

Art review: Resistance begins inside

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Oregon ArtsWatch

By **LUSI LUKOVA**