

## New art museum exhibition delves into ‘Feminist Futures’



January 19, 2024 - 1:30pm

A new exhibition at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art explores critical questions about artmaking, history, the future and feminist models of inquiry using works from the museum’s collection and UO faculty members.

“Artists, Constellations and Connections: Feminist Futures,” on view from Jan. 27 to June 17, features current work by University of Oregon studio art faculty members installed alongside and in conversation with works they have selected from the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art’s permanent collection.

“Feminist Futures” was organized by the art museum and seven members of the UO Department of Art as part of the 50th anniversary of the Center for the Study of Women in Society.

The participating women faculty members approached the exhibition as a collaborative and collective project. The works in the exhibition are conceived as a constellation of connections between peer artists responding in diverse ways to the moment and to relevant artists and artworks of the past.

“Selecting pieces from the JSMA collection enabled us to think about our work and feminism in relation to both the institution and a deeper history of artmaking,” said Laura Vandenburg, an art professor and director of the School of Art + Design in the UO’s College of Design.

Vandenburg said faculty members approached the search in individual ways.

“Some took it as an opportunity to explore and discover women artists represented in the JSMA collection, finding connections to our own practice,” she said. “For others, the selections provide an expanded context for the artist’s own work, engaging the past and complex cultural histories. Mixing the current work of art faculty and selections from the collection, we hope, allows for a richer constellation of resonances to emerge for viewers.”

The exhibition introduces an installation by art professor Tannaz Farsi that elaborates on the idea of historical artifacts beyond the status of a commodity; a self-portrait photography series by art professor Tarah Krajnak that sheds light on the censorship of multicultural women in photography; a collection of ornate brooches by jewelry designer and professor Anya Kivarkis that replicates jewelry from representations in archived historical texts; and a large-scale installation by Vandenburg that grapples with themes of biological contingency.

Additional highlights include imaginative acrylic paintings of professor Charlene Liu’s culinary heritage, a ceramic sculpture inspired by an Otagaki Rengetsu poem and a 6-foot-tall cutout installation by professor Amanda Wojick.

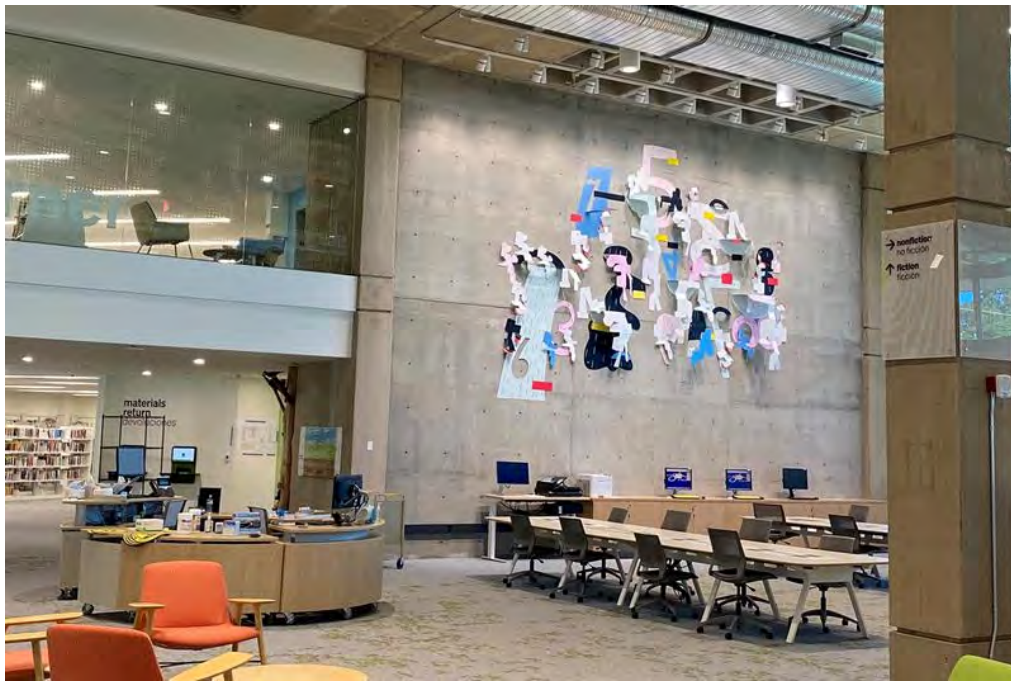
Some of the artworks chosen from the museum’s collection, such as the Otagaki Rengetsu bowl, represent echoes and affinities with the faculty work and speak to the power of art to collapse time and space. Other selected artworks, such as the Edward Weston photograph, function as antagonists, as a catalyst to interrogate more inclusive and complex experiences.

“Artists, Constellations and Connections: Feminist Futures” is curated by Wojick, Liu, Stacy Jo Scott, Vandenburg, Krajnak, Farsi and Kivarkis from the UO Department of Art in consultation with museum curators Adriana Miramontes Olivas and Danielle Knapp.



## Amanda Wojick Creates Public Art for Salem Library

October 6, 2021



Large-scale sculpture commissioned through City's Half-a-Percent for Public Art Program

Salem's newest work of public art is by Eugene, Oregon-based artist Amanda Wojick. Call Number Cascade, a site-specific sculpture on the main floor of the newly renovated Salem Public Library is a whimsical composition of color and form inspired by a love of libraries, landscapes, and a story of seven hidden waterfalls not far from Salem. Wojick thinks of the work as a three-dimensional painting that incorporates perforated and folded cutouts of numbers, rectangles, and abstract shapes inspired by the waterfalls.

The hand-painted steel sculpture is sited on a double-height concrete sheer wall on the library's main floor. This is one of four such walls installed as part of the seismic safety upgrades. Constructed from tilted, painted and welded steel panels arranged in layers to create a three-dimensional relief, the work features a variety of colorful shapes and images that invite interpretation and sustained viewing.

