidas plan to donate 10 percent of their commissions to the Doernbecher Children's Hospital Foundation.

Pacific Northwest College of Art – After a seven-month national search, PNCA announced in March that Thomas Manley will replace Sally Lawrence, departing president of 22 years. Manley, who spent the past two decades as a teacher and Vice President at Pitzer College, will take office in July and face a major fund-raising challenge to keep the college on its feet.

Artists' Tax Deductions – For years, arts advocacy groups have urged Congress to allot artists the same tax rights as those who donate works of art to charitable organizations. Thanks to Sen. Leahy (D-Vermont) and Sen. Bennett (R-Utah), the U.S. Senate approved a measure on April 9 allowing artists, writers and composers to take a full fair-market value charitable contribution for their donation of original artwork.

Some openings and events

"Out Loud" – Pacific Switchboard hosts *Peace Performance*, a weekly open-mic event open to poets, dancers, musicians, actors, and performers who want to gather together to address the war. Every Thursday at 7 p.m. Contact Greta at greta@pacificswitchboard.org for details.

William Pope.L – From May 7-July 26, the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art hosts William Pope.L's exhibition *eRacism*, a series of installations including sculptures, drawings, videos and 20 years of performance documentation. Pope.L will also develop an outdoor sculpture/performance at SW Third & Taylor in early June.

Best Coast – Artist/critic Jeff Jahn and Los Angeles-based curator Muriel Bartol will mount *Best Coast*, an exhibition of emerging and established artists from L.A., San Francisco, Seattle, Las Vegas, Vancouver, B.C., and Portland. Half of the artists are from Portland, including Harrer Fletcher and damali ayo. Opening May 19 at 7 p.m. at SE Water & Yamhill. Through May 24.

The New Space – The local community darkroom, studio, gallery and microcinema joins forces with Microcinema International for *Independent Exposure*, a bi-monthly screening of short films and videos created by emerging filmmakers. The next screenings will take place on June 18 and August 18 at 8 p.m., 1632 SE 10th Ave. See www.newspacephoto.com for details.

Oregon Biennial 2003 – The exhibit of 26 artists pronounced Oregon's best by curator Bruce Guenther opens June 28 at the Portland Art Museum. Artist's Talks will take place at the museum every Sunday at 2 p.m. during the month of May.

Still Showing

Marylhurst Art Gym – The Art Gym presents *The Occupations*, a 20-year retrospective of local artist D.E. May, whose "fictitious cartographies, obscurely annotated diagrams, and temple-like box works seem to come to us across a vast, musty expanse of time" (says Joel Weinstein, Portland journalist and editor of *Mississippi Mud*). Also showing: recent photographs from the *Portland Grid Project*, a collaboration by Christopher Rauschenberg and nine other artists who have photographed the city, one square map section at a time, since the early 1990s. Through May 17.

James Turrell – Through October 5, Seattle's Henry Art Gallery presents *James Turrell: Knowing Light*, new large-scale light installations as well as models and drawings of his 30-year land, sky and space art project at Roden Crater in Arizona.

Artist Opportunities

ORLO – ORLO is soliciting submissions for its Video Slam 2003 (July 12-31). This year's themes are "Stumps," "Water" and "Urban Hunter Gatherer." See www.orlo.org for guidelines.

TriMet – TriMet seeks community artwork that reflects the people, places and activities of North and Northeast Portland. Twenty-four pieces of art will be reproduced in porcelain enamel on 20" x 22" steel panels and placed at nine station platforms along the Interstate MAX rail. Submissions are due May 30. Contact Eva Lake at Eva5555@hotmail.com for details.

Regional Arts and Culture Council – Applications for Project Grants and Professional Development Grants for Organizations & Individuals will be available May 26. The deadline for Individual Fellowship Grants in Visual Arts will be announced in mid-May. Applications for Rural Artist Residencies Program are accepted anytime with decisions made monthly. Information and forms are available at www.racc.org and at RACC's new office in the Creative Services Center, home of the Oregon Creative Services Alliance and other creative companies, located at 222 NW Fifth Ave.

IT'S MY HAPPENING

...And It's Freaking Me Out

by Camela Raymond

What's going on with Portland's art scene? We know this much: there are more artists than you can shake a stick at, and every couple of months there appears yet another new art/dance/theater collective, gallery, or alternative exhibition or performance space (while others dissolve, or perhaps compost). Here are just some examples from the past year, plus or minus a couple of months: Soundvision, Field, Neon, Project Room One, Genuine Imitation Gallery, JK's Gallery, Compound, Center Space, The New Space, Water St. Dance Project, 2 Gyrlz, The Lecture Series, Spare Room, and Pacific Switchboard. Even with its failing economy, Portland remains a mecca for young artists from all over. They come, they settle and they make paintings, poetry, power point presentations, performance-brunches and on and on.

It's old news, really (at least two years old, maybe five; in a more general sense, 100 or so). But few mouths have tired of talking, bitching and making pronouncements and predictions about what all this artistic energy means and where it's going (or stumbling). The City of Portland has joined the fray, in its way, with the Mayor's new Cultural Economy Initiative, a program charged in part with getting to know young artists and making sure they're supported (see related story). And that simply adds another flame under the dialogue that continually bubbles among artists, curators, scene watchers and critics, and that boils down to this: With all the art that's getting made, is history getting made with it?

Or, to frame the question positively, what should Portland do to reach its creative potential? And what might its creative potential look like?

Those are the questions we asked five individuals who make, curate and/or write about art in Portland to address for this issue's feature on "Scenes as Community and Commodity." Each one approached the questions (and complicated them) from his or her own angle and experiences. Andrew Dickson, a filmmaker and performer who frequently deals with issues of regional identity in his work, writes about Portland's prospective status as "the place to be" (and to have been) in the first decade of the 21st century. Tiffany Lee Brown, a writer, performer, and editor of the webzine 2 Gyrlz Quarterly, discusses the opportunities and risks for artists in the Cultural Economy Initiative. Alicia Cohen, poet and founding member of Pacific Switchboard, argues for the essential importance of creating vibrant experimental art outside of established institutions. Jeff Jahn, artist, curator, and critic, tells artists how to get serious — or perish. And Bryan O'Keefe, a regular writer for *The Organ*, critically meditates on passing notions of "scene" in the Northwest.

We hope you'll read these essays, talk about them with your friends and colleagues and find something therein that demands your response in word or deed (or even intentional refusal) — that is, before you move back to Minneapolis.

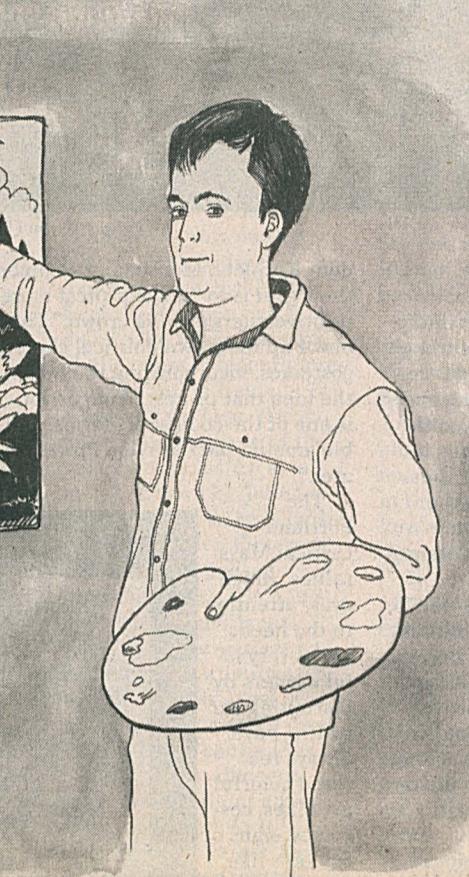


Illustration by Corey Lunn

A Shootout at the Better-Than-OK Art Corral

(Or, You're kidding me, are you serious?)

by Jeff Jahn

All right, gunfighter, draw! Shots whizz by, and suddenly you're just another statistic. It's a tough reality: five years after graduating, 70 percent of all M.F.A.s are no longer actually making art. M.F.A. or not, you, the aspiring artist, have little time to get things rolling — cultural endeavors are a waste of attrition.

No excuses: the level of achievement your work attains is mostly a construct of your own expectations. Thus, your expectations should be educated and calculated. In fact, put this down and read Robert Hughes' *The Shock of the New* if you haven't already.

True to life, artists are entitled to precisely Zilch. If you hope to have a lasting career, your first task is to be engaged with history. Let's start with some novice questions. Can you point out the differences and correlations between Gary Hume and Warhol, Julie Mehretu and Pollock? Nothing is more audacious or needed than American artists who really grasp history and understand that it's about continuity and change. Think of historical engagement as a way to calibrate your relationship with

PLEASE SEE JAHN ON PAGE FIVE

The Place Is Portland, the Time Is Now

by Andrew Dickson

There has been a lot of talk during the last few months about what's happening to Portland's cultural landscape. While some call for less talk and more rock, I have always been up for discussions of place, particularly this place. I understand the pull of Portland. I can identify with the graphic designers, punk rockers and painters who move here in droves despite our miserable economy — I was one of them seven years ago. Something remarkable is happening in Portland right now. Who wouldn't want to be a part of it?

While Portland artists have made plenty of significant work, outsiders typically view Portland and Gus Van Sant films as our only exports. But Portland's clean slate is being written on right now. I'm talking about the Lab, *The Organ*, Peripheral Produce, Seaplane, Red76, Fast Forward, the charm bracelet and like-minded additions to Portland's art scene. There are twice as many publications as there were five years ago. Underground galleries, record labels, film festivals and design collectives keep

PLEASE SEE DICKSON ON PAGE FIVE

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REVIEW OF ARTS

MAKE ART, NOT WAR

by Susan Beal

Portland was famously nicknamed "Little Beirut" by George Bush Sr. during Gulf War I, but whatever his son is calling us now is probably unprintable. Peace rallies regularly tie up downtown streets, political graffiti livens up billboards and walls, and even First Thursday openings are featuring art that is harshly critical of current events. When the war happens with lightning speed on every channel, the protest in response is thrown together quickly: rallies, art shows, graffiti and open mics. The counterculture thrives under adverse conditions. Artists and activists have plenty of fuel to spark their next fires, and the digital media to communicate their ideas instantly. Nobody gets to see everything; there's just too much going on for that.

One of the more remarkable local responses to the war is anti-war, the "instant and global" graphic design-meets-activism resource that Joshua Berger, managing director of the design firm Plazm, created with Jon Steinhart and Anthony Ramos. Several Portland artists have joined designers from six continents to contribute free, downloadable anti-war images for activists and designers to use.

Plazm has a long history of social activism. "When 80 to 90 percent of the media is controlled by multinational corporations, it is essential to have a forum for independent artists to speak," Berger says. That desire for freedom of communication impelled him to form the firm with partner Pete McCracken in 1991, during the first Gulf War. In January, with war imminent again, launching anti-war was an ideal way to "facilitate activism through creative messaging," Berger says. "Judging by the volume of hate mail I receive daily, people who feel differently are checking out the site too. What effect it has on those people, I don't know. At least I know the graphic messages they receive will be strong ones."

Edward King, a Portland painter whose mural with

PLEASE SEE WAR ON PAGE TWO

THE CITY AS CREATIVE ENTERPRISE:

What Every Artist Should Know About Portland's Cultural Economy Initiative

by Camela Raymond

Like an absentee father come home to make up with his family, Portland's city leadership is reaching out to artists and counterculture operators as it has perhaps never done before. In scruffy art spaces in the Central Eastside and Northeast Portland, Mayor Katz has been meeting with gender-fucking performance artists, skateboarders, avant-garde dancers and lesbian DJs, feeding them gourmet pizza while inviting them to confess their aspirations and frustrations and tell her how the city can earn their loyalty. She and Rosie Williams, the economic development specialist she hired to head the City's new Cultural Economy Initiative (the administrative unit that's orchestrating this love fest) are dropping hints that Playstations are in the offing: grants, professional development assistance, and even subsidized health insurance and live-work space for artists.

Has the City suddenly become enlightened, or is it up to something more selfish? Most likely, it's a somewhat muddled combination of both. At best, the Cultural Economy Initiative represents a dawning understanding that cities are, at heart (and increasingly throughout the corpus) cultural organisms that draw fresh oxygen from art. Or, in Williams' terms, "When you have people who have a passion for what they're doing, you can't help but have a city that's going to generate capital and wealth." At worst, it's a passing attack of paternalistic sentiment. Whatever the case, artists who want to make the most of the current situation will do well to examine the City's motivations — and their own.

What we do know is that the City's outreach to artists comes in response to newly influential ideas in regional economic development. City leaders no longer want just a well-educated, well-behaved workforce; now they want a "creative" one that can contribute to the technologically and culturally sophisticated industries ascendant in the 21st century. And artists have come to be regarded as essential agents in this transformation, although the link is actually more complicated and perhaps less flattering to artists than all the pizza might suggest.

For some time, regional development thinkers have argued that American cities must tie their futures to knowledge-based industries as they say goodbye to manufacturing jobs (which are moving offshore where the labor is cheap) and retail jobs (which are moving from the high-rent urban core to suburban malls in a car-centered landscape). To keep creating jobs that pay the bills, cities must compete where they can win, in industries that depend on their greatest resource: a concentrated population of smart, savvy, free-thinking people. American hands may be too expensive for anything but necessities like safe trucking and the small luxuries of fresh coffee.

PLEASE SEE CULTURAL ON PAGE FOUR

The Organ

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THANK YOU

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CORRECTIONS TO ISSUE #4

In "My Art Diary," artist Roger McKay, whose works were featured in LoveLake's Big show, was mistakenly identified as Thomas McKay.

Also in "My Art Diary," Yvonne Rainer's name was misspelled as "Rainier."

