

EAST OREGONIAN

KINDLE: Portland art show comes east

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STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

An installation by Oregon artists Charlene Liu and Brenna Murphy sits in the front lobby of the Rivoli Theater. They are two of the three artists being featured in the Pendleton area as part of the Portland Biennial.



An installation by Oregon artists Charlene Liu and Brenna Murphy sits in the front lobby of the Rivoli Theater in Pendleton. The installation is part of the Portland Contemporary Arts Center that opened in 2015.

Although it is titled the "Portland Biennial," this year the biannual survey of Oregon artists typically confined to Portland exhibition spaces will spread out across the state, including venues in Eastern Oregon. Three venues in Pendleton will host works by two Oregon artists of international standing with two of the venues transforming into pop-up galleries for art installations.

Presented by Disjecta Contemporary Arts Center, the Portland Biennial is seen as a continuation of the Oregon Biennial begun by the Portland Art Museum in 1949. The Oregon Biennial served as a means of highlighting the state of the contemporary arts scene in Oregon, as well as providing an opportunity for career advancement among emerging and

mid-career artists (Pendleton painter James Lavadour was among those selected for the 2003 biennial). When the Oregon Biennial folded in 2006, Disjecta stepped in to fill what would have been a massive hole in the contemporary arts scene and held the first Portland Biennial in 2010.

Each Biennial has had a different guest curator selecting artists representing Oregon arts. Milwaukie, Wisconsin-based artist and educator Michelle Grabner is serving as curator for this year's exhibits. In the process of selecting artists and venues for the Biennial, Grabner reviewed 400 applicants, conducted 107 studio visits, and logged over 1,800 miles traveling throughout Oregon.

Some of the venues Grabner selected for the Biennial are not dedicated art exhibition spaces — a hardware store in Clatskanie stands out as the most non-traditional of the lot — and Pendleton has its fair share. The largely unused and vaguely Spanish-styled Christian Science Reading Room at 13 S.W. Byers Ave. will exhibit an installation by Jessica Jackson Hutchins, a Portland-based ceramicist, painter and installation artist. Hutchins has been exhibited internationally, and was included in both the 2010 Whitney Biennial and 2013 Venice Biennale. Hutchins' work is included in several public collections, namely the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Portland Art Museum. She is represented by the Marianne Boesky Gallery in New York, the Timothy Taylor Gallery in London, and the Johann König Gallery in Berlin.

The Rivoli Theater at 351 S. Main St., in the midst of a restoration campaign, will host Charlene Liu, associate professor and the printmaking coordinator in the Department of Art at the University of Oregon, and Brenna Murphy, a Portland-based artist.

Born in Taiwan and raised in the American Midwest, Liu's work explores a pictorial space by turns illusionistic and graphic, combining hand-drawn, digitally constructed, and mechanically reproduced tropes and motifs. Using printmaking, painting and papermaking processes, Liu samples and juxtaposes cultural references and the natural environment in an attempt to reconcile matters of biography and place.

Brenna Murphy weaves trans-dimensional labyrinths using personal recording devices, computer graphics programs and digital fabrication. Murphy's work is an ongoing meditation on the psychedelic composition of embodied experience across physical and virtual realms.

Crow's Shadow Institute for the Arts at 48004 St. Andrews Road also will display works by Liu. Karl Davis, executive director of Crow's Shadow, is thrilled to be working with both Disjecta and Liu.

"We were excited to work with Disjecta for two reasons," says Davis. "One, they are well respected and two, it is a chance for us to bring in another Oregon artist to cross-pollinate. Here at Crow's Shadow we seek to bring the world to the reservation and the reservation to the world."

Although the majority of artists involved in the Biennial are from the Willamette Valley, Eastern Oregon will receive some representation in the event: Pendleton artist Whitney Minthorn, who specializes in retouching high-end fashion photography, will have his work displayed in Portland at White Box, a visual art space operated by the University of Oregon.

The Biennial officially starts July 9 and will run until September 18, leaving enough time for Pendleton Round-Up visitors to have an extra visual spectacle. Receptions for both Liu and Hutchins will be July 23 at their respective exhibits.

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