"I've been waiting a long time to see it installed; dreaming about what it would look like from various vantage points in the library was very exciting to me," said Wojick. "I wanted the colors

to feel very vibrant and connected to the different seasons. There are multiple layers that I think you may not notice all at once." ([YouTube – Amanda Wojick Art Installation](#)).

The new artwork was funded through the City of Salem's [half-a-percent for public art program](#), using funds generated from seismic upgrades to the library. Through this process, a Request for Qualifications was announced in December 2019 and shared with Oregon and regional arts organizations. A selection committee that included members of the Salem Public Art Commission, the Salem Public Library Foundation, Library Advisory Board, Hacker Architects, and Library staff selected Wojick in March 2020 from a pool of thirty-three artists who responded to the call.

Amanda Wojick's work has been exhibited widely; she is the recipient of national fellowships and awards from the [MacDowell Colony](#), [Mass MoCA](#), the Oregon Arts Commission, The Ford Family Foundation and Sculpture Space, among others. Her work is in public and private collections including the Portland Art Museum and the Tacoma Art Museum. Wojick received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Colgate University, and holds two Master of Fine Art degrees from Alfred University and Bard College in New York. She is a professor of sculpture and the Ann Swindells Chair of the Department of Art at the University of Oregon where she has been teaching since 2001.

An exhibition of works on paper by Amanda Wojick will be on view at the Salem Public Library through January 2022. The exhibition will feature nine works on paper that give the public an opportunity to learn more about the artist's creative process and the inspiration behind Salem's newest artwork. The exhibition is sponsored by the [Salem Public Art Commission](#) with support from the Salem Public Library.

## Amanda Wojick's Work on Exhibit from East to West

April 23, 2018

In what could be called an art exhibit triptych, [Amanda Wojick](#), associate professor and coordinator of the sculpture program at the School of Art + Design at the University of Oregon, has pieces on display in three states this month—New York, Illinois, and Oregon.

“The Space is Always” is showing in the Oregon Governor’s Office of the Capitol Building in Salem, from now until May 31. According to the Oregon Arts Commission, which runs [the Art in the Governor’s Office Program](#), “Wojick’s work explores a collision of abstraction and everyday life. Using layered texture, vibrant colors and irregular shapes, she weaves together elements of painting, sculpture and collage.”

The Art in the Governor’s Office Program identifies living, professional Oregon artists for exhibitions in the reception area of the Governor’s Office in the State Capitol. Artists are nominated by a statewide committee of arts professionals and are then selected by the Arts Commission with the participation of the Governor’s Office. Artists whose work has previously been shown in the Governor’s office include Henk Pander; Michele Russo; Manuel Izquierdo; [James Lavadour](#); [Wendy Red Star](#); and art alumnus [Gordon Gilkey](#), MFA, ’36.



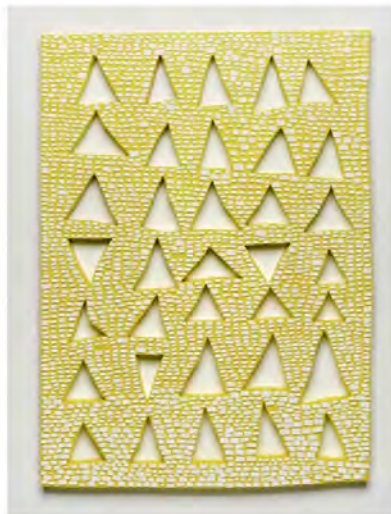
Artwork by Amanda Wojick hangs in the Oregon Governor's Office of the Capitol Building in Salem. Photo by Jonathan Bagby, instructor and exhibits coordinator, School of Art + Design, University of Oregon.

In Chicago, Wojick has work at the Tiger Strikes Asteroid, a network of artist-run spaces with locations in Philadelphia, New York, Los Angeles and Chicago. The show, called Manatee, recognizes the give and take of mentor/mentee relationships.

Now until June 2, Wojick also has work in the “MacDowell Now: Recent Abstract Painting” show at The Curator Gallery in New York City. The six artists in this show have two things in common —each was a fellow at The MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, in 2017, and each creates abstract work, notable for its vibrant color, “disrupted geometry, and intricate patterns intensified by layered, interwoven, and highly evolved signature motifs,” according to the exhibition’s website. Wojick was awarded a month-long fellowship at the prestigious artist’s colony in fall 2017.

“I am honored to have the recognition from the Oregon Arts Commission, Tiger Strikes Asteroid, and the MacDowell Colony. I have lived in Oregon since 2001, but I’m originally from New York, so I love having my work exhibited in Chelsea at the same time. I’m also a huge fan of Governor Kate Brown, so I’m especially excited to have my work there during her term,” says Wojick.

Wojick’s work has been exhibited at galleries from Portland, Oregon, to Stockholm, Sweden, and numerous places in between. She holds two Master of Fine Arts degrees, one from the Milton Avery School of the Arts, Bard College, and one from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. She earned her bachelor’s in art and art history from Colgate University.





## Oregon ArtsWatch



### [VISUAL ART](#)

## Considering the Art Gym's abstractions

At Marylhurst, curator Blake Shell has gathered 10 artists who work in the abstract for a colorful group show

February 23, 2016 // [VISUAL ART](#) // [Barry Johnson](#)

One of the dominant art doctrines during the Renaissance argued that art was “an allegory of the mind of God,” an imitation of a hidden reality, a form of revelation. Culture critic and historian [Raymond Williams](#) teased out this one (along with three other aesthetic philosophies) in “The Long Revolution,” and it seems especially pertinent to abstract art, some of which has a specific spiritual connection, after all, as early abstractionist [Wassily Kandinsky made clear](#).

Approaching the ten artists and 32 artworks in the [Marylhurst Art Gym's “and from the distance one might never imagine that it is alive”](#) with the idea of the hidden made visible in mind leads to some happily perplexing moments.