The Organ deeply regrets the errors.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

Didn't want the opportunity of responding to an intellectually questionable piece in your recent issue slide by. I'd like to offer a response:

Ben Sharvy's essay "Beauty Refutes the Liberal" looks to "prove liberalism wrong." Hmmm. I've tried the best I could with Mr. Sharvy's "argument" but sadly the only "proof" offered is, well... nothing. For such a bold proposal of an old debate one would hope for more of our contemporary criticisms than a rehashing of antiquities. "How about putting down the whip my boy, the goddamn horse is dead?" (General Butternut). Well, let us counteract Sharvy's stroking. It will be a good time.

First brushstroke: "Define your terms" (Voltaire). I suggest Mr. Sharvy explain his tortured use of "liberalism"; clarify its (his) assertion of being "right;" and elevate his "polemic" over mere tantrum. (Would he care to prove Wagner and Tchaikovsky are "windbags"?)

Second brushstroke: Romanticism as instruction manual on emotions? Following the maestro, as Sharvy refers to the Romantic program, might prick one's insecurity over fear and control if one's own sense of love is generic and infantile; but that is neither Tchaikovsky nor Toscanini's problem. If this is the music of studied fake orgasms, then I suspect the individuals who feel this way would refuse to be mounted by their partners for the sake of FEAR AND CONTROL. What's so "right" about that?

Third brushstroke: Ah, so Ben Sharvy wants to be left alone ("the right not to be bent to serve" for "the right to be left alone")? This "purest form" is based on an illusion that is impossible: the right to be left alone. (Surely I've misunderstood this most antiquated of points; we're all post-Postmodern here, aren't we?) One person's piss is a

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

WAR.....

Raul Mendez, *The Relatives of Who and What*, is currently on display at Portland International Airport, is more interested in exploring the gray areas of the culture of dissent in his art. "I don't want to slap people over the head with my ideas. I can't protest every day because I've got to work and pay my bills. I don't read every book by Zinn or Chomsky — but there's not one day since the war started that I've forgotten it was going on." He says that "painting, writing, all kinds of art are therapy — they make sense of what you're thinking."

King sees a commonality between the propaganda the pro- and anti-war movements use, their reduction of everything to good or evil, black or white. "When I'm at a protest, it's insane: the cops in full riot gear look like something out of George Orwell's 1984. I start thinking, 'Damn the cops.' But I realize that they're people too, and they're looking at a crowd of 30,000 wondering what's going to happen next. The mob mentality can be pretty scary." His recent work speaks to disillusion and the war, but he employs more politically ambiguous images like dead roses, a child's toy soldier and little girls' dresses to convey his ideas.

King also joined *Play Dead*, a public die-in organized by Zachary Renfro on the South Park blocks in front of the Portland Art Museum. Reno publicized the die-in through fliers and a post on indymedia.org, and 60 people participated. His idea was to "keep it as subtle as possible, and as open to interpretation as it could be. Pro-peace, anti-war, pro-war, pro-troops, wherever you were standing, it should still be a powerful image to see a mass of bodies like this. A woman in a black veil was there crying the entire time, holding a sign that said 'Right Now, I'm Ashamed to be Human.' That was one of the most intense parts of the whole thing."

Sam Gould and Laura Baldwin of art collective Red76, recently debated an outlet for their frustrations with the war. The two have started a group called USCUT (United States Citizens Unafraid of Thought) and are planning sidewalk teach-ins and events to "directly and positively engage with the public." Gould says, "An artist's goal, in my mind, is to create a dialogue with someone. For a long time I thought that my politics and my art and life did not mix. I'm finding now that that is impossible. They are inherently linked."

Chris Larson, a musician and filmmaker, recently created his first consciously political art piece, a 36-minute digital video called *DATA*. It pairs aerial footage of cities and landscapes, embellished by abstract Flash animation, with quotes and facts about past and current U.S. military interventions. Larson's music group, the Land Camera Micro-Orchestra, accompanies the shows with a dreamy live semi-improvised soundtrack. The film doesn't tacitly oppose war; Larson says, "To me, it is much more powerful to help facilitate a fuller understanding of the issues surrounding U.S. military intervention than it is to just convince someone of your beliefs. As citizens, we are hampered to find truth with regard to what our government and military are really doing. On both sides, pro- and anti-war, so many people are acting out of propaganda-induced fear."

The film has shown five times, including on First Thursday at the Go Gallery in the Everett Station Lofts. Larson says he strives to keep the work current: "The video has been re-edited for each performance with more and more relevant data. The last showing, after the beginning of the so-called 'Operation Iraqi Freedom,' included the Iraqi civilian death count as of the day of the show."

A Land Camera performance sparked Margery

Fairchild, a choreographer, to visualize the first image of her new piece, a collaboration with musician Jeff Brown. She sees frightening parallels between current American nationalism and the rise of fascism in 1930s Europe; her work, tentatively titled *Cockroach*, incorporates elements of street theater, cabaret and historical references from other wartime eras. She is planning a series of public performances on the streets during July, as part of First Thursday, Last Thursday and the July 4th holiday.

Fairchild cites other activists as inspirational: "The Radical Cheerleaders are such a highlight of protests. They lift spirits so much. They serve a beautiful purpose. And at the protest on March 20, everyone was looking around unsure of what to do after a confrontation with police on the Steel Bridge, and in rode Critical Mass — it was like one distressed army joined by another. It was a triumphant moment, almost Tolkaesque in scope!"

Cielo Lutino, a writer and city planner, organized a Portland chapter of the Radical Cheerleaders with stu-

inclusive of all of them."

Poetsagainstthewar.org inspired Nemo to collect 81 short anti-war poems for a zine anthology, *Shock and Awe*. He e-mailed them out to his mailing list, posted them on his site, monkeychicken.com, and then printed and assembled the collection with "incalculable help from the IPRC." He's distributing free copies through Reading Frenzy. Nemo and writer/printmaker Greta Marchesi are also planning regular Thursday night anti-war themed open mic nights at their Northeast Portland arts space, the nine-member collective Pacific Switchboard. Both of them are grateful for how quick and easy it is to organize events and contact people with e-mail. "For once," Marchesi says, "it's heartening how technology is working constructively."

Faith Farrug is attending the open mics at Pacific Switchboard to recruit people to join her anti-war project, Operation Papercrane PDX. "I started making a few cranes to hang in front of my house as ornaments. Then I had this vision of driving around Portland and occasionally seeing one." The sale of the colorful origami cranes benefit Mercy Corps. "My income limits what my response can be. So I thought, why not do this thing and give the money to the people who are trying to deal with the aftermath of the war. It's a fairly simple response, not angry or confrontational."

Kate Towers, co-owner of the clothing boutique Seaplane, has been creating her own hands-on anti-war art. "I thought, well, if we're going to bomb tonight, tomorrow morning we should put up an anti-war window at the store." She paired a shirt she made that said "Make Clothes, Not War" with a display of military clothes "reinterpreted with feminine details, like flowers." Rebecca Pearcy, owner-designer of Queen Bee Creations, asked about displaying a one-of-a-kind version of her popular Truckette handbag with a "no war" design over a pink and red heart. Towers says it and other peace-themed clothes and accessories by local artists have attracted a lot of attention from shoppers. "Personally, I think if you feel passionately about something, you should put it in your art," she says.

Topher Sinkinson and Dan Young, "average guys who hate to see fear and lies absorbed by the TV populace," are making one-inch yellow-and-orange pins with slogans like "Don't Am-Bush My Future" and "Resist War." With the help of artist Kristan Kennedy, they printed and made 250 buttons with 75 different messages and then passed them all out at the March 15 protest in downtown Portland. "It was nice to see people wearing them," Sinkinson says. "The button is a powerful protest tool, and this avenue is super-direct and totally anonymous."

As the war in Iraq enters its second phase and second month, it will be interesting to see how Portland artists respond. The community events and performances being planned now will be coming to a loading dock or arts space near you in the next few weeks and months. Anti-

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Video still from DATA, by Chris Larson, 2003

dent Kathleen Manseau in summer 2002. Lutino says their goal is to "make protest more interesting, and give positive energy to the crowd." The Radical Cheerleaders make up their own political cheers and create their own costumes, incorporating red, white and blue to counter the idea that protest is unpatriotic. Lutino says, "Activism is one of the coolest art forms, and it requires an incredible amount of creativity. Protest marches are great theater."

The Portland Critical Mass rallies, which draw attention to the needs and safety of bike riders by disrupting car traffic, have always featured colorful art bikes, costumes, signs or symbols like "a gas pump nozzle with a baby head attached," says Fred Nemo, a longtime Critical Mass activist and poet. The weekly rides through downtown, held in response to the war, have drawn well

over 100 riders every Friday. But Sara Stout, another Critical Mass member, points out that there has been less ornamentation lately and more of a "serious mood, reinforced by the heavy police presence and their arbitrary arrests." Nemo says Critical Mass is "more eclectic than simply the bike community, the activism community or the art community, because it is

war we will certainly be up, and updated, for the duration; DATA will continue to be re-edited as events unfold. Sinkinson says wryly, "It sounds like we have a few more global wars on the horizon, so we are starting our button assembly line now to meet future demand." What else will we be seeing on the sides of buildings, Web sites and

LETTERS & OPINIONS

To the Editor:

These are my answers to the questions posed in Matthew Stadler's concluding paragraph ("Lessons from the Kootenay School of Writing," issue #4):

1. Yeah, what?
2. Well, at least a little, sure.
3. I don't think I understand the question.
4. Maybe.
5. Definitely.
6. Yes: We will revise our concluding paragraphs when they consist entirely of questions. We will double-check the grammar of our concluding sentences, if we care about that sort of thing. We will cease to blame our housemates for the disappearance of our keys when we know full well that we must have misplaced them somewhere ourselves (the keys, not the housemates). We will remember to ask people about contemporary poetics. First we will find "poetics" in the dictionary, in case somebody asks us what we mean when we ask them about contemporary poetics, then we will start right in with the asking. Maybe that's not so ambitious after all. So forget it.
6. (revised answer) Hopefully.

Sincerely,

Matthew (Hattie) Hein
Northeast Portland

From the Editor:

Stadler's questions were as follows: "And what of Portland? Will new collectives like the Spare Room catalyze any public discussion of contemporary poetics? Will we hear from Steinman or LeGuin, that is outside The Oregonian's and Tribune's book review pages? Will Doug Marx's keen intelligence about contemporary poetry find a forum more ambitious than the daily paper? Will writers take an interest in the vitality and rigor of the local film and video community, which is itself constructing a kind of public poetics that writers could engage and learn from? Will we do anything more ambitious than polishing our manuscripts in workshop, plotting careers, and cashing our modest checks for reviewing the latest books from some distant, other coast?"

ESSAY CONTEST WINNER

In the February/March issue, the editor of *The Organ* announced an essay contest on the following topic: "You are applying for my job. Editor of The Organ Review of Arts. Please write a cover letter describing your aims for running this paper in 1,000 words or less." A highly democratic system of securing awards and assigning judges was established, too complicated to repeat here and sort of followed, resulting in a prize pot bubbling with several artworks and services from local creative types and two judges, the estimable Tom Blood and Curtis Knapp — in their own words, "judges who live in Portland, Oregon." With all the essayists who scraped up their best ideas and formed them into sentences clamoring for a try at the editor's job (which was never really up for grabs, actually), we can only wonder what methods Blood and Knapp used to separate the cream from the milk — fistfights and deep afternoon siestas, perhaps. We thank each and every essayist for their time, effort and excellent ideas, which we shall most certainly exploit selectively. Here is the winning essay. Runners-up will be posted to www.organarts.org ASAP.

The people involved with *The Organ* should be happy with the work they've done and continue brightly and satisfied. Camela is a fine editor and I don't think *The Organ* should be looking for anyone new. I think the paper is a success — humble, honest, friendly and using critical language more to describe things people see, rather than trying to lock some horns with the "real world" New York or prove/refute historical theory-type stuff. Art not as historical contentions but as the medium of people, a commerce of the social life of this area. A view of the arts paper, then, as a guide to the interactions and relationships, to the inspirations available, and to the creations and potential in P-town, this view will have us look around for access, not celebrity. Artists have their own relationships with their work and good ones needn't be legitimized by the news. Because they are making a living and hopefully good choices for themselves....

Camela, if you're looking for some editorial ideas here a few:

What does [the paper] want to be about? It's about arts, mostly Portland arts, mostly people you know and how they're showing. What makes people make the art people make is the other artists, the people people talk about and the area. If it slips into an attempt to build up or tear down people's work then I think it's on the wrong track. Documentation, good; judge, bad. But how can it be an example of itself as a report, as a representative of the

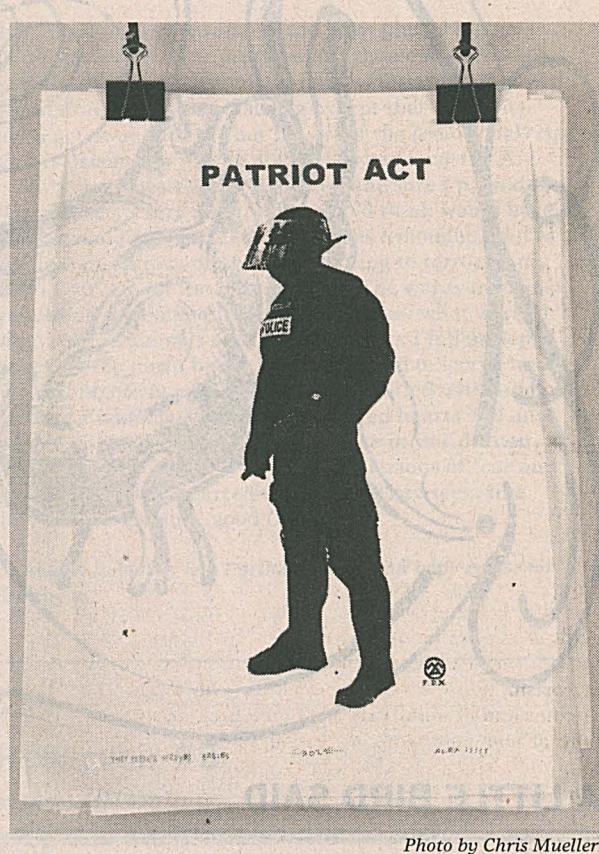


Photo by Chris Mueller

The Art of Alex Lily

"If you support the war in Iraq, then you support the destruction of antiquities, and if you are a proud American nationalist, then your pride is built on genocide."

