

Portland2016 Biennial art survey to hold local receptions

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Avantika Bawa, right, and Sean Barrow work on Bawa's site-specific installation, "Mineral Spirits" in the Astor Hotel Lobby.

CLATSKANIE and ASTORIA — The Disjecta Contemporary Art Center's Portland2016 Biennial will host community receptions in Clatskanie and Astoria at three venues: on Aug. 13. The receptions will take place in the former Hazen Hardware building in Clatskanie, at Clatsop Community College's Royal Nebeker Gallery in Astoria, and in the lobby of the historic Astor Hotel in Astoria. The receptions will be attended by the artists and Disjecta board and staff and are free and open to the public.

Led by the curatorial vision of Michelle Grabner, Portland2016 features 34 artists selected to exhibit at 25 venues in 13 communities throughout Oregon, making it the most comprehensive survey of contemporary art in the history of the state. Presenting 10 weeks of events and concurrent exhibitions, "Portland2016: A Biennial of Contemporary Art" opened on July 9 and runs through Sept. 18.

"Portland2016 is a special moment for the art community," says Disjecta Director Bryan Suereth. "With Michelle Grabner at the helm of this Biennial, it has attracted national and international press for Oregon artists — attention they well deserve. And with Portland2016's expanded geographical reach, we're excited to engage cultural tourists as well as local audiences in communities across the state."

The Biennial is presented in some of Oregon's most respected arts venues, including Ashland's Schneider Museum of Art, Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and White Box at the University of Oregon in Portland. It also activates some nontraditional buildings in rural locations, such as the former Christian Science Church in Pendleton and the Morin Print building in The Dalles. Artists have created new works inspired by their assigned locations.

"The Portland2016 Biennial venues offer artists the chance to consider new contexts and new audiences," Grabner says.

1 of 3 "It presents exciting opportunities to experience Portland-based artists engaging sites in La Grande, Pendleton, Madras and The Dalles, and likewise to see work by artists from Pendleton, Eugene and Corvallis in Portland venues."

Grabner's curatorial vision for Portland2016 investigates regionalism, exploring the ways in which artists' works reflect a particular geography or culture while also interrogating the ways in which local dynamics impact the global art world in an era of decentralization. The artists in Portland2016, while not necessarily linked by medium, visual style or career levels, all share an interest in creating work informed by a theoretical and geographical distance from larger commercial art centers.

Hazen Hardware

Disjecta, in partnership with the Oliva Family and Hi School Pharmacy, will host a reception for artist Heidi Schwegler at the former Hazen Hardware building, located at 136 N. Nehalem St. in Clatskanie from 1 to 4 p.m. Aug. 13. Beverages will be provided courtesy of sponsor Deschutes Brewery, and Schwegler will be in attendance to discuss her work and answer questions along with Disjecta Director Bryan Suereth and board members. The gallery is also open for viewing noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

Schwegler is drawn to the peripheral ruin, modifying discarded objects to give them a new sense of purpose.

"I am interested in the lives of objects and the transference of memory. In our day to day, our memories fill the spaces around us, they seep into the carpet and become crystallized in the objects that bear witness to our lives. Because of this, these particular things act upon us as we forget, instigating memory," Schwegler says.

"My style as an artist is a hybrid of conceptual art and craft; it is important that the objects I fabricate are well made and at the same time provocative and meaningful. In reaction to the ubiquity of the disposed commodity now empty of use value, I am interested in making beautiful objects that deal with those private tragedies that make us distressingly aware of our own mortality."

Royal Nebeker Gallery

The CCC Royal Nebeker Gallery, located at 1799 Lexington Ave. in Astoria, will host a reception from 5 to 7 p.m. Aug. 13. The Biennial welcomes all members of the greater Astoria community to celebrate the work of artists Jack Featherly and Julia Oldham and will provide beverages courtesy of Deschutes Brewery. Both artists will be present. The gallery is also open for viewing noon to 5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday.

Featherly makes paintings that are stylistically diverse and avoid presenting an easy read. His imagery begins in traditions of gestural abstraction, product packaging, TV graphics and ukiyo-e, but end somewhere new. Oldham combines live action video with animation to create narratives about science and nature.

Astor Hotel Lobby

In partnership with Paul Caruana and the Astor Hotel, Disjecta will host a reception for Portland artist Avantika Bawa from 7 to 9 p.m. Aug. 13. Beverages will be provided courtesy of Deschutes Brewery. Bawa, along with Suereth and board members, will be in attendance to discuss the work. The venue is also open noon to 5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday.

"My practice emphasizes the intersections where drawing and sculpture, stasis and motion, and the functional and nonfunctional intermingle," Bawa says.

“Bearing in mind a location’s prior use, I create wall drawings and/or paintings, and repurpose and rearrange functional objects to create temporary installations on site. I gather and compose industrial products like brick, plywood and concrete, simulating common gestures, such as sitting, leaning, pulling and stacking. These installations invite the viewer to experience the crossroads between the utilitarian, historical, and aesthetic qualities of each space.”

About the Biennial

Portland2016 continues the tradition of the Oregon Biennial, begun by the Portland Art Museum in 1949. With the end of the museum’s Biennial in 2006, Oregon artists lost a longstanding platform for career advancement. In 2010, Disjecta Contemporary Art Center reintroduced the Biennial, curated by then-Linfield College Gallery Director Cris Moss. The exhibition spanned nine venues throughout Portland and included 19 Oregon artists. Portland2012 presented the work of 24 artists at five venues and was curated by Prudence F. Roberts, former curator of American Art at the Portland Art Museum. Portland2014 was curated by Amanda Hunt, associate curator at the Studio Museum in Harlem, and included 15 artists.

Major Sponsors for the Portland2016 Biennial include The Ford Family Foundation, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and Oregon Cultural Trust. Local community partners include Astoria Visual Arts.

More information can be found at www.portlandbiennial.org