‘and from this distance one might never imagine that it is alive,’ (left to right) Grant Hottle, Ron Graff, and Amy Bernstein, 2015. Courtesy of The Art Gym. Amy Bernstein’s “Flesh of My Flesh” is at the far right.

For example, [Amy Bernstein's](#) “Flesh of My Flesh” gathers a set of small splashes, ribbons, and shapes of thick oil paint on a gleaming white canvas. How should we interpret those individual gestures and the painting as a whole? What hidden reality does it reveal? Something about the nature of pure paint, its elements, perhaps, the attraction of color—bright blue, red, purple striated with white—deployed in various small splotches? Or the mind of the painter who deployed them in just this way, which seems random but is not? Is this the way God creates, and what would the implications of THAT be?

Blake Shell, the exhibit’s curator and Art Gym director, picked out a set of four of [Pat Boas's](#) Sumi ink on paper pieces, gradations of gray, pale to nearly opaque, layer upon layer, curves and lines, diagonals, verticals and horizontals. The hidden reality might be that the universe conceals as it reveals; or, that the number of veils between us and reality is countless. Of course, if Shell had picked a different four pieces from the same set, called “Unalphabetic,” which overlay the Sumi ink with a riot of bright colors, shapes and lines in gouache and watercolor, then the thinking might be entirely different.

and from this distance one might never imagine that it is alive, (left to right) Michelle Ross, Grant Hottle, and Ron Graff, 2015. Courtesy of The Art Gym

My point isn't to argue that art IS an allegory of the mind of God. Another doctrine that replaced the Renaissance attempts to square the aesthetic ideas of Aristotle, Plato and Christianity, gradually gained strength, according to Raymond's account: Nature is God's creation; art is man's. He quotes the poet Tasso: "There are two creators: God and the Poet." I suppose a poet would say that?

No, my point is simply to observe that if we're going to get anything out of "and from the distance one might never imagine that it is alive," an exhibition of abstract work, it will involve some interpretation on our part after we've spent some time observing the art. In that speculation, anything goes, from thoughts about the divine mind (or its absence) to a sudden, non-biblical revelation about a color combination that might work in the kitchen.

**Boas, who shows regularly at Elizabeth Leach** and is the director of Portland State's School of Art and Design, has appeared in one other Art Gym group show and one solo show. The latter, "Record Record," gathered her studies of the New York Times over time:

"Like a Surrealist looking for the 'automatic writing of the world,' I traced the outlines of the heads of all the people who appeared on the front pages of The New York Times during 2001, month by month. I preserved the relative position on the page of each outline, creating randomly patterned calligraphic clouds, and began thinking of Freud's idea of the magic slate as a metaphor for memory. Though newspapers are thrown away and events may be forgotten, they never really vanish. The residue that collects underneath changes how we perceive the topmost layer."

Another set juxtaposed a regular Tiffany ad in the Times with the photographs of sad international news adjacent. And her "Little People" noted a change in 2008: the Times started featuring fewer stories and photos of the rich and powerful and more of ordinary folks, the little people.

Pat Boas, Blue Spiral Drawing, Sumi ink on paper, 2015, 30 x 22 inches

Other Boas projects involve language and letters, mostly to get at how disembodied they can seem, how distant from representation...of reality, I suppose. Those letters appear in her "Unalphabetic" series, for example.

Is Boas an "abstract artist"? I don't have a problem including her in that category, but her work is very wide-ranging. The "little people" are depicted photo-realistically, almost. But then, most of the artists in the show are equally wide-ranging; some of their work is more "abstract" than other strands are, at least to me.

So, **Calvin Ross Carl, who graduated from PNCA in 2008** and is co-director of Carl & Sloan Contemporary, is represented by three acrylic on canvas paintings that feature English phrases on top of backgrounds of paint that resemble cake icing at an old-fashioned bakery. One says, "You Are Doing OKAY." To keep you guessing, though, another says, "Good Days Gone Kill More Time." Carl and Boas lead us to consider how "abstract" versus how "representational" language is.

On the other hand, Carl has also painted some pattern pieces that are more clearly abstract, in the old-fashioned sense, than these. Still, I like this current project: The phrase most germane to our considerations here might be 2014's "Stop Believing (Things You Can't See)" [at HOHQ gallery](#).

[Michael Lazarus](#), who earned his MFA at the School of Visual Arts in New York in 1994, is represented here by wall pieces that gather found materials and set them on wood (mostly) and employ acrylic for color purposes. They are figures, heads with eyes, like one that fit right into Adams and Ollman gallery's "Key Figures" exhibition, but similar constructions feature words. For example, he was in the Elizabeth Leach "Words, Words, Words" show (with Pat Boas). His message in that show: a "Keep Out" sign below the phrase, "Getthefuckawayfromme."

and from this distance one might never imagine that it is alive, (left to right) Amanda Wojick, Michelle Ross, and Michael Lazarus, 2015. Courtesy of The Art Gym.

But really, explore the histories of any of the artists in the show and their use of varieties of media, forms and ideas becomes apparent. The contemporary artist in general seems restless in this way, developing practices that aren't confined to particular materials and approaches.

**At the end of 2012, the Museum of Modern Art in New York** opened "[Inventing Abstraction, 1910-1925](#)," "a dizzying, magisterial cornucopia" of an exhibition according to Roberta Smith of the New York Times, collecting 350+ pieces of early abstract works. If you look them over, you can find suggestions of what was to come in abstract work, with the possible exception of Abstract Expressionism. I suppose typologically speaking, Picasso by himself predicts most of it, maybe?