— Alex Lily

Alex Lily has been creating prints of riot cops based on photographs taken at protest demonstrations since Bush I was in office. His work is on view at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics in Santa Monica, Calif. His stencils, posters and stickers are frequently visible in public places around Portland.

gallery walls? After talking to so many Portland artists this week, I can honestly say that in times like these, the only thing I'm looking forward to is what they come up with next.

To find this art:

www.anti-war.us

Edward King: mural, Portland International Airport, near the A-B-C security checkpoint; a November 2003 solo show at Stumptown Coffee, 128 SW Third Ave.

Shock and Awe: www.monkeychicken.com or Reading Frenzy

Anti-war open mic nights at Pacific Switchboard, Thursdays at 7 p.m., 4637 N Albina St.

Operation Papercrane PDX: papercranepxd@msn.com

USCUT: www.red76.com

Seaplane: 3356 SE Belmont St.

Die-ins: www.indymedia.org

Critical Mass: rides through downtown Portland every Friday afternoon

Radical Cheerleaders: performances at rallies

DATA screenings: www.thelandcamera.com

Susan Beal Is making art magnets to raise money for Oxfam's humanitarian aid in Iraq. Info: <a href="

PERFORMANCE, DANCE & FILM

Yvonne Rainer's Avant-Garde Humpty Dumpty

After Many a Summer Dies the Swan: Hybrid
Four Wall Cinema Collective
April 5, 2003

by Jeremy Rossen

What is the place and purpose of art in times of political and social turmoil? This question is crucial for everyone, especially artists, to address at this point in time. The United States is currently led by a hegemonic administration that is using the "War on Terrorism" to facilitate its goals of exploiting other countries' resources and of ruling the world with extreme violence. The war is not on terrorism, but a war on the environment, women, people of color and humanity. The U.S. has been spreading terror both at home and abroad, playing upon its citizens' fears to erode civil liberties and to criminalize any form of dissent. This is not only turning our country into more of a police state every day, but also laying the groundwork for a potentially bleak future. Yvonne Rainer explores art's power to address these and many other issues in her new digital video piece, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan: Hybrid*, which she presented in front of a sold-out crowd on April 5 at Four Wall Cinema Collective.

Rainer began making short, formalist-inspired dance films in the early 1960s. At that time New York was teeming with avant-garde filmmakers and artists such as John Cage, Andy Warhol, Jonas Mekas, John Coltrane, Merce Cunningham, Trisha Brown, and members of the Fluxus Movement. In the late 1960s, Rainer moved toward creating multimedia, performance-based work that incorporated 16mm film projection with live dance. Eventually this led to her first feature film, *Lives of Performers* (1972), which used both documentary and fictional story-telling techniques to explore romance between dancers.

In a radical departure from most avant-garde filmmakers of the time, who were more interested in structural/minimal/conceptual filmmaking and art, Rainer began to use a narrative style of feature filmmaking. Her films chose to focus more on personal relationships, radical politics (she was raised by two anarchist parents), social issues, language, feminist theory, gender issues and, most specifically, narrative and avant-garde film's failure to adequately address these issues. By this time Rainer had left the dance world in order to focus on her films, feeling that these concerns were too complex to represent through dance. Since that time, Rainer has amassed an amazingly solid body of film and video work and established herself as one of the most important multimedia artists of the past 30 years. At the age of 68, Rainer continues to make new work, traveling the world giving lectures and teaching her dance pieces to others.

After Many a Summer Dies the Swan: Hybrid is a dense, multilayered look into the cultural chaos of pre-World War I Vienna. The video uses historical stills and the musical accompaniment of Arnold Schoenberg's piece, "Transfigured Night," to represent the culture of Vienna's elite and avant-garde art world. This footage is juxtaposed with film of a dance rehearsal of Rainer's *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*. This dance piece was commissioned in 2000 from Rainer by the Baryshnikov Dance Foundation. A series of quotations from artists and radicals, including Oscar Kokoschka and Ludwig Wittgenstein, add to the visual complexity of the video. There is a series of pans that move to the left, right, up and down, slowly hiding and revealing texts and images. These also give the

piece a nice pace and flow, rather than sinking in the heavy weight of the subject matter. The video presents the social disintegration of Vienna and the failure of the bourgeoisie to embrace change, while also detailing an almost-powerless avant-garde.

Rainer warned the crowd beforehand that it was impossible to take everything in on one viewing, and that it would take multiple viewings to follow the video more closely. It definitely does. Following the video was a fairly long Q&A session in which the audience members seemed to be caught off-balance, unsure of how to react to what they had seen. Rainer graciously answered all of the questions, mostly of the "How did you get into dance?" variety.

However, there was one exchange that stood out. Rainer was asked what she felt the power of her artwork was and if she felt like it could change the dismal state of the world. Her response was that although she was now skeptical about the power of art, she believed that you had to live your life like everything you did mattered, that it was important and could change the world.

The next night, I finally caught up with Rainer in person. Feeling a need to ask some of the questions that were

not brought up during the past few days, I asked her what she thought about the '60s radical and avant-garde artists who had entered the world of academia and institutions in order to continue making their work. Was their work now catering to this new, more conservative audience? And did she feel a part of the group of avant-garde artists that embraced the "academic and institutional canon" that she had fought against in the '60s? Rainer's response to these questions was, quite simply, that you have to pay the rent and could not always bite the hand that fed you.

Her answer was disappointing, since it seemed to assume that everyone plays into the art world's "rules" about how to get grants, exhibitions and, ultimately, recognition. The avant-garde artists and short-sighted "revolution-now" radicals of Rainer's era may have figuratively died, as she stated in her 1996 essay, "The Avant-Garde Humpty Dumpty," but, contrary to Rainer's views, there is a worldwide movement today of avant-garde, radical and DIY artists who thrive outside of the "system," pay the rent and continue to believe that social change and revolution are possible.

After Many a Summer Dies the Swan: Hybrid (2002, 30 min., video) is available through its distributor, Video Data Bank, Chicago, Ill.

Jeremy Rossen is a filmmaker, member of the Four Wall Cinema Collective and a bicycle mechanic.

the program provided a rare chance to see and support new projects at an early stage in their development.

Black Cat Orchestra is known for composing new scores that play live with silent films, a painstaking process of matching notes to frames which takes months to complete. This time they left it up to chance, playing sets of their original music with short films projected overhead by Portland-based filmmaker Steve Doughton at the Zeitgeist Café. At times the synchronicity was uncanny: each cut in the opening film was perfectly matched by the band's tempo, time-lapse footage of flowers blooming and fading in tandem with the rhythms and dynamics of the song. Other accidental pairings were more esoteric: a lively tango with an animated film of an Inuit legend; a klezmer dance with an instructional film about geometric shapes. Either way, the music and images were captivating on their own, but the sum proved greater than its parts.

Erin Boberg is the Assistant Curator of Performing Arts at the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art.

Bill Brown and the Surveillance Camera Players

by Ashley Edwards

In the tradition of the Situationist Internationale and urban agitprop activists, Bill Brown is furiously constructing a movement to raise awareness of how video surveillance threatens individual freedoms in the United States. A New York privacy advocate and founder of the NYC Surveillance Camera Players, Brown visited Portland on March 13 for the International Arts Group Exposition hosted by Red76. In the dimly lit yet bustling Laurelhurst movie theater, Brown led the audience through a film tour of his savvy guerrilla theater campaign against the unblinking eye of the surveillance camera. The next day, Brown offered a short surveillance camera tour of downtown Portland.

Since 1996, Brown and his troupe have manifested their opposition to unsolicited surveillance *within* the direct gaze of the camera. Standing in the focal range of surveillance cameras around the world, the SCP have staged adaptations of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* and other texts. Other performances have entailed exorcising the technology, praying to it or simply holding up a series of signs that read, "It's OK, officer," or "Cops with guns are watching you." All performances are silent since, as Brown explains, the law prohibits cameras from monitoring speech. Still, the SCP are heard and seen. They use their visibility — their public appearances, their interviews with the media and their comprehensive Web site — to "explode the myth that only those who are 'guilty of something' are opposed to being surveilled by known eyes."

Yvonne Rainer

Works [1966-2003]
Reed College
April 10-13, 2003

by Elizabeth Ward

During the early 1960s, experimentation at New York City's Judson Church changed modern dance. Prior to this point, dancers influenced by the Vaudeville tradition, such as Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and Loie Fuller, paved the way for the new barefoot dance that Martha Graham made famous with her deeply psychological and highly refined dances. Musician Robert Dunn's 1962 composition workshops at the Judson Church were a catalyst for a revolutionary shift in American Art Dance. Everybodies, movement and gestures dominated performances. Gone were the days of virtuosic dancing and spectacle. Performances were minimal or even pedestrian. Often trained and untrained dancers shared the stage, which

was not the classic prosecutorial stage of the theatre, but a gym floor. The Judson Church movement carried on after Dunn's initial composition class. Original students like Yvonne Rainer and later collective members like Trisha Brown went on to shape the postmodern era of dance. Even today, the tradition of movement at the Judson Church continues with weekly presentations of new and experimental work.

In a tribute to this movement and with a commitment to carrying on the legacy of the Judson dancers' work, local artist Linda K. Johnson and former Trisha Brown dancer Shelley Senter recently presented Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A* at Reed College. *Trio A* was the centerpiece of the performance, which also included work by Johnson, Trisha Brown, Remy Charlip and Bebe Miller. First performed at the Judson Church in 1966, *Trio A* is a historically significant work. Over the years it has had many incarnations. The first part of *The Mind is a Muscle*, a larger, three-part

evening-length work, *Trio A* is known for its continuous, nonrepetitive, even-keeled presentation. The dancers move through a wide range of movement without embellishment or acknowledgment of the audience. At Reed, *Trio A* was performed twice by Johnson and Senter and once by Reed students, allowing the audience time to digest the dance's patterns.

Senter and Johnson began the piece in profile while a 1968 statement by Rainer was read. Written during the Vietnam War, the statement ends in "a reflection of a state of mind that reacts with horror and disbelief upon seeing a Vietnamese shot dead on TV — not at the sight

of death, however, but at the fact that the TV can be shut off." At the end of this reflection the dance began. *Trio A* is full of turns, balances, foot taps, twists, straight arms, breaks, skips and odd coordinations, throughout which Johnson and Senter shifted in and out of canon. After the dancers came to rest, the movement was repeated to the Chambers Brothers' R&B hit, "In the Midnight Hour." With the addition of music, the dancers seemed even more at ease. At times they appeared to swim through the movement and music.

To highlight the work of two other important postmodern choreographers, Senter danced solos by Remy Charlip and Trisha Brown. Charlip's dance is a series of 88 movement sketches mailed to Senter for interpretation. Senter glided and paused through the movement while a child read a story written by Charlip. Senter is a beautiful performer and her fluidity was noticeable for a second time when she danced Brown's choreographic material. As evidenced by the number of her dances in the repertory of major ballet companies, Brown's work, while progressive, is more accessible to audiences and dancers than that of other Judson choreographers.

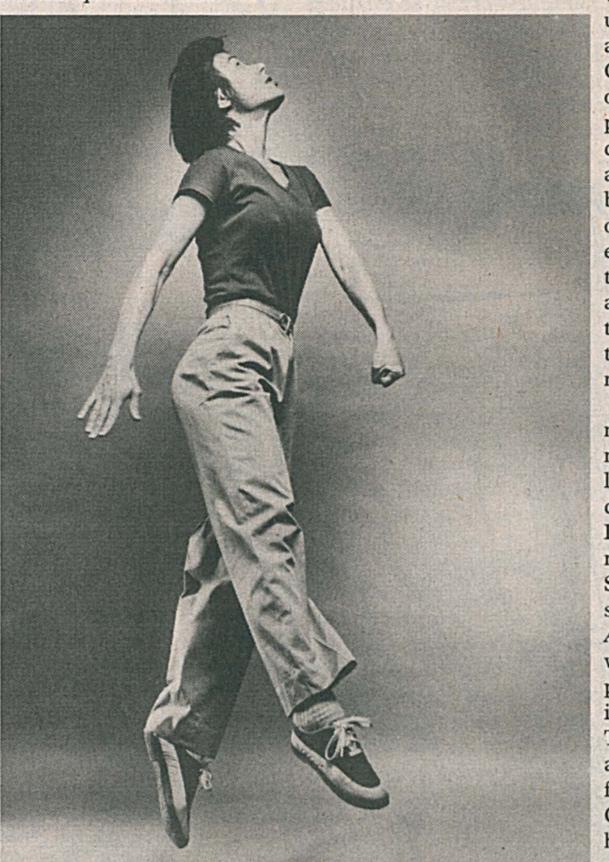
Linda K. Johnson danced her own choreography in *UNbecoming*. The solo began with the comforting sound of rain and thunder in the distance as Johnson drifted, suspended in light. Later an angry crash of lightning was heard while Johnson stood upstage, calm and composed. Jeff Forbes' lights framed Johnson as she shifting weight propelled her through the dance. Johnson danced a trio with gigantic shadows cast to the side and behind her. Midway through the dance she smiled and clapped in a moment outside of the serenity of the piece.

Johnson also performed Bebe Miller's *Rain*, a visual delight with a large square of green grass at center stage and Johnson costumed in a brilliant red dress. The piece began with subtle shifts, pauses and looks before shifting into quick action. The movement was strong and the music haunting. Johnson walked into a run around the grass before the dance slowly wound with Johnson resting on the grass. The emotive and dramatic gestures seemed to reference the modern dance of Graham that Rainer and the other postmodernists had rebelled against.

The concert finished with a repeat of *Trio A* by Johnson and Senter and the addition of Bill Boese, light board operator and Vietnam veteran. Wearing full military gear, Boese stood at attention center stage while Senter and Johnson moved effortlessly through the material. The program stated that this was Yvonne Rainer's latest deployment of *Trio A* in response to the current military action in the Middle East. The audience could watch the performance as before, but must do so while being reminded that not all is bucolic in the world.

In a world where everything, including dance, can be packaged in a slick illusion of perfection, the postmodernist movement's approach is still relevant and challenging 40 years after it began. The postmodernists attempted to break down the highly refined art of dance and imbue it with a sense of reality. This can be seen in both pedestrian-style movements or in simple acknowledgements of gravity. In Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A* one can see the roots of a common vocabulary of movement used today. By exposing current dance artists to this historically significant piece, Johnson and Senter illustrate their commitment to the further synthesis and development of dance.

Elizabeth Ward is a Portland-based improviser, choreographer, dancer and bicycle mechanic. This summer she and collaborators Margery Fairchild and Jef Brown will present their second evening-length work.



Yvonne Rainer performing *Trio A*, 1968

Photograph © Jack Mitchell 1968

BUY~SELL~TRADE

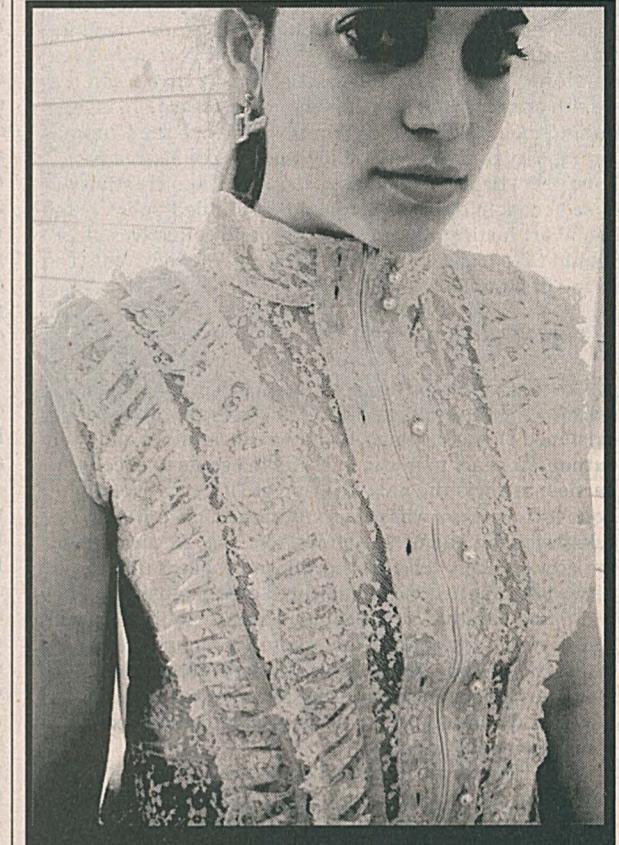
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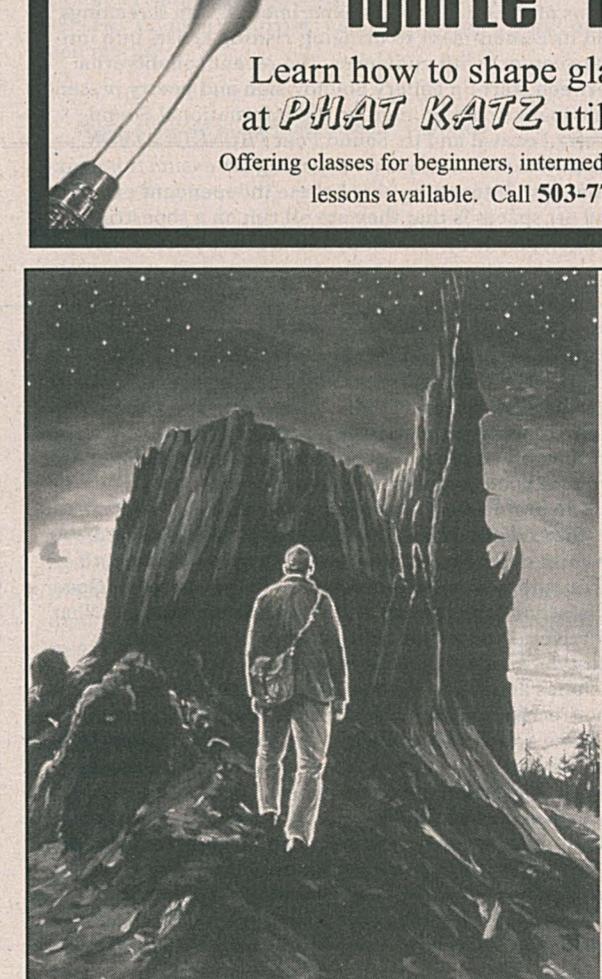


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Ashley Edwards is a local whale-lover. She likes to find poems, and she buys French stuff when she can.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

IT'S MY HAPPENING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

BROWN.....

Guys have finally found a use for us: the Boho creative community makes good bait.

The big fish is the "young creative class," a demographic group that can be defined to include anyone aged 18-34 who makes their money creating new ideas, technology or content. Because cities and their economic health are increasingly centered on ideas and consumption rather than the old-fashioned concept of industrial production, those that lure and retain creatives will ostensibly become economically and culturally vital, while other towns languish in boring post-industrial squalor. The creatively will invent self-cleaning toothbrushes, make critically acclaimed films, program death-defying software, start dozens of healthy businesses, and cure cancer. No wonder Portland politicians want their share of the goods.

The broad definition of the creative class includes marginally employed artists and Boho creatives, but don't let this fool you. In all likelihood, the City of Portland is desperate to attract only a segment of the creative class: the wealth-creating members whom one might call, in an unkind mood, the Creative Yuppies. To keep the Cruppies happy, City officials and policy-shapers appear ready to bolster Portland's burgeoning arts scene and creativity-based economic sector. Independent-minded Bohos, established art institutions and underground collectives alike should take measures now to influence the inevitable evolution of our city.

TRICKLING UP

Creative communities don't need urban growth analysts to explain what I call the Trickle-Up Theory. The existence of small, fringe, super-weird creatives and their output (from art to music to crafts to events to excellent parties) attracts the next layer up of DIY creatives and Boho loft-dwellers whose work is more slick, critically acknowledged and/or well-promoted. They in turn draw the economically feasible movers and shakers that the City wants to attract. Florida conducted intensive studies and found creative class people to be finicky, but drawn to diversity and tolerance. They wanted communities in which they could define themselves and create their own identities. Cruppies are looking for more than organic food and mountain-biking trails, and many don't care about the opera or ballet.

According to my anecdotal evidence, collected by living among Bohos and Cruppies in various cities for the last fifteen years, creatives of all stripes want originality and genuine expression around them. They want a zine-making resource center, a cafe with experimental music or an independent film collective. They want a smorgasbord of interesting performances, galleries, boutiques and record labels. Such things come to Portland courtesy of various Bohos.

But Bohos shouldn't look at Cruppies as mere hangers-on. "Trickle-Up" is the basic model, but the relationship between Bohos and Cruppies is actually complex and

symbiotic. For one thing, many of us move between the different layers. An artist might become a hard-earning Cruppie for a while, motivated by starting a family. Owners of a successful DIY-level gallery might close shop to resume their personal artistic pursuits. People often occupy both roles at once, moonlighting as artists and well-paid creative professionals.

Furthermore, Cruppies spend money on everything from "risky" new artwork to gourmet vegetarian food. As the excitement of underground activity and the aura of authenticity trickle up, money trickles down, occasionally feeding those who create art, music and performance, along with gallery owners and show promoters. Local writer Michael McGregor explores the situation in the Winter issue of *Metroscape*, a publication of PSU's Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies. He writes, "To sustain a vital arts community — one diverse and prosperous enough to attract international attention while both fostering and holding onto local talent — a city needs a large and active art-consuming public, one with the inclination and the money to support a variety of artists and arts organizations." This is where the Cruppies come in, breezing into art galleries and venues after their 12-hour workdays at agencies and software companies, wads of cash dripping from their pockets into the waiting hands of installation artists and performance poets.

Despite the symbiosis that exists between Boho artists and their creative class benefactors, a delicate balance must be maintained between the two groups' interests or the whole soufflé collapses. Portland presently has a wealth of Boho creators and a dearth of substantial patronage. That doesn't stop us from creating art and producing shows, but some of us yearn for the financial support that would allow us to do more and do it better. If we court the Cruppies too recklessly, however, we could end up being pushed out of our own city by high rents.

Artists are typically part of a second wave of gentrification (after punks). As wealthier households follow their lead, rents go up and Bohos lose their foothold. They can't afford to stay underemployed but highly creative, so most either scramble for their own yuppie jobs and start putting in 60-hour work weeks, or they split town and establish the next creative mecca in a friendlier habitat. Increasing competition and high rents also make it difficult for artists to find venues for the same galleries, designer collective shops, music shows and multimedia events that are part of a town's appeal to the creative class. The end result is a dull city full of the vaunted, wealth-generating creative class, many of whom will migrate to the next hipster spot at the drop of a hat. San Francisco followed this arc in the 1990s. Now many of those Cruppies are broke, and a lot of them are reading this, having moved to Portland to chase the creative dream.

REMEMBER THE ARTISTS

Clearly, it would not be in the City's best interests to promote the creative class at the expense of the actual artists. To keep the whole cultural ecosystem in balance, the City should offer artists resources such as micro-loans, grants and rent stabilization, which could be done with existing City resources and a minimal financial

investment. Larger policy decisions should keep the Boho artists in mind. Districts such as the Central Eastside could be specially zoned to respond to the inevitable developers' interest in gentrification while keeping

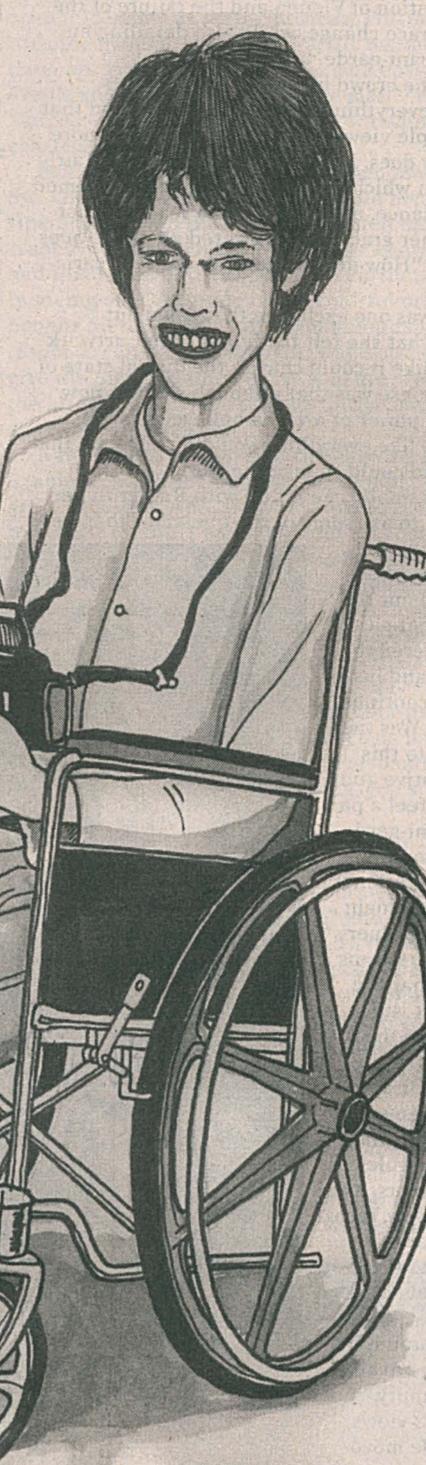


Illustration by Corey Lunn

artists from being priced out. The City could actively promote an effort to match up artists and collectives with currently unoccupied real estate. A special designation could be set up for local creative businesses, offering

and design, and our roles as artists and consumers."

Another art "space" based on an academic model that is intellectual but fairly nonacademic is The Lecture Series. Over the past year, it has offered lectures by local and visiting artists on subjects ranging from taxidermy to *Twin Peaks* to modeling theory. Especially interesting is the way the series skews the boundary between the work of art and art discourse, highlighting the performativity of the lecture format and critical voice.

Arts funding, art spaces, art events — all of these are important, but you don't need to wait to start creating your own experimental art scene. Spring in the wild and lush Pacific Northwest is an experimental arts laboratory. Just taking a walk is an immersion course in contingency, openness and irreducibility. So walk slower and look, listen, feel more carefully. A rigorous attention to exploration of and experimentation with what is right in front of us is perhaps the most radical resistance to the status quo. The very act of seeing the world (what seems the most unartistic act) is one of the most complex and elaborate artistic creations any human being will ever make and which every one of us does indeed make every day. Attending to how we "see" or engage the world and exploring how we might "see" or engage differently is at the heart of any experimental project. Perhaps the most essential art space is also the most available.

Alicia Cohen is a writer, teacher, artist and founding member of Pacific Switchboard art space. Her book of poems, *bEAR*, was published by Handwritten Press.

them a Fast Track through all permit processes, not only helping artists and craftspeople who want to start their own businesses and collectives, but ensuring that there are plenty of small galleries, cafés, shops and performance venues to show the Bohos' work. In general, the City could mount a campaign to actively promote its own citizens and their independently owned, nonfranchise micro-businesses, instead of hoping that an outside corporation will aight or our blighted economy like some *Deus ex machina* and save us all.

Once these programs are in place, outreach will be needed. In my own conversations with Mayor Katz and others at the City level, I've found that policy-makers are so steeped in local politics and policies that they don't realize how little the average person knows, myself included. Most of my friends who would qualify for this goofy "Boho" tag don't read *The Oregonian* or know how to navigate intricate red tape. My friend George made a great, simple suggestion: a bus with ads placed in universally accessible places like TriMet buses and billboards. On a slightly more ambitious level, an office or bookmobile-style resource center could educate artists about loans, grants and other programs. Special attention could be paid to accessibility and diversity, so that our city doesn't solely promote its white, educated, Internet-using, English-speaking, nondisabled artists. (Incidentally, Portland's whiteness and appearance of segregation is, according to the experts, a big turnoff to the creative class.)