Grant Hottle, Bloodstone, Oil on canvas, 2015, 30 x 24 inches

Anyway, Arp's painted wood pieces in that show resemble Lazarus's work, just a little (some others remind me of Frank Stella). Alvin Coburn's photographs have some connection in my mind with [Grant Hottle](#)'s abstract oils in "and from the distance one might never imagine that it is alive," which have similar hard edges and layers. Hottle's paintings (he teaches at Clark College in Vancouver and is also associated with Oregon College of Art and Craft) are ravishing, in their way. Here's what he told [Noise & Color PDX](#) in early 2015:



“I’m really comfortable with abstraction and large scale painting, but I’m also really uncomfortable with the history of macho-ness and confidence with which all of that High Modernism was loaded...with these sensibilities of truth and genius and all that stuff that I don’t buy into. [...] I’m a formalist, but I take it seriously in terms of visuals. I don’t think I take it that seriously in terms of philosophy.”

So, maybe no hidden reality here, intentionally at least? I like the variations in the application of paint, from saturated to textural, the color dramas, the play in three dimensions. Somehow these pieces remind me just a little of certain work by early Portland abstractionist Carl Morris, though maybe Hottle would consider Morris’s work an example of High Modernism.

[Michelle Ross](#)’s paintings are not as bold as Hottle’s, but they are subtle, lovely things to look at and enjoy purely on the surface, even before the cognitive mind starts trying to shape them for its own purposes. Ross, another Elizabeth Leach artist, manages clean lines and absorbing textural backgrounds, playing with geometric shapes and blotches and subtle color shifts that yes, offer a poetic creation of their own.

I was also drawn to the curious grids of [Amanda Wojick](#), which have many antecedents in the history of abstraction. Wojick, though, who is associate professor and co-chair of the sculpture program the University of Oregon and an Elizabeth Leach artist, shapes her canvas and linen pieces slightly and her grids are handmade, not sharply geometric. In fact, they are only loosely grids, I suppose, each “box” a different size and separated from the rest by lots of white space. They remind me just a little of Frantisek Kupka’s “Nocturne,” in that MoMA show.

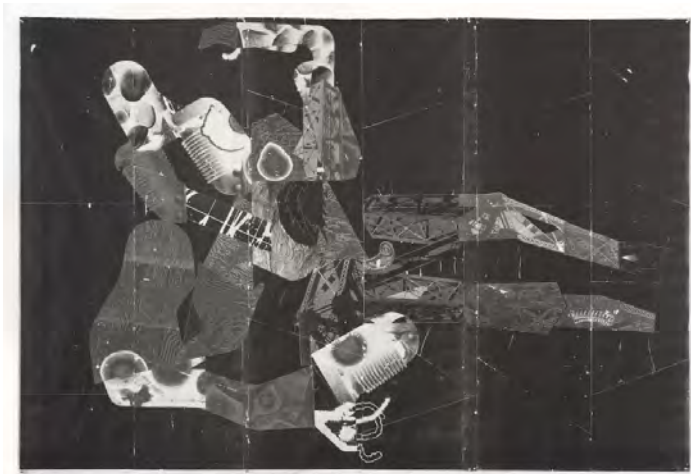


Amanda Wojick, Impatiens, Acrylic, Mulberry Paper, Paper Mache, on Linen, 2014, 23 x 22 inches

**Now, I’m just roaring through the rest** of the ten artists in the show, because they are interesting to look at, too. Curator Shell’s eye for work with lots of visual interest doesn’t let her down here at all.

[Ron Graff](#), associate professor of painting at the University of Oregon since 1980, shows four oil on canvas paintings. “Balancing Act” has a mustard colored background, a large brighter deep yellow shape on top of that, a black line interrupted by arcs, and a patch of four semi-rectangles in the corner, orange, deep-red, pink and black. You may follow that line, embrace that shape, look closely at the subtle variations in the background, or plunge into the rectangles, which share a similar effect with Bernstein’s paintings.

[Jack Featherly](#), an UPFOR Gallery artist, is another artist with work that is more “abstract” (his Ray paintings), but here he is represented by work that is figurative, related to Japanese ukiyo-e work, and deeply involving.



Robert Hardgrave, Castleford, Toner transfer on Tyvek, 2015, 72 x 108 inches

And finally, [Robert Hardgrave](#)'s huge Castleford, a toner transfer on Tyvek, a brand of flashspun high-density polyethylene fibers, used to protect buildings during construction, according to Wikipedia, has pride of place in the first gallery in the exhibition. Hardgrave is a Seattle artist who has dived into various materials in his career, including painting murals and acrylic on canvas and burlap. "Castleford" looks techy, even science-fiction-like, and also seems related somehow to early abstract photos, such as Man Ray's "Rayographs." I'm still looking at that MoMA show.

Will "and from the distance one might never imagine that it is alive" draw you closer to the divine, to some Platonic ideal of Beauty, to an idealization of nature? Possibly, but Renaissance art theory does have its limits. It does suggest, though, that there are artist worlds out there that, while they may pull lots of real world images, materials and associations into their orbit, operate according to a logic, analysis and/or imagination of their own. Perhaps, not unlike your own.



Ron Graff, Balancing Act, Oil on canvas, 2015, 38 x 35 inches

#### NOTES

The exhibition continues at [Marylhurst University](#) through March 5. Marylhurst is just south of Lake Oswego on Highway 43. A catalog for the show will published in the spring.

# ARTFORUM

**Amanda Wojick**

**ELIZABETH LEACH GALLERY**

**417 N.W. 9th Avenue**

**May 1–May 31**

Amanda Wojick creates work with a humble economy of means. She likewise deploys cheap materials—wooden dowels, bright yellow Band-Aids, polystyrene—to achieve an odd balance between solidity and impermanence. In *After* (all works 2008), clusters of brightly painted thin wooden dowels are held together with rubber bands, which form makeshift joints and create a flimsy, drooping, tentlike structure. The tenuous arrangement seems to have established its current configuration by itself, as if Wojick had only gently urged it into being. With no fixed order to its colors or spatial arrangement, *After*'s modularity is deceptive, in that its manifestation first appears as an exercise in arbitrary formalism. But while flexible, each dowel services the next structurally. Likewise, the carved and painted polystyrene shapes used in *Among* are stacked boldly but could just as likely have been arranged differently.