DO IT YOURSELF TOGETHER

As Portland confronts the problems and opportunities of Creative Trickle-Up, many artists look the other way. Some define themselves by their Otherness and intentionally alienate themselves from other creative groups, the aboveground community and anything that stinks of government. Others, having established themselves on the independent scene, want the city to stay exactly as it is. But even if the City hadn't suddenly noticed its underground Boho population, change would be inevitable. Portland would still be full of new voices, new artists, new media and new collectives, who create change and reroute the flows of cultural and monetary capital simply by working to realize their artistic and cultural visions. They're doing it now. Change is already here.

What can the arts community do about it? We can start by facing reality and acknowledging that we're part of this city and its political environment. Then we can take advantage of this slender window in time, this strange moment in which policy-makers and influencers actually want to hear from us and make efforts to keep us here. What can the City do to help you? Write letters to the editors of local papers. Call the Mayor's office. Flood the PDC with your opinions. Debate the issues with artists and creatives, whether at events or online forums (such as the PDX Salon and DIY Artists mailing lists).

Working together may be the only way to preserve what we love about Portland while influencing its inevitable evolution. That may fly in the face of many do-it-yourself principles, but sharing resources is especially important for those of us involved in mounting large events and complicated shows. If seven splintered arts groups got together and presented a kick-ass plan for sharing some big warehouse in the Central Eastside or starting a creatively based e-commerce collective, the City would pay attention. They might even pony up some loans or help obtain space.

But we have to bury our assorted competitive axes and get off our lazy butts right now. Politicians are like magpies, and the City will have moved on to something shinier in six months. We have an astonishing, beautiful mix of creative people in Portland at the moment, representing all manner of genre, aesthetic, musical taste, political bent, intellectual tendency and social group. Sometimes this results in pointless snobbery, backstabbing and fragmentation between groups. It's time to crawl out of our comfy little cliques and break our usual patterns of artistic creation, enjoyment and critique. Even if we fail to influence City policy and Portland's inevitable evolution, we'll still reap the rewards of cultural cross-pollination, artistic open-mindedness and a more fluid, robust creative community.

Tiffany Lee Brown is the editor of 2GQ.org and the former editor of Anodyne magazine and Signum Press. She contributes to Bookforum, Bust, Willamette Week and other magazines, as well as writing short fiction for various books and journals. She lives in Portland, where she plays with the band Brainwarmer.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

COHEN.....

example). PAM is not only small, but, more problematic, its outreach to the local community is virtually nonexistent and its curators are deeply conservative (the recent Kienholz show excepted — and we'll have to wait and see how they do with their upcoming biennial).

However, big-money institutions, as Stadler illustrates by way of the experimental Kootenay School, are not required to create a vital art conversation. Cheap rent, good social services and people who are willing to rigorously challenge and to go beyond what they (and their culture) already know are often more crucial factors.

Jack Spicer, the San Francisco poet (1925-1965), said that he knew his poetry was on the right track when it said "exactly the opposite" of what he wanted to say: "like if you want to say something about your beloved's eyebrows and the poem says the eyes should fall out." Experimental art by nature is a challenge to the status quo; it is work that is willing to leave behind semantically overdetermined messages and work instead within semantic spaces that are foreign and resistant to established orders. It is work that challenges us to go beyond what we already know and, perhaps, to remake our relationship to knowledge altogether. It asks, why do we have to "understand" everything in the first place? Where does that drive come from? Can we forge a different relationship to the "meaningfulness" of being in the world? Being

with the world? Listening rather than explaining?

Experimental work thrives in contingent sociohistorical moments and spaces — in other words, outside institutional structures, be those psychological or physical.

One way to create a rigorous experimental art conversation in Portland is to create art spaces, from physical art spaces to conversations between individuals to magazines. For example, *The Organ*, even after only a few issues, is an "art space" that has made an impact on the integrity of the conversation about contemporary art in Portland. Unfortunately, art criticism here tends toward the ill-informed musings of so-called art critics like *Willamette Week's* Richard Speer, who generally responds to (even mildly) challenging work in the mode of the outraged public at the Armory show of 1912 (see his reviews of Ed and Nancy Kienholz, Amos Latteier and Andy Goldsworthy).

New independent art spaces and groups that have been popping up are promising: The New Space, Holy Goats, Neon, Zeitgeist, Field, Pacific Switchboard, Water Street Project, Ya Dirty Olde Lab Shoppe, La Palabra Café-Press and the charm bracelet. Four Wall Cinema Collective's programming is absolutely excellent, both in terms of the quality of its experimental film screenings and its commitment to bringing visiting artists into intimate contact with audiences. The recent collaboration between start-up gallery Soundvision and poetry presenters Spare Room brought us the International Sound Poetry Festival and its Sound Poet *PHONECATTHON*, which was one of the most engaging art events this year. What is so interesting about these independent events and art spaces is that they are all run on a shoestring budget, primarily funded by the artists and curators

themselves.

Independent art spaces can do more than present art — they can also serve as facilities for art education and research. If you are considering enrolling in school, think about this: why not take the money you'd put into school (\$10,000-\$45,000+ per year) and rent your own space (\$200-\$1,000 per month)? Did you know that adjunct (part-time) professors are paid only about \$2,500 per class, even with a Ph.D. or M.F.A.? That's about the amount it costs to take a class at PNCA. Why not hire your own professor and offer your own art or theory classes at your own "school" instead of paying a middleman?

Or take this model response to the need for engaged art historical dialogue: Greta Marchesi's Early 20th-Century Art Movements Symposium, which was held at Pacific Switchboard in fall 2002. The symposium — made up of artists and people interested in art — met weekly to talk about Futurism, Constructivism, Bauhaus, the Objectivists, Cobra, Dada, Negritude, Expressionism and Cubism in a contingent, self-directed and self-determined educational space. The participants began with a certain anxiety at not having an "expert" to lead the group, but they quickly developed an interactive discussion and performance-based pedagogical model. They performed impromptu Dada plays, read manifestos and cooked dishes from *The Futurist Cookbook* as they studied the movements' documents and critical discourse. According to Marchesi, a study of experimental art demands an interactive model because "avant-garde" movements are not just about making work; they are about making *a life*, and studying these past radical cultural experiments is actually to see the present more clearly. Our discussion of Bauhaus led to discussions of Target and Ikea, democracy and design, and our roles as artists and consumers."

Another art "space" based on an academic model that is intellectual but fairly nonacademic is The Lecture Series. Over the past year, it has offered lectures by local and visiting artists on subjects ranging from taxidermy to *Twin Peaks* to modeling theory. Especially interesting is the way the series skews the boundary between the work of art and art discourse, highlighting the performativity of the lecture format and critical voice.

Arts funding, art spaces, art events — all of these are important, but you don't need to wait to start creating your own experimental art scene. Spring in the wild and lush Pacific Northwest is an experimental arts laboratory. Just taking a walk is an immersion course in contingency, openness and irreducibility. So walk slower and look, listen, feel more carefully. A rigorous attention to, exploration of and experimentation with what is right in front of us is perhaps the most radical resistance to the status quo. The very act of seeing the world (what seems the most unartistic act) is one of the most complex and elaborate artistic creations any human being will ever make and which every one of us does indeed make every day. Attending to how we "see" or engage the world and exploring how we might "see" or engage differently is at the heart of any experimental project. Perhaps the most essential art space is also the most available.

Alicia Cohen is a writer, teacher, artist and founding member of Pacific Switchboard art space. Her book of poems, *bEAR*, was published by Handwritten Press.

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CULTURAL.....

and scones; but, at least for a little while, their best minds and social institutions are worth a premium for what they can accomplish in fields such as design, entertainment and technological development. In recent years, therefore, city and state governments have prepared for the new economy with these prescriptions: strengthen education, especially science and math education; and create environments attractive to companies through tax incentives, up-to-date social and physical infrastructures, and a good quality of life for employees.

But last year, this model was blindsided by a new force: "creativity" and its appetites. Of the source was regional development professor Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life*, a book that proposed a whole new approach to building a 21st-century economy.

HOW TO SEDUCE A CREATIVE

Florida looked at creativity as a problem of scarcity. Creative minds are so valuable, he argued, that companies are increasingly willing to follow them wherever they go (and mobile and finicky as they are, "creatives" move around at whim). Furthermore, creative visionaries and entrepreneurs, particularly those under 35 years old, don't just attract companies; they will generate the next generation of Nikes and Microsofts and Amazon.coms. Therefore, his first piece of advice to cities was to stop courting big companies and start working to attract the creative workers themselves (the prime targets are the "supercreative core" of scientists, engineers, tech people, artists, entertainers, musicians, and the like; plus managers, lawyers, financial and healthcare professionals, and

was held recently at the Portland Development Commission. And then there's the Cultural Economy Initiative, established by Katz to venture deep into the waters of Portland's creative culture and hopefully snatch up some pearls.

The Initiative differs from earlier City-sponsored programs to stimulate so-called "creative" industries. The City targeted the "creative cluster" for development several years ago, defining the sector broadly to include industries such as healthcare and semiconductors (Williams worked for the City on this effort). The Creative Services Alliance was formed as one prong of attack, a continuing effort to vivify a narrow subset of advertising, graphic design, public relations and related industries by aiding with workforce development, marketing and office space. In contrast, the Initiative has taken the "cultural" sector as its focus, which it defines as including creative services as well as arts and crafts, design, fine arts, performing arts, and what the Initiative is calling "Uniquely Portland," which ranges from the Slow Food Movement to Adidas. More important, it's taking a decidedly different approach to its program, fully informed by Florida's writings, by focusing on sussing out the needs of individual "creatives" and figuring out how Portland can fill them. "We're trying to look at what is unique about Portland," says Williams. "What is the DNA of Portland, and how can this be used as an asset to attract people?"

To this end, Williams has spent the inaugural months of her job getting to know seemingly every young artist, fashion designer, dancer and pastry chef in the city, along with students, educators and the principals of established design and advertising firms. Approaching them with her faded New York accent, grandmotherly blitheness, and youthfully hip outfit, she's asked, "Why are you here and what can we do to keep you here?" For the 20 or so boho artists and young design entrepreneurs at a recent Rant and Rave session that I attended, they ranged from allowing posters on telephone poles to offering more incentives for sustainable building, improving community-based learning at PSU, creating cooperative retail space for crafts people, lowering taxes on small businesses, devel-

oping public awareness of experimental art and a culturally literate populace, and persuading the Portland Art Museum to open for free one evening per week. In the quest to keep Portland culturally relevant, it seems that Williams' biggest challenge will be setting priorities.

What will those be? And, apropos of *The Organ's* readership, will the needs of artists stay on the agenda?

Still only a few months out of the gate, the Initiative's track record is still slim — consisting of organizing two First Thursday openings to showcase work by design students at area colleges; presenting an entrepreneurial training class for "creatives"; handing out some professional development grants to entrepreneurs (including \$2,500 for Stella Farina's Fashion Incubator); and planning the first of what's to be an annual Design Festival to "highlight the caliber of design in Portland" this September (with a Festival committee made of high-profile design entrepreneurs including Sohrab Vossoughi of Ziba Design and Alicia Johnson of Johnson + Wolverton). None of these efforts has directly impacted fine artists. But this is slated to change, perhaps dramatically. At the lesser end of the scale, the Initiative's professional development grants could go to artists to help them "move up what they consider their ladder," in Williams' words. "This could mean a musician who needs a new guitar. This could mean an artist who needs three months free rent." Money for classes, assistance in organizing apprenticeships, and "venture capital" for arts-oriented businesses and nonprofits are other services that artists can potentially access.

But Williams also has high hopes of going much further: she's started talking about making group health insurance options available for artists and creative professionals, as well as opening up doors for the development of affordable live-work space for artists. The update she's just submitted to the Mayor includes both items as program objectives and makes the following recommendations:

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DICKSON.....

sprouting up. There's been a spike in the number of people living here who have made or will make a major cultural contribution with their art. We're reaching a critical mass.

The way I see it, Greenwich Village will never again be as exciting as it was just after World War II. It will always be cool, but some grizzled poet will surely remind you of New York's heyday (and deride you for missing out on the '70s as well). The late '60s will forever be the time to have lived and loved in the Bay Area. Even smaller cities like Austin and Olympia had had their time in the spotlight. I predict people will one day talk about generation DIY, the early 2000s, and Portland in the same breath.

I can understand why some longtime resident artists worry about too much self-referential dialogue, not to mention the effects of the Mayor's focus groups on artists (the city has been made aware of its glut of creative types and is scrambling to figure out what to do about it). The fear is that smug self-awareness, government interference, and yes, even success, will make Portland a boring, more expensive place to make art. If Portland graduates from the underground ranks of Providence and Baltimore to the mid-major corporate level of Boston and D.C., those of us invested in the artistic community might feel validated that our scene has transcended state lines, but we'll also have turned Portland into Seattle. We'll lose our cutting edge.

I do applaud any efforts being made to make this a better place for artists. The only way to retain the migratory creative class Portland currently boasts in such high numbers is to find sustainable ways to keep people here. Maybe the Mayor's office will figure out a way to help. But I worry that at some point we'll lose our innocence. If Portland becomes a place where hipsters move to be discovered rather than hone their talents without marketplace interference, if dot.commers move here so some of that DIY cool will rub off on them, it's all over.

To my mind, art critic David Hickey's PICA lecture last fall about "making art in the provinces" kick-started this general discussion among local curators and tastemakers. Although I wasn't there, everyone I talked with was quick to note his suggestion that nobody cares what happens in little cities. But a lot of people also understood that this is what makes living in a city like Portland so great — true artistic freedom. In New York, an A&R rep might hear your rock band's third show and sign you to Sony. Mary Boone might attend your undergraduate thesis exhibition and offer you a space on her roster. How can that not influence the work being created toward conformity with prevailing styles?

A lack of opportunity speaks to the character of what's going on here. I think the work being created in town tends to be unpolished and honest, getting made because it has to be made. Artists know when to take themselves seriously and when to have a laugh; they seem happy. Working a couple of jobs is the norm. Health care is scarce, but so is contention and competition. This may change. Whether Hickey's lecture was a call to arms or simply good timing, the year following his talk boasts the premiere of a half dozen major shows showcasing Portland art and the inception of a couple of nonprofits (organizations like the Portland Center for the Advancement of Culture and the Fashion Incubator) whose stated goals are to export Portland art worldwide. Some of it is bound to stick. Will success go our heads? Will grant money, jobs and national press make us hungry, or will they allow us to rest on our laurels? I don't know.

When I first moved here, fellow East Coast transplants joked that Portland was like a spa that you relaxed in for a few years between college and grad school — play in a band, show some paintings in a café, you know, chill out before it's time to get serious again. That always pissed me off. I felt they were selling this place short. I didn't want to hang out in a spa or go to graduate school — I wanted to dig my heels in, get to work, and be more than a passing tourist.

I think the fundamental change in the seven years I've been here is that nobody makes that joke anymore. For the time being, people are taking chances, having fun and creating an inspiring scene. Artists are free to do what they want, not what they think will be successful. I hope it lasts. Fifty years from now, people are going to yearn for the good times happening in Portland right now; let's enjoy them.

Andrew Dickson's latest alter ego is Bradlee Simmons, a recent Bay Area transplant victimized by geographic preju-dice. He is extremely troubled by anti-California "It's the Cheese" billboards.

SATIRE

by Parker Burnmill

On an unusually cold August evening, far from the candescent light of the urban landscape, three men sat around a campfire. Blessed by the promise of warmth from their flickering jewel, a dialogue began among them. At first they spoke of dreams. Then they spoke of love. After a brief silence, the conversation turned to politics. For a moment, the men argued sports. As hard as they tried, no conversation could provide an ounce of comfort. All at once, the gentlemen agreed that the summer night was opposingly frigid.

"Kentucky..."

Amber-washed faces looked long into the fading embers.

"Oregon..."

Nothing was new. The embers continued to fade.

"Art..."

It was really cold.

Having expired all the possible topics of constructive conversation, the three men were left to their own devices.

A bottle of bourbon was produced from the pack carried by the man from Kentucky. He peeled off the lid with his teeth, spat the cork into the fire, and guzzled half of the brown liquid. The bottle was sent rocketing into the sky. A shot rang out: "Bang!" The three were showered with glass and 101 proof whiskey. Wide-eyed and short of breath,

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JAHN.....

the rest of civilization.

Next, learn to differentiate yourself. Figure out your role in the game by becoming familiar with all developments on the field on which you wish to play. Be a competitor, yet generous to fellow artists with similar tastes, following the example of such ambitious artists as Damien Hirst and Kandinsky. Also, pick your friends wisely (you don't have time to be a therapist) and let them help you develop your strengths in context of one another.

Forget styles and genres; be relentless and lucid, following the lead of artists from Nicolo Paganini to Paul Klee to Martha Graham and from Yves St. Laurent to Charles Baudelaire and Zaha Hadid. (Don't know those names? Look them up!) People forget that although Van Gogh was mad, he was lucid when he painted. How lucid are you?

Next, demonstrate sustained achievement. If Matisse had given up painting to become a pastry chef after the Divisionist period, his work would not be taken so seriously today. Sure, it can be hard to keep your spirits up, because artists who show their work are constantly being judged, often by critics with less than adequate information. In spite of this, the better artists turn everything into an opportunity. How committed are you? Are you tough enough to back up your decisions? Waffling won't get you represented by Matthew Marks. How do you prove yourself? Do you hide behind a group?

For those without a show at the Dia Center yet: How is your pitch, your hustle and your follow-through on opportunities? How hungry are you? Success doesn't come from the art alone, and it never has. It comes from being tough enough to make strong art despite the daily distractions. (Are you just another happy, sated aesthete, content to be contented and busy in the studio?) Simply put, the best artists cannot be waylaid by excuses, but instead seek to cover all the angles, intellectually, aesthetically and socially.

Are you serious? Seriousness means being familiar enough with the minutiae of the business to know what I'm talking about. For example, are you familiar with the quirks of shipping, publications and the personalities of dealers and collectors? These details are key because "seriousness" is a projected conceit that others pick up on. When backed up by hard work, familiarity allows you insight into the daily reality of museums, galleries and

critical reviews, all of which need a fresh outlook at key times to remain valid.

This is where historic engagement comes in. Your clarity about where you fit in brings the always nebulous present into more focus for galleries, museums and critics. It is always up to the artist. A strategic, informed position and statement set the context in which your work will be seen. With this thin badge and your ammunition checked, go ahead and draw: You'll dance through the aesthetic crossfire with unapologetic, polarizing panache.

Here's a seriousness breathalyzer calibrated for all Pacific Northwest artists: What is your take on the void, Surface Support and Art Informel? Answers should at least be fast and witty, if original thought eludes you. Caveat: if fast and witty are good enough for you and originally bares you don't talk to me, poseur!

At a certain point, each serious artist owns up to his or her responsibility alone, like a gunslinger walking with spurs a-jangling. But, like pistol duels, those lone walks should be short, well-timed and deftly executed. Forget the myth of the lone artist; it has never been true.

Humans are social beings. Degas said he created for a small circle of friends. Challenge your peers to discuss the thorny parts of existence and aesthetics with you. Groups like the Caracci School, Die Brücke, The Factory, the Marfa minimalists and The Ten are all fine examples from the past. Recently, the YBAs, Super Flat (Factory) and The Royal Art Lodge have formed similar communities. Most of these groups started up in art backwaters (the art world has a fetish for quirky, exotic and unexpected locales) and turned their internal dialogue into important art historical phenomena. In essence, one needs to redefine the game, and it helps to try out new rules in a team setting before asking the rest of the world to play.

Critics, dealers and curators are all secondary players, observers in the courtroom. But artists, you are on trial, and you're representing yourself. As you build your case, your evidence has to back up the testimony. Of course, in this age of endless familiarity and acceptance, the trick is finding a good fight to pick and the right strategy for winning it. At that point of precarious engagement just before the shootout, you set the expectations for the presentation, and everyone watches what unfolds. Are you going to be standing when the smoke clears?

Jeff Jahn is a critic for Modern Painters (London) and art editor for nwdrizzle.com. His current curatorial project is Best Coast, an exhibition of emerging and established West Coast artists that will open May 19 in Portland.

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O'KEEFE.....

of literary myth is a city of cirrhosis, a future assisted suicide's chosen backwater.

II.

During the mid-'70s there wasn't much to the city's cultural life. The War was over. You could hear an organ recital at a chapel. You could see Jesse Colin Young and Kenny Rankin at the old Paramount Northwest Theater. You could drive to Salem to see Blue Öyster Cult and REO Speedwagon at the Armory Auditorium. You could stay home to watch an episode of *Mannix*, or *Kung Fu*, or *The Merv Griffin Show*, with guests Phyllis Diller and Fred Travalena.

III.

Nothing happens here.

IV.

Popular myth hammers into shifting ground the "low-high" ladders of "scenes" and cultural economies, with specific scene fashion emblems climbing and descending. The symbolism of the imaginary Northwest is no exception. Sub Pop's Bruce Pavitt (who told journalists he graduated from Evergreen with a degree in "punk rock") stood aside while the much ballyhooed metal-punk-pop hybrid of the early '90s he distributed was labeled "grunge." Years later, Marc Jacobs' 1993 Spring-Summer women's collection for Perry Ellis, not itself officially presented as "grunge," was so labeled by fashion commentators. The early K Records, in both the music of Beat Happening and the graphic art of its International Pop Underground 7" sleeves, mined an aesthetic of Scorpio

menace disguised as chaste sock puppetry (derisively referred to as "twee"), easily assimilable to the childhood imagery of artworks of Japanese youth culture. I once saw a Senegalese woman in a t-shirt with a Kill Rock Stars iron-on, looking at a Seurat in the Musée d'Orsay.

V.

As Portland attempts to boost its levels of innovative human capital during another receding economic tide, some unanswerable questions about the recent past of the entire Pacific Northwest arise (although who can say that Portland owes anything to Seattle or that Seattle has left some kind of legacy to Portland): Did the unauthorized disclosures of David Geffen or Nick Broomfield or SPIN magazine create THE SCENE? Is it possible that a noir fantasy (something like the fantasy blamed for the rapid development of Southern California in the 1920s and thereafter) established the initial pop moment and reputation of urbanized Cascadia, the alleged "silicon forest" of the 1990s? Was automotive backfire mistaken for a shotgun blast?

VI.

Indie culture, and the countercultural rhetoric of its fans and promotions, implied independence from capitalist systems of production distribution and consumption. Yet, indie distributors occasionally functioned as profit-making enterprises, blurring the line between high and low finance. Think Southern California's Big Eight in the silent film era, but on a smaller scale and minus the big money and ambitions of vertical integration.

VII.

But it can also be argued that organic local art operating on its own economic principles has sustained local culture for over a decade, such that terms like "independent," when applied to the culture of the Northwest, begin to look like regional shibboleths guarding shared aesthetics, ideology-labels serving as oppositional framing devices with, often, little relationship to the objects framed.

VIII.

What is it about the West Coast that causes so many hedonists to confuse art with lifestyle? Look at Robert Arneson's California artist, bald, bearded, arms folded, tanned, cigarette butts at his feet, looking at one of his own bronze self-portraits through... sunglasses.

IX.

Aside from the information gathered by the search engines and the centralized memory archives we consult for entertainment, the Googles and Behind the Musics, so much seems to disappear into private attics or garbage trucks (or their digital equivalents) right after the moment of dissemination. It is commonplace to say that unencumbered and isolated individuals are empowered to invent shared memories and cultural histories through new technological functions undoing and redoing scene memory store and recall operations, fueling popular narratives. But those of us who struggle in our psychological transience to maintain some contact with the tangible world must choose geographical over virtual communities. To live and work somewhere, to come from somewhere, may require a kind of spatial commitment to memory, like a walk around the city, a preference for urban environments over urban planning metaphors.

X.

Many of us live out a fragile Swedish Saturday morning cartoon, all mushroom gardens and giant household pets. But if we live like Smurfs, how do we fill the gaps between each 90-minute episode? Some not-so-innocent conversation may do the trick, bringing together a crisis response team of community gatekeepers to write new arts agendas, encouraging our emerging pedophiles and its surrounding countryside to restrict its access to such lethal means of self-harm as over-the-counter cold medication, rohypnol, methadone, Newports, Old Crow whiskey, RC Cola, Smith and Wessons, and bridges over Superfund sites. Perhaps then weak social cohesion will be replaced by spirited, friendly, enthusiastic dialogue — a thing of potential greatness. What are we doing? Security Council diplomats call it straightening out question marks!

Bryan O'Keefe is a writer based in Portland.



Illustration by Scamper Franklin

the Oregon man and the Artist questioned their comrade's behavior.

"That was half a bottle of perfectly good bourbon. Why in hell did you waste it?" inquired the Artist.

"Well, guys," answered the man from Kentucky, "I guess I got a little homesick. And where I'm from,

we've got rivers of bourbon. So, to put it one way, it don't mean much to me wastin' a bullet on a botle." Besides, he had the good fortune of having the bourbon in his stomach, and everything was begining to make sense to him.

The Oregon man shuddered. The man from Kentucky burped. Tears began to well up in the eyes of the Artist. His face became long and his posture began to slump. The shadows cast by the fading fire stretched his features into grotesque pockets and ridges. He hadn't had a good meal in ages, and he longed for a drink. The situation was beginning to overwhelm his mind. Hallucinations of crows peering from the darkness needledd into his mind. A gypsy popped out from behind the glowing embers and whispered agonizing melodies.

"You bastard!!" the Artist screamed, "Did you have to go and have the whiskey to yourself? Don't you know that sharing is an act of valor? Have you any kindness in your heart?" The Artist kicked at the dirt and ran a loop around the fire. Shadows cast tall phantoms on the surrounding trees.

The man from Kentucky smirked, trying to contain his laughter. The man from Oregon didn't have half the moral aptitude and doubled over, bursting with tears of laughter, screaming in delight.

"And you!" continued the prosecuting Artist, addressing the man from Oregon. "You're no better! You just sit there and do nothing."

"Because he had a gun," replied the tickled man from Oregon.

"BLAH, HAH!" the man from Kentucky, tormented by humor, chimed in.

"Assholes, the both of you!" The Artist sank into his

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He'll make you a whisper.
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seat, putting his chin on his knees. He wiped the tears from his cheek and stared deep into the fiery coals, perhaps looking for some sort of inspiration. At last it came to him. He sprang up and began to rummage through his pack. From it he produced a menagerie of flyers for gallery openings, stickers, zines, weekly pulp from the corner box, two glossy European design magazines, and a library book. All of these he promptly threw into the fire. The flames shot toward the sky. The Artist drew near the fire, exposing his bare flesh to the flickering flames. He danced, much in the same fashion as his tantrum, singing "I am PROMETHEUS among us!"

Before long, the flames vanished and the cold returned. This time, the bite was unbearable. The Artist sat again in total dejection. He realized the waste of his actions. Balled up in a fetal position, he mumbled silently to himself, "It's okay, I can replace it all. There is plenty of junk to read where I'm from."

The Oregon man couldn't help but overhear the repetitious mumbling. "Yeah, but why did you have to go and burn it all? You could have recycled it." His ears were meant to impress the man from Kentucky, but they fell on deaf ears; the man from Kentucky had passed out in the silence.

All alone in the night with the embers on their last leg, the man from Oregon searched long into his soul. Frost had begun to set into the toes of the three men; things were getting desperate. The Oregon man dug deep into his pack and revealed a six-pack of Henry's Ale. He cracked the cap of his bottle with his teeth, spat it into the fire, and sank the whole contents into his stomach in one pull. He placed the empty bottle back into the cardboard box, stood up, and shot the Artist.