*Between*, on the other hand, is much more permanent. The freestanding structure is built with hundreds of polystyrene pieces, each one painted with a blue outline on its outward face, stacked in imprecise rows. A goopy intermediate material likens the work to a brick-and-mortar wall. Unlike *After* or the Band-Aid-on-paper works hung nearby, each element in *Between* is distinct, making evident the labor, the tedious repetition, invested in its creation. Wojick's manufacturing processes are varied but always refreshingly straightforward; the pleasure is in beholding how she extracts nuance from her simple operations.



View of "sight line." From left: *Among*, *Between*, and *After*, all 2008.

— Micah Malone

# ON THE TOWN

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Visits to artists' studios—including that of David Eckard, left—have been a key part of Jennifer Gately's quick-study selection process for the 2006 Oregon Biennial.

## Love at First Sight

*Jennifer Gately, the Portland Art Museum's new curator of Northwest art, tosses her first ball.*

IF EVER A PORTLAND ART MUSEUM BIGWIG were in a position to score with the local art community, it's Jennifer Gately.

The ebullient 35-year-old curator and newly avid tennis player first proved her affection for this city's art scene by exhibiting Portland up-and-comers at the Sun Valley Center for the Arts in Idaho, where she directed visual arts programming for five years. In January PAM welcomed her as the first Arlene and Harold Schnitzer Curator of Northwest Art, a freshly minted position designed to raise the profile of the art of the region. Weeks after taking her post, Gately gained support to reform the selection process for the Oregon Biennial, the museum's periodic survey of contemporary art that she is now in charge of organizing, putting a clearer onus on herself and her successors to be knowledgeable about the local scene. Meanwhile, the curator has strategically spread the ball around for the 2006 Biennial, which opens July 29. Countering the perceived conservatism of the museum's last two efforts, Gately released a 34-person roster on which artists working in traditional media such as painting and sculpture are in the minority.

That leaves the score at love all, and when the doors open to the Collins Gallery at the end of the month, Gately's first serve will be judged an ace or a fault. —*Camela Raymond*

Biennials always produce awful fractiousness. Why do we have them? [Former Museum of Modern Art curator] Robert Storr just brought together an entire community of curators internationally to debate that very question. He

PHOTOGRAPH BY OWEN CARRY

## ON THE TOWN

tends to lean, if I remember correctly, toward the notion that they are moot.

Do you agree?

No, I don't. I think it's important to present currents in art on a regular basis, because art should be inclusive, not exclusive. Biennials are a nice way to crystallize a moment for a community, and to have that community engage as well.

Your Biennial picks include a number of surprises. Brittany Powell and others are fresh out of art school. Mark Hooper is known as a commercial photographer. Other artists, such as David Eckard and Pat Boas, have been around for a while without getting much institutional attention. As an outsider, what currents have caught your eye?

Keep in mind that I've only been here three months, so anything I say now could be completely different in three more months. But I was amazed at the abundance of paper. Everything from the small paper dots, the circular forms that Amanda Wojick uses to cover the surface of her sculptures, to K.C. Madsen's eight-foot-tall sculptures made of crumpled forms of paper. And of course there are a lot of drawings.

Many of the artists you selected share a narrative impulse. Not quite. I found a more specific interest in psychodramas and self-reflection. Federico Nessi's photographs are about the power of the inner superhero, and Ty Ennis's drawings are glimpses into his sense of self. There is also a strong sense of place manifested through portraiture—but not as you might traditionally expect. Take Brittany Powell. Her contact paper wall installations are based on memories of her hometown of Albany. For the Biennial, she'll be recreating her favorite doughnut shop, life-size—you'll feel like you're at the counter.

At the Sun Valley Center for the Arts your exhibitions explored, along with historical subjects, themes ranging from biodiversity to skateboarding to hunting. The latter exhibition incorporated a room-sized installation that represented—and actually functioned as—a bar, along with hunting photographs you took from a local watering hole. Yes, it's called Grumpy's. I borrowed a few photographs of people who were recognizable in our community. And then I replaced them with signs that said, "Where's Bob? He's up at Sun Valley Art Center." The hunting project completely came from a show in Portland called

**Right:** Interdisciplinary artist David Eckard's "performance sculpture" *Podium* awaits removal from his studio to the Portland Art Museum for the 2006 Oregon Biennial.

**Below:** One of several works that will appear by returning Biennial artist Storm Thrapp, this untitled oil painting exemplifies the self-reflective mood of this year's exhibition.



*The Hunt* organized by [Biennial artists] Michael Brophy and Vanessa Renwick in 2003. The board was so nervous, they almost put the kibosh on it. But it came off beautifully, and it brought more people in than anyone anticipated.

You are PAM's first curator of Northwest art. What does that mean to you?

A lot of hard work. Assessing the gaps in the Northwest art collection is a big task. There are several collections that have been promised to the museum that need to be reviewed, shaped, given a voice. Beyond that, I'll be working on making the collection accessible to people outside this region. This place is so community-oriented; sometimes it doesn't bounce much further than that, so it's my job to kind of toss the ball. I've been playing tennis; can you tell?

And you have a doubles partner, Arlene Schnitzer, who endowed your position. It's true! She's been an incredible arts patron.

And a powerful one. Her patronage has had a determining effect on the collection that you're working with. Yes, and she's very conscious of that.

She's very, very gracious about the fact that I'm a different person. She wants to know what's new and fresh. It's not all about her; it's all about the art.

The events you programmed at the SVCA were exuberantly interdisciplinary. Can we expect the same here?

I hope so. Naturally, the museum's special exhibition galleries are booked out for a while, so it will be some time before I can really do something of note. In the meantime, there's a small [approximately 400 square feet] gallery in the Center for Northwest Art on the top floor, called the Wintercross Gallery. The idea is that I will present small installations of contemporary work on a quarterly basis, starting in September. It will be a very experimental, open place.

You're suddenly obligated to a bigger community than in Sun Valley. What does that feel like?