"What the hell did you do that for?" screamed the man from Kentucky, waking up.

"Because where I'm from, we've got way too many Artists," admitted the man from Oregon. "Besides, I'm sure he's got a copy of *The Organ* in his pack that we can throw on the fire!"

Rudolph's Warriors

by Penny Broadway

Along the Milwaukie Road, one of the many Northwest railroad lines Glenn Rudolph has photographed over the last three decades, in a park surrounded by tilt-up warehouses, every Saturday great battles are waged between armies of soldiers in heavy makeup, their weapons wrapped in duct tape. As recently as 1978, Rudolph photographed pig and chicken farms nearby, but now he's trained his camera on these clannish bands who rally to names like Das Ende Alles, New Revelation, Clan Damon, The Rogues and Drowning Pool. Druids, goths, headbangers, Satanists and dungeon keepers come to mind in the mish-mash of costumes made of chains, fur, crow feathers, capes, kilts and leather. One group worships trees before battle. Another has several members who wear long canine teeth, members of a vampire club that congregates at night in underground parking garages.

Behind his 8-by-10 camera, Rudolph plays Timothy O'Sullivan to this weekly pageant. "They've tapped into something that really makes me feel good," Rudolph says. He laments he should have made a movie instead of several years' worth of slowly composed, large-format photos, but Rudolph also believes his ancient-looking camera has been his passport. Unlike the facile sniper aim of the photojournalist's 35mm, the ancient camera is as slow and dull as these warriors' weapons. As on the battlefield of their weekly war where the mere touch of a sword is fatal, the death Roland Barthes argued every photograph becomes can only happen by agreement.

It is a richly atavistic cultural economy in which fantasies are leveraged on a shared gold standard of authenticity. Elsewhere, the pictures Rudolph takes are either considered worthless or coveted depending on the trading floor. Savage Gallery declined Rudolph's offer to show his war photographs in his recent show (missing out on the timeless wine they might have currently

made to David Hume Kennerly's court photographs of presidents). However, Paul Allen purchased one of Rudolph's panoramic battle scenes, fully understanding the role it could play as a post-industrial Uccello or Delacroix in his new Seahawks Stadium.

For Rudolph, the pictures' currency is unabashedly talismanic, their value divined from the decades he's spent dousing every corner of the valley. Here, he has discov-

ered, change and meaning do not accrue in the easy sedimentary layers of chronology but rather bubble and churn metamorphically. As junkyards, trailer parks, condo developments and tilt-up warehouses gradually covered some of the most fertile soil in the world, as prostitutes' bodies composted on the banks of the nearby Green River while wealthy subdivisions rose to enjoy the panorama from the surrounding hills, Rudolph has stood watch, finding those

eras still gurgling in the cracks, from the small-town princesses taking spring rides on daffodil-covered floats to ravens congregating in numbers sometimes great enough to blacken the sky.

The soldiers in these pictures, bearing self-assigned monikers like Raven and Carnage and Slipknot, have arrived from the full cross section of topographies and times to create their civilization in this, the valley's lowest

point. This is Foster Storm Drain Park. When it rains, it fills with water.

Penny Broadway lives in Seattle.



Two photos by Glenn Rudolph. Images courtesy of the artist.

What's Race Got to Do With It?

An interview with William Pope.L

by damali ayo

William Pope.L has dubbed himself "the friendliest black artist in America." His visual art, installation and performance explores social issues and relationships through an investigation of "lack," decomposition and evocative objects/images. The result is an inescapable visceral experience of our world.

His exhibition, eRacism, will be at PICA from May 7 - July 26. This installation contains, among other things, 5,000 hot dogs, 10 gallons of peanut butter, 170 lbs of onions, and large quantities of mustard, ketchup, sauerkraut, mayonnaise, milk and Pop-Tarts. eRacism was developed in conjunction with the Institute of Contemporary Art at the Maine College of Art in Portland, Maine, and Diversworks in Houston. This retrospective show will tour the United States until 2004.

damali ayo: You're teaching at Bates. What is it like to insert the dialogue of race into ...

William Pope.L: ... the idea of a primarily white sphere ... The fact that Bates has a self-image of being white is sort of a misnomer. In this country because of the admixture of the years, many white folk have black blood in them. White people don't own up to the black in them.

I say to [white people], because of America's obsession with race, even if you don't have it biologically you have it culturally. You know, the obsession of a lot of white kids with hip-hop and on and on and on. I always look at it as if you're really talking to a group of people who don't own up to who they really are.

ayo: That reminds me of Adrian Piper's piece, *Cornered*.

Pope.L: Yeah, she's definitely an interesting predecessor for me.

ayo: Absolutely ... but the concept that people have blackness in them doesn't necessarily make you feel more at home there, does it?

Pope.L: No, no, but that's a way for me to try to find where lack has a benefit or has an opportunity ... Instead of having the conversation today to be about a set of categories that have nothing to do with each other or oppose in some way ... to show someone where the overlap is, where they have to find their own ownership or relation to that, because the conversation there just sort of ends, "Well, yeah you're black and I'm white ... or you're white and I'm black..." But what if it was, "Well, you're white, I'm white, but we're white in different ways. What do you think of that?"

ayo: Sure, then you definitely have something to talk about.

Pope.L: Oh yeah.

ayo: You find it important to connect and to bond with your audience before you interrogate them. Can you talk some about how you do that?

Pope.L: Well, some of the simple things are like asking someone, "How are you doing?" Artists are sometimes not open to the idea that we are part of an entertainment industry, and there's nothing wrong with that. It's like in church ... a good preacher would always have a sense of humor, because he knew he was going to take you to a place that was maybe difficult to go ... part of it has to do with pleasure ... finding pleasure in celebrating the difficulty.

ayo: And you feel the art experience is similar, that there's an enjoyment of the experience as well as a difficulty and a learning.

Pope.L: Yeah ... This idea of having a relationship to an audience is that audiences will go farther with you if they know from the beginning that your interest isn't only in showing them difficulty.

ayo: How does your audience know that?

Pope.L: It's an effort ... With art audiences, people have said, you're preaching to the converted ... and I say, well how do you know they're converted? Just because a person is liberal in this country doesn't mean they share all the sympathies that I may. So this idea that with art audiences, the sale is already made, I don't buy. There are different things that I try to do ... I try to use less jargon, and if I do use jargon, I will try to set it up for people, but I don't assume that they will know always what I mean. Now interestingly enough I've met people in the art world who believe that because you don't do that, you run the risk of not seeming deep, sophisticated and educated because you're not creating this sort of veil of difficulty in terms of getting the message, but I don't believe that ...

rock band.

ayo: What was it called?

Pope.L: John Wayne.

ayo: Nice.

Pope.L: And that led me to radio plays, to writing. So I usually got along a lot more with poets and fiction writers than I did with artists, because a lot of the artists I knew at that time were interested in a limited studio practice, and they weren't as much fun.

ayo: I have a similar experience. Let's talk about mail art, because that's one of the first pieces of yours I learned of, and I thought it was brilliant ... Maybe you should describe it.

Pope.L: You mean the "I am still Black" postcards? It talks about the idea of becoming a community and becoming more successful. I found that the more I was in the art community, the less black people I saw. And when I started traveling more, would I wake up and realize I wasn't black anymore? It didn't have to be a case where I wasn't biologically black anymore. It would be a case

where I would simply stop thinking that way. How could I deal with that uncertainty, prevarication? What if I keep reminding myself? What if I make that public? What if I actually do this as a ritual and let other people know over time?

ayo: So would you then note it down, in that instance of doing it?

Pope.L: No, it couldn't be that spontaneous. I realized that the pattern is similar to the [James] Baldwin notion, your nigger moment — you know of your blackness through someone else's actions/reaction to you. It comes to you every day.

Looking at the history of conceptual art, or Fluxus — this has interesting structure, but what if the content was hotter; what about the sociality in which we live? And so I figured out a system so that every certain number of days, every time I would go away for a certain amount of time, I had an obligation to think about this and to let other people know I was thinking about this.

ayo: That's fantastic.

Pope.L: That's how I structured it. So, you know, when I did my crawl tour through Europe, I went to Prague, Budapest, Madrid. Every time I go to a different city, I note down the addresses, and I have to send them a card.

ayo: Can you say a couple of things about what you're planning for the PICA space, particularly about the amount of food you are planning to install? A friend of mine called that wasteful.

Pope.L: OK. Waste. She's right. Conspicuous consumption. But what's interesting is that it's like anorexia, it's like the back alleys of so many restaurants in our country, hospitals. We hide our waste. It's like, where do we construct our bathrooms? We have a very aggressive, arrogant relationship to consumption, so what if I just want to put it out there? I'm not constructing consumption as a beautiful act. I think there is a beauty in it, but I think it has to do with the lack in it. I'm not going to reject the fact that I'm part of a society that is about conspicuous consumption. I'm just going to put it out there.

Image of William Pope.L courtesy of PICA

It's difficult enough dealing with the intersection of class and gender and race without making it more mysterious and pseudo-difficult by using language that doesn't help anyone. The journey is difficult enough without that.

ayo: So, of all the ways you can raise those conversations about race and class and gender, why did you choose art?

Pope.L: Well, I didn't initially. I started making these things called communication devices in undergraduate school, and reading philosophy and looking at conceptual artwork of the '70s. The most impressive thing about the people who were making that work is their lack of prejudice against material. In other words, you didn't have to be a painter *per se*, you could use painting if you wished, you could use electronic media, you could use inert gases, so there wasn't this thing where you had to match a material to an idea. So I decided that, through doing communication devices ... that's actually how I started my first

hospitals. We hide our waste.

hosptials. We hide our waste. It's like, where do we construct our bathrooms? We have a very aggressive, arrogant relationship to consumption, so what if I just want to put it out there? I'm not constructing consumption as a beautiful act. I think there is a beauty in it, but I think it has to do with the lack in it. I'm not going to reject the fact that I'm part of a society that is about conspicuous consumption. I'm just going to put it out there.

damali ayo is a conceptual artist and performer. Her next show, playback, will show during September at Mark Woolley Gallery.

A GOOD FRIEND IS HARD TO FIND

Blood and Guts Forever
An Exhibition About Friendship

The Art Gym, Marylhurst University

March 3 - April 4, 2003

by Allison Dubinsky

Just a few days before I saw *Blood and Guts Forever*, I'd returned from Chicago, where I had gone to visit a once-best friend with whom I'd had a falling-out years earlier. She and I had been inseparable in college. We'd met on the first day of orientation as freshmen, and we'd spent the next four years helping each other survive overdue coursework, difficult professors, hapless boyfriends and Houston's merciless climate. But a year or so after graduation, we stopped talking, and we didn't say a word to one another for about four years.



Artwork by Johnne Eschleman

feeling you get when your heart's being ripped out but you continue your daily angst-free activities such as shopping for milk and walking the dog.

Adkins is one of the two elusive minds behind the charm bracelet's sociological art experiments, and he seems to be primarily interested in art that fosters or explores the creation and nature of connections between people. The last time I saw something he curated, it encompassed 500 people's work (*Meeting People*, a grid of wooden blocks that individual artists had manipulated — painted on, drawn on, attached mechanical things to, etc.), so I was curious about what a more selective show would look like.

The first pieces in the exhibit were four beautifully framed pieces of construction paper, each faded by natural light to reveal the gentle silhouettes of superheroes. They were John Ryczek's *Superfriends*, and while I admired their graphic appeal, I didn't feel like I was being shown any sordid secrets. Not that I had high hopes for any such thing when I entered, but I had high hopes thank to the show's ostensible "theme." My art-viewing companion pointed out another, more practical, concern: wouldn't the silhouette fade over time? If you bought it, would you have to keep it under your bed? I'll venture that the built-in ephemeralism was part of the plan, a comment on the diminishing value our culture places on traits

To the left, the room opened out: Natascha Sofia Snellman's *Who Was I Last Night?*, a series of tender photographs depicting her great-aunt Gerri and her grandmother Pat, took up one wall. It was apparent that the two women in the images were friends, but the work didn't resonate on an emotional level until I read the explanation that accompanied it. The words told us how Snellman's great-aunt didn't recognize herself in the prints after they'd been taken, although she immediately recognized her sister, Pat; she seemed to have forgotten she'd posed for any photographs at all. This seemed to me a more compelling meditation on memory and the fragility of our connection to our own selves than the images alone. When the text that accompanies an artwork seems to be so crucial to the meaning of the piece, I often wonder why the two parts aren't more intertwined, either visually or through the use of a different medium, like slides or video.

This is exactly what Miranda July and Emma Heditch had done with their "web-based collection of girlhood longing," *How Will I Know Her?* This ongoing collaborative project consists of numerous photographs of young girls holding pictures of people they wish they could be with, but can't due to circumstances of some sort or another: divorce, death, distance. Each photograph is accompanied by a statement written by its subject; the overall experience, strangely, feels like flipping through a book of mug shots looking for the right perpetrator of some crime or another, maybe because of the stark white backgrounds, or maybe because the girls look so uniformly sad and shy, as if they're being asked to do something they really don't want to be doing (whether that's having their photographs taken or talking about people they miss, I'm not sure).

Behind me, a small room emitted a whirring sound; it was the bubble machine in Melody Owen's installation. There were no bubbles the day I was there, but the show's

PLEASE SEE BLOOD ON PAGE EIGHT

Interview With Michael Brophy

by Mark Hansen

Michael Brophy paints the terrain of the Pacific Northwest as a confrontation. He composes trees and stumps, rivers and clouds into canny narratives of how this land became a landscape, how the land was and is disciplined. His latest show at Laura Russo Gallery ventured out into Eastern Oregon, juxtaposing sweeping views of vertiginous canyon land with closer scenes of clearcuts presided over by log statues on stump pedestals. Gone from this landscape are not only the trees, but the loggers, the bears and the sasquatches.

I met Brophy and others for a number of drinks the other night. After a while we decided it was time to have the interview. Brophy's longtime friend, filmmaker Steve Doughton, joined us. As James Yu, a friend of both mine and Mike's, advised, I started with some questions about professional wrestling.

The Organ: Is Hunter Hurst Helmsley a viable champ?

Michael Brophy: He is. He's the "Total Package."

The Organ: He's not another Nick Bockwinkle?

Brophy: No way — still the full package. He's the greatest heavyweight.

The Organ: Can Goldberg save World Wrestling Entertainment Inc.?

Brophy: I think yes. I want to know if Goldberg is gay.

The Organ: What connection do you make between wrestling and painting?

Brophy: It's theatrical and artificial but it tells the truth. It's making something out of nothing. I think it was Picasso who called painting "the lie that tells the truth."

Doughton: And they're both big moneymakers.

The Organ: You've drawn on Stewart Holbrook's writing about Oregon, his "labor taxonomy" kind of stuff. How'd you run into him?

Brophy: I was researching for that City Hall project. I saw *Wildmen, Wobblies and Whistleblowers: Stewart Holbrook's Lowbrow Northwest*, and I loved the title.

Tony Tasset

Works 1993-2003

Portland Institute for Contemporary Art

March 12 - April 19, 2003

by Charles D'Ambrosio

If Iraqi looters broke into PICA and had the run of the place for an hour or two, what, if anything, would they take away from the Tony Tasset show? In three spare rooms you find the assorted work: several video montages of the artist's face in profile as he goes about his banal day, of the artist documenting a diet in which he loses thirty pounds, of the artist, his wife and child morphing into one another around the breakfast table; the sculptural work — a snowman, a cherry tree, a dead blue jay; and photographs — of the artist wetting his pants, of his wife in a summer dress, of his garden, of his parents, of an eye. None of this holds up well on a Friday afternoon after a week of bombing; the work here is too boyish and trivial and self-absorbed, too cozy with its own accomplishments, too lazily convinced of its own rightness. The surfaces are slick, the impressions convivial and domestic. The self in the Tasset show is organized, artificial, facile — its confrontations are as tidy as the ones on Oprah, a series of constructs without the chaotic pressures of content, the raggedness of lived life. A video loop of a man losing weight is not so compelling when all week you've seen men lose their legs.

Image by Tony Tasset, courtesy of PICA

The images can't compete, even as a joke, even as ironic comment — they squander too much good will, too much real desire, by asking us to care about forgeries and copies. The show had a distinct undergird feel, a tiresome cleverness — safe, unchallenged, agreeable. Plundering is quite the opposite of the polite arrangement of seeing in a civilized setting, but aesthetics has something to learn from the urgencies of the hungry and confused, the outraged, the wounded. Iraqi looters swarming PICA would be after different spoils, the hard goods, light bulbs, televisions, computers, tables and chairs, and in an imagined ransacking of the Tasset show, focused on the ephemera of the self and its polite little fictions, they would come away empty-handed.

Pillage is a kind of coin in the spontaneous economy that springs up in the aftermath of wars and riots, and its relation to the art market is interesting. Following the sack of Baghdad, men and women holding wads of dinars, which the U.S. Treasury, as of this writing, lists as worthless, weren't nearly as savvy or keen investors as the boy hauling a bed home on a handtruck, and one imagines that, politically, those people, the ones who went for the cash, probably felt more comfortable under dictatorship — in good times and bad, it takes a kind of faith to consider paper worth stealing. A secondary market for dinars has apparently sprung up on eBay, with people seeking souvenirs, mementos of the war, featuring pictures of Saddam Hussein — bringing us closer to the art market, a world of objects and negotiated agreements (prices) argued out in a somewhat fluid and spontaneous forum. The ransacking of the antiquities museum in Baghdad was another kind of score, however, and the market will be significantly different. The booty will likely be a hard for officialdom to locate and recover as the Weapons of Mass Destruction that began the bombing in the first place — they'll offer rewards for the priceless. Oil was saved while the calcite bowls, the shell combs and the hammered gold vessels were not. But the loss is nothing new. The library containing the 12 original cuneiform tablets of Gilgamesh was destroyed by the Persians in 612 B.C., and anyway, the greatest collection of Mesopotamian art, acquired when the ransacking of civilization was the business of gentlemen, is in the British Museum. A professor at the University of Chicago has been quoted as saying that war and archaeology don't mix, but I disagree. Both the worthless dinars on eBay and the priceless cuneiform tablets in Baghdad will receive some of their valuation from the same source — that they are uncirculated, that they promise rarity. War, like time, turns everything into a trinket, but destruction jacks up the price nicely.

Charles D'Ambrosio is the author of the short story collection, *The Point*. His recent short fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*. A collection of his essays will be published by Clear Cut Press in Fall 2003.

The Organ: You painted a lot of the historical figures, the workers, from that book. If you were going to do something similar now what would it look like?

Brophy: Critical mass. WTO protesters. A very similar kind of thing.

The Organ: What about framing devices in your work: windows, viewpoints, the grid of Portland, your own back, stump pedestals?

Brophy: I was always interested in the "back" of a landscape painting, what's behind the view. I wanted to show the fact that people are there, not the Sierra Club calendar kind of thing. My own back in the painting is a kind of pun.

Doughton: I think a good question is where he learned it. C. D. Friedrich has a lot to do with his compositions. You should also mention that Mike can bench his own weight.

The Organ: Your hiking sack shows up in your work a lot. What's in it?

Brophy: Let's see ... a pen flashlight. One time I got stuck up in the Gorge in the dark and had to climb down with no light. It took forever. Water. My camera that Steve turned me on to, the Yashica T-4. Pencils and a sketch pad. Food sometimes. Water.

Doughton: A Powerbar?

Brophy: Write down "Powerbar."

The Organ: OK. How has teaching affected your practice?

Brophy: My painting? I had to learn the stuff I was supposed to learn when I was a student. It's different from what I do in the studio, though.

The Organ: What was the first image you ever seized upon?

Brophy: Clearcutting. I was probably 25 when I first painted that. My parents were living out on the coast and I visited them often. I watched this stand of trees on Highway 53 go down in stages. The destruction was awesome and terrible. There was mud all over.

The Organ: What do you listen to when you're working?

Janet Koplos: "The Labor of Making"

by Sophie Ragsdale

The audience of nearly 300 was not yet settled when Janet Koplos commenced the eighth annual William Jamison Lecture Series on April 2 at the Pacific Northwest College of Art. The room was filled with a fidgeting din, a final fussing with cell phones, and the last words of casual conversations, when Koplos began to speak in polished, soothing tones. The audience grew quiet and soon rapt when she claimed, "in a society of extremely developed specialization of labor...we live in hope and faith that things will work."

Koplos, an art critic and senior editor of *Art in America*, centered her lecture on "the labor of making" for this event sponsored by Oregon College of Art and Craft and PNCA. Her choice of theme proved a timely meditation on our basic need for connection, not in the technological sense of being "well-connected" but in the most human sense of emotional and sensory engagement.

Considering the impulse to create labor-intensive work in an era of "labor-saving devices," Koplos drew attention to her own labor — critique — by working through her commentaries on dozens of slides. She introduced a series of works and examined them each as a "personal catechism of toil" (in the words of Jackie Windsor, whose works were among those projected against the broad, white wall). Other works included the explosive paintings of Jackson Pollock, which break through representation onto a nonrepresentational plane, and the monumental sculptures of Richard Serra, which are an overwhelming reminder of the hard physical labor of artistic production. The work of German artist Roman Opalka was particularly effective at rendering and recording the passage of time and also the task of constructing memory. His process consists of painting and recording himself speaking a sequence of numbers, as well as taking daily photographs of himself. By making visible the passage of nearly 40 years through the medium of his body (he has painted

Brophy: A whole range of stuff. Harry Smith's folk anthology is amazing. Metallica. So much. No TV.

The Organ: What of golf? That shows up in your recent work.

Brophy: Funny. I don't golf, but there were a few ideas. James [Yu] told me once he wanted to retrace a military march backward by hitting a golf ball. I loved that. It also came from Hat Point Road. It's up in Hell's Canyon and it's the worst road. I went up in it my car and I had to stop every 10 to 15 yards and move big rocks out of the way. I thought, What next for this place? A golf course? Sure!



"Sky," from Nine Lives (suite), 2003

enough. A golf course is also a real logger image: dominion over the landscape.

The Organ: What of the floppy guy in the Floppy Guy painting?

"time," or the evidence thereof, almost exclusively since 1965), Opalka inspires the viewer to ask, "Why?" What is the value of perpetuating a close and careful relationship with our work?

Koplos turned from a formal critique to a social one, reflecting on the ideas of "high technology" in relation to "high physicality." She argued that the impersonality of mechanical activity moves certain artists to "bring back the directness of touch." For example, Liza Lou is an artist who spent five years on the careful beadwork of her installation, *Kitchen*, a glittering rendition of an otherwise banal space. Regarding mechanical facilitation, Lou has stated, "For me, my work is a prayer, and so the doing of the work is its own dignity."

When spiritual satisfaction is apparent in an artist's labor, the viewer is moved to consider his or her own instincts for connectedness. It becomes clear that the "labor of making" resonates at a time when our "hope and faith" is invested in talking heads, split screens, and the multilayered moving texts of headline news. Even though such media offers "complete" war coverage, zooming in on bomb blasts and panning a ruined Baghdad, we are only engaged in these events on a virtual level. As mediated by television technologies, the sights and sounds of war affect us in the same way that action film exhilarates or an epic drama inspires compassion. Although real-time footage overcomes time and space, we are so conditioned by hyperreality, cinema and other visual arts that we remain emotionally distant from the current crises. Still, as Koplos pointed out, "we cannot get away from our need for human connectedness," even if such connection means letting ourselves be vulnerable to the reality of death and destruction, love and creation. By bringing her audience's awareness to the works of Pollock, Serra, Lou and others, Koplos revealed that methodic production is essential not as a means to an end, but as both the means and the end of satisfying our undervalued need for emotional, sensory, and spiritual connection.

Sophie Ragsdale has no certain interests or vocation, but she likes chocolate.

RED76 Presents the IAE at Project Room One

by Camela Raymond

The main event of Red76 Arts Group's International Arts Group Exposition was a rushed, confusing affair at the Laurelhurst Theater. The evening of video screenings and live presentations by a couple dozen arts groups from around the world (see related story on Bill Brown and the Surveillance Camera

Players) was an impressive organizing effort by Red76's Sam Gould and Co., a smorgasbord that drew a dense crowd of young samplers. But the overlapping programming in four theaters made it near-impossible to give the best fare the attention it deserved (such as Chicago-based Temporary Services' documentation of low-tech inventions created by prisoners to make their lives more comfortable) and easy to give the brush-off to anything that failed to impress in the first five minutes (there was a lot of brushing off).

What a pleasant change, then, to visit the IAE's associated exhibit hosted by Project Room One, consisting of a few objects and much peruse-able documentation of process-oriented work by Temporary Services, N55 (of Copenhagen), Instant Coffee and others. The quiet isolation of Jen Rhoads' high-ceilinged space on NE Farnagut "made for an ideal viewing experience (I didn't visit until after the official closing date, making me about the fifteenth person to make the trip, according to Rhoads' estimate). The general mood of the

art on display was antiheroic. Best compared to local artists/groups like Harrell Fletcher and Miranda July, the charm bracelet, and Red76 themselves, these collectives are all about real-life social interactions, projecting the message that they care little about advancing art history on its own terms (although they end up doing that, too, slyly or not). They've printed booklets on how to build portable housing pods (N55), solicited comments from neighbors about a controversial public art sculpture (Temporary Services), made solar-powered clothing and personality-tailored food for friends (Jane Palmer and Marianne Fairbanks), and curated a show of T-shirt art (Instant Coffee).

Of the limited critical attention that has been directed at these groups, much of it has focused on this quality of public engagement and accessibility, a characterization that Chas Bowie questioned in our last issue, writing, "Though their forays into the public sphere are less antisocial than, for example, those of Vito Acconci, who followed strangers on the street until they fled into private buildings, these groups are no more taking art to the masses than he was." But Chas alluded to something that I think is more notable — the issue of temperament. Yes, they are less antisocial than Vito Acconci, and this raises questions. With few exceptions, the history of avant-garde art has been one of devising new ways to shock the bourgeoisie or kill fathers. But these collectives, collectively, seem to have a different fantasy. Like the grateful, unembittered foundling who followed home the heroine Madeleine Blanchet in George Sand's *François*



Anne Van der Linden, "Ironing." Print of black ink drawing from We Like Dick, part of Temporary Services' Binder Archives: A Portable Traveling Exhibition

Brophy: It's from a Goya painting where the women are throwing a wooden dummy in the air. It's about women toying with men. I made it into trees throwing a logger up in the air. It's the toying-with/tossed-up concept.

The Organ: What's selling?

Brophy: The small stuff. Single figures looking into landscapes. The pretty ones.

The Organ: What's next for you?

Brophy: I'm working on some more crowd images around panoramic views. Also, more wooden rooms. I have a big show going up in Seattle, at my gallery there — Linda Hodges Gallery. That opens May 1, for the month. Clear Cut Press is putting out a collection of my work in conjunction with Laura Russo Gallery. That's really exciting. We're going to raise money to print it by selling boxed editions that come with an original gouache. Those are going to be \$350.

The Organ: What about the Lewis & Clark project you were planning for 2005?

Brophy: Funding for that didn't come through, so I've come up with this other plan. I met this guy who wrote a book about the last 100 miles of the Lewis & Clark expedition — basically from Portland to Astoria. Apparently it took them forever, longer than any other segment of their journey. I want to commemorate that with a flotilla down the Columbia, where people could deal with that however they wanted to. Writers could write about it, you could tape it, whatever. A bunch of boats floating down the river.

The Organ: You used to have a heavy boxing bag up in your house. Why'd you take it down?

Brophy: I'm far less angry than in the past. I never worked on it like a workout. It was only incidental; I would just walk by and kick it or something, so I just got rid of it.

The Organ: Do you have a special message for your fans?

Brophy: No! My pockets are empty! Please help!

Mark Hansen is a Portland writer.

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