It's a big responsibility. There are so many expectations. I hope I'll be able to fulfill at least a fraction of them. Not everyone will be happy all the time. But so far people have been very supportive. People here are so nice. At a certain point it's like, *What do you really think? Tell me!* ■

PHOTOGRAPHY: SLIDING DOOR CASEY WAIN; SET BY BILL NICHOLSON; JAM COLLINGS; MONITORING GROUP PHOTO

## ART

Oct. 7

## Band-Aid solution

Amanada Wojick finds inventive uses for some common objects

BY RICHARD HUNTINGTON  
News Staff Reviewer

In these days of artistic mix and match, what might appear to be abstract work often harbors narrative hints suggesting imagined worlds of places and people.

Such is the case with the beguiling work of Amanada Wojick, an artist originally from Rochester, now living in Eugene, Ore. Her exhibition at Buffalo Arts Studio, called "Works on Paper and Cliffs," shows her to be an artist of refined sensibility who knows well how to hide that refinement behind casual technique, throw-away materials and compositions that appear to be more self-generating accumulations than conscious constructions.

Her use of found materials — a very inventive use — makes her works on paper and wall-hung sculpture fragile objects with an appealing provisional quality. Band-Aids are in profusion on many works, joined by such pick-up items as nails, paint chips, kitchen matches and Styrofoam. These castaway materials help to lift these works from the tidy world of abstraction to a fictional space of Wojick's own making.

Wojick's wall-hung sculptures, "Cliffs," quickly lose their abstract veneer when it's discovered that they represent tiny rocky environments that, rough and odd as they are, have been "colonized." The bulky "Blue

Cliff," for instance, is graced by an aqua-colored pool too high to be seen by the average viewer but visible in a bank of small circular mirrors quixotically installed on the wall above.

Another piece, "Picnic at Hanging Rock," has a festive exterior pleasing in itself. But closer inspection reveals a hollowed-out interior: It's the very cave chamber where this "picnic" proceeds. The picnickers? Little targets on stems and striped "personae" hanging around the walls.

Her bright works on paper deal less directly with the idea of site and narrative, but implications of human activity do emerge. Many of the impressive Band-Aid drawings feature strips repeated in patterned clusters that — after viewing the "cliffs" — readily suggest brightly colored rock strata. Ink drawing is sometimes used to visually connect the strata and to hint at various organic forms like foliage or more rock. In a couple of instances rudimentary ladders appear or even more rudimentary human faces — eyes mainly, which seem huddled together in groups, watching this busy march of shapes with wary glances.

Some drawings have a miniaturist touch. The miniaturist is no abstractionist, not when she is forever manipulating scale. A shift in scale proposes distant terrains, places that can only be only conjured up in the mind. For example, "Moses (Drawing)," a delightful piece that finds pleasing three-dimensional life as a "cliff" as well, is made up of many small, loopy red and white targets set on nails to form a rough circle. It seems exceedingly frail, but it manages to draw the attention inward, hypnotically, to a radically reduced world where only little whirling things reside.

Wojick is not always so delicate and magical, however. In the wonderfully blunt "Band-Aid Mound Drawing" the operation of applying Band-Aids is reduced to near-obsessive absurdity. She just keeps sticking on strip after strip, one Band-Aid piled upon another, until a low, lumpy, rounded mound is formed on one section of the paper. Its awkward potato shape and the dull thud of its surface makes it seem kin to one of Phillip Guston's clunky cartoon heads.

Even the sole floor piece with the hilarious title "Linoleum Hardwood Floor Puddle" suggests a bizarre island landscape where a noxious green flickers through a crazy mass of topsyturvy "trees" with rough-cut circles of "hardwood" flooring for tops. It comes on like a trendy "installation piece" but — like the other objects in this joyous exhibit — slyly shifts gears, sending the work into a imaginative dominion of extraordinary dimension.

## Ongoing

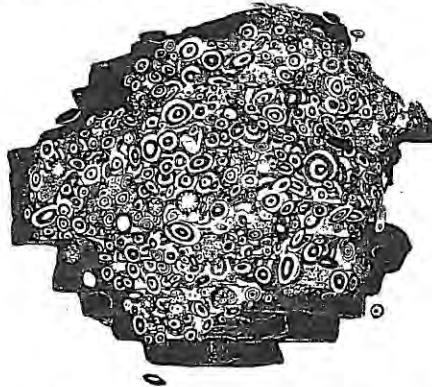
Insite Gallery, a fresh new space at 810 Elmwood Ave. with the low, airy feel of a Los Angeles gallery, continues its inaugural exhibition "New Walls, New Works" featuring the prints of Kathleen Sherin and Zerbe Soderwick. Sherin and Soderwick share an interest in complex, overall compositions that are primarily abstract.

Sherin is the more painterly of the two and the more abstract. She uses an extended collograph technique that allows her to methodically build up rich, glowing layers of form and color. Some images obliquely suggest the patterns of tree limbs spread regally over variegated and burnished backgrounds that suddenly burst forth into spectacular golden hues.

Soderwick, who shows chiefly digital prints along with a few photographic images of eggs, has a more graphic sensibility. Her prints, crisp and often festooned with linear flourishes, are sometimes populated by simplified animal shapes that are integrated into the overall play of forms. These animals are elemental, symbolic creatures, reminiscent of the powerful reductive drawings incised into rock by ancient tribal societies.

The show will continue through Sunday. For information about the work or gallery, call 884-9410. •

e-mail: rhuntington@buffnews.com



Amanada Wojick makes use of found materials in "Works on Paper and Cliffs."

## HOW YOU LIKE IT - AT BUFFALO ARTS STUDIO

Walking into the gallery space at Buffalo Arts Studio you are immediately hit with **Amanda Wojick's** best drawing, "Big Orange Band-Aid Drawing." The strength of this work captures her project at its best: a mixture of both fine art and everyday materials used to create landscapes ripe with unnatural colors (fire-engine red and other fluorescents abound). At first you notice many colored, striped ink markings suggesting worms and/or night crawlers, but then after stepping back, the Band-Aids actually begin to create an archipelago coming into the frame from the lower left-hand side. She judiciously, and perhaps unnecessarily, brings the point home with ink work taking the shape of exaggerated cattails and other swamp grasses, primarily placing them along the upper-left perimeter of the archipelago.

Indeed, with these works Wojick is focused exclusively on the landscape. And if, in her effort to create "hidden worlds," she seems to have perhaps skimmed on the quality of craftsmanship, it would be understandable; she has had quite a prolific year. (Thirteen of the exhibit's 16 works are from 2005.) For example, in the work "Blue Cliff," which adorns the far wall of the gallery, she gives us a whimsical world that suggests mermaids, and a curiosity as to what is inside this work coming out of the wall. Yet, upon closer inspection, the paint chips that obsessively coat many of the works of the show are not applied across the entire surface. Seeing the foam underneath is akin to finding out that Santa Claus can't be dead because he never even existed. Instantly you're drawn to the artifice of the work, but in all the wrong ways. If there is one criticism of Wojick's show it is that her work always seems to stop short of offering up something beyond itself.

If Wojick's work stops short of offering up something beyond itself, **Sandra Rechico's** installation is an offering. Made with human labor, Rechico's work does not seem as cold or conceptual as many viewers may initially feel upon walking into a world that is not hidden, but rather underlined. With yards of yarn hanging over various objects in Buffalo Arts Studio's ceiling (she uses white yarn for the fire extinguishing system; gray for the roof drainage piping), Rechico has created a different map of what is otherwise a plain mixed-zoning room. When walking through the various sub-zones, or rooms within rooms, viewers get to experience a newly defined space. If the space is the macro, closer inspection provides the individual nature of not only the crocheted yarn tubes (which were fabricated prior to any of Rechico's volunteers working on it) but of the manipulations at an individual level (some people have added knots, others left theirs looser, others tighter). By combining these two elements of the installation, what Rechico has in fact created is a map of community—a topographical assault on a room that can only be accomplished through the assistance of others.

It is to the credit of **Rebecca Moda**, Exhibition Coordinator, that the unique tension has been displayed between these two artists, both of whom explore the world—one how she would like to see it, the other as it is lived. The exhibitions continue through October 29.

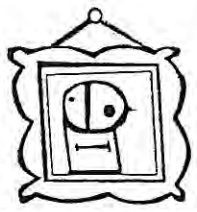
—kevin thurston



Edward Bisone's exhibit opens at the Castellani this week. The artist's reception will be held on November 4.

723 NW 9th  
Portland, OR 97209  
503.228.4287  
www.elizabethleachgallery.com

BOOKS THE ARTS VISUAL ARTS



VISUAL ART

The day after Valentine's Day, a few discarded valentines had blown through the schoolyard by my house. I found them piled up against a chain-link fence like a tiny red and pink snowdrift. It made me think of the three shows up at Elizabeth Leach Gallery. Though each of the three Northwest artists—Claire Cowie, Amanda Wojick and Kristan

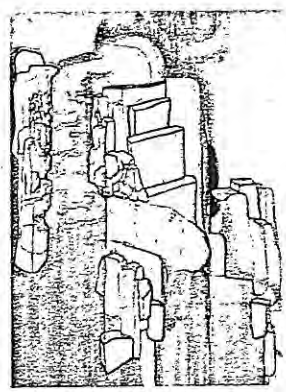
Kennedy—use differing materials and styles, their work, for me at least, will be forever linked to decaying valentines.

The first things you notice in the space are Wojick's mixed-media sculptures. Band-Aids, linoleum chips and other materials cover Styrofoam structures, creating colorful landscapes that look a little like psychedelic birthday cakes plucked from someone's dream world. Wojick's works on paper combine drawing and the artist's apparent fascination with Band-Aids, resulting in a visual feast of common objects and doodle lines that somehow add up to unforgettable beauty.

A soft other-worldliness runs throughout the gallery. Claire Cowie's show, *Village*, uses watercolors and sculptures, to explore a land populated by tree boughs ripe with color, where clusters of cottages lay off in the distance and gnome-like creatures ride horses and wear pointy hats. Sparse and delicate—dainty even—there is a creepy element to Cowie's *Village* that may not be intentional, but I like it.

The title of Kristan Kennedy's show, *Valentine Field*, is not a premonition of my schoolyard experience, but the name of a real football field that Kennedy found in a tiny town here in Oregon. The title alludes to memory and a sense of place, two themes that tether

Kennedy's abstract mark-making to a sublime world of almost-perceptible landscapes. What were started as "drawings for drawings' sake" took on a hidden architecture, becoming imagined spaces with their own laws of gravity, space, and time. Many of the works defy a sense of scale, simultaneously suggesting the monumental terrain of another planet and a microscopic close-up of the neural pathways in your brain. RYAN DIRKS



Three shows at Elizabeth Leach Gallery:

Amanda Wojick's *Cliffs and Waterfalls*, Claire Cowie's *Village*, Kristan Kennedy's *Valentine Field*; 417 NW 9th, through Feb. 26



# visual arts

gallery guide | reviews | events



Instinctual artistry: Kristan Kennedy's "Blob #1" is at the Elizabeth Leach Gallery.

## Young, smart, of the moment

By D.K. ROW  
 THE OREGONIAN

The first solo exhibitions in Elizabeth Leach's new Pearl District space announce one part of the flourishing dealer's formula: Stay young, bright and of the moment.

With new work by Kristan Kennedy, Claire Cowie and Amanda Wojick, Leach successfully embodies those claims with results that alternately charm and befuddle. Kennedy's drawn blobs and globs, Cowie's Asiatic landscapes and paintings of Buddha-like frog men and Wojick's mixed-media pieces and sculptures made out of

tool store products are like beautifully photographed movies with no plotlines: This packed series of solo shows is alluring stuff that you may not remember after looking at them.

The artists have much in common besides Leach. Each is near 30. Kennedy and Wojick both attended Alfred University in New York. All are from the Northwest—Kennedy from Portland, Cowie from Seattle and Wojick from Eugene. The artists also share the same intentionally messy, diffuse aesthetic and attitude about art.

For Kennedy, who first gained notice in the local scene as one-

half of the conceptual art duo called Swallow Press (x2), the show is, in the most general sense, about experimentation with mark-making. In these new works on paper, including a large-scale scroll that unfurls onto the edge of the floor, Kennedy freely interprets, like a jazz musician expanding on a single phrase, vaguely sexual forms and shapes. Her gooey representations accumulate and morph into abstract landscapes and fragments that resemble parts of the human body. Look closely at the drawings' sheer physicality, and you'll sense the artist following her anxious,

Please turn to Page 29

### review

Works by  
 Kristan  
 Kennedy,  
 Claire Cowie  
 and Amanda  
 Wojick

Where:  
 Elizabeth Leach  
 Gallery, 417 N.W.  
 Ninth Ave.

Closes: Feb. 26

FRIDAY  
 FEBRUARY 11, 2005  
 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
 1000 NE 11TH AVE  
 PORTLAND, OREGON 97232

*Continued from Page 26*

roving instinct as she marks out some obscure, personal narrative. The work, however, is not without humor: The bold, colorful bulging shapes of "Blob #1" — a late-night, adrenaline version of a lighter-colored, flat-figured Milton Avery landscape — punctuate the work's primal, B-movie horror title.

Cowie's watercolors are light-hearted stuff. Seemingly influenced by Japanese art, in particular Japanese woodblock prints, Cowie crafts dispersing pools of such delicate, tenuous color that the whimsical frog men and fluttering dragonflies in her paintings seem on the verge of disappearing. Most of the works are muted landscapes — a tree in the foreground and a village of roughly sketched houses in the back — and possess such an airy quality that they seem to float like clouds that will evaporate into the heavens.

Cowie's insular, Proustian world contrasts with Wojick's mixed-media pieces and sculptural works incorporating Band-Aids, nails, plastic wallpaper and foam. Her sculptural forms — created from products one could buy someplace like Home Depot, such as nails, wallpaper and foam — look like mountainous cliffs and ridges. With their jutting nails and bits of paper decorating the surface, the cliffs and ridges turn into symbols of environmental abuse. And, in the case of "Tilted Mount," art world trivia, too. The

sculpture's title is a playful reference to "Tilted Arc," Richard Serra's infamous 1981 steel sculpture that incurred the wrath of the public when it blocked New York's Federal Plaza. (The work was eventually cut into three pieces and sent to a scrap metal yard.)

That self-awareness is prevalent to each artist's work, especially so in Wojick's sculptures and mixed-media pieces, some of which cleverly incorporate Band-Aids. But that same breezy, throwaway quality also suggests an undisciplined, stylistic affectation that finds its kinship in those comic, retro trucker hats worn by all the young dudes with intentionally greasy hair: Aside from being roughly the same age and residing in the Northwest, these artists are making cool, good-looking work that one would find in the pages of Artforum magazine. To varying degrees, Kennedy, Cowie and Wojick are still mired in the post-collegiate concerns of being stridently contemporary.

The money and effort Leach put into renovating this new space was her latest attempt to infuse some big city glamour and personality into the Portland art world.

Her artists, including Kennedy, Cowie and Wojick, are fortunate to be showing in Portland's best-looking space and with one of its most aggressive dealers, too.

But so far, the new gallery's spacious, Walden Pond austerity, not the artists, is the star of the show.

411 Broadway  
 Portland, Oregon 97202  
 503.464.0911  
 10am-6pm Wed-Fri  
 12pm-6pm Sat-Sun

May 27, 2004 Portland Mercury 41

# ARTS



## VISUAL ARTS

The bulk of this month's interesting art in Portland is scattershot, peppering the landscape here and there, but lacking the proper context or punch to create a strong gravitational pull (James Boulton's show at Pulliam Deffenbaugh notwithstanding). Everyone from the coffee shop to the art museum features some compelling art this May, but the best work seems caught in a muck that prevents the pieces from shining as brightly as one would hope.

John Brodie's show at Stumptown, *Signs, Desperate* is full of direct messages painted in blocky black letters on sheets of chewed up cardboard. Most of them are too full of unintentional references to homelessness and the British artist Gillian Wearing to be very effective, but the grand centerpiece of the show is undeniably commanding. It's an extended plea to a mysterious recipient begging for a fresh start and understanding. Its pointed ambiguity is mildly creepy and altogether human.

Around the corner, Elizabeth Leach has a group show called *Intense Focus* that highlights artists who work in obsessive, accumulative, or otherwise tedious fashions. For too many artists, this means tiny, tiny Bruce Conner-like speed freak hatch marks, although *Intense Focus* features many fresh

works. Amanda Wojick's *Linoleum Hardwood Floor Puddle*, a tiered floor mandala made from thousands of nails capped with wood-paneled disks protruding from an eight foot disc is captivating. For his video *The Aging Project*, Ken Solomon photographed himself every day for three years and turned the results into a low-tech time lapse film. Solomon looks like he's hovering around his mid-thirties, so his physical development isn't as dramatic as a child, or even a tree would be. What is interesting, then, is his devotion to his narcissistic process.

If you rob a bank this month and have 15 still burning a hole in your pocket, make a point to see the Rau Collection at the art museum. The traveling exhibition contains some truly awesome paintings. There are a few Monets, so if Mom comes to town, you can probably convince her to take you. While you're there, look out for the melancholy, overcast El Greco, the highly steal-able Morandi still life, and Elizabeth-Louise Visge-LeBrun's 1797 portrait of Charlotte Rist, which may be the best John Currin painting in the entire Northwest. CHAS BOWIE



What's Working: The Month of May Winds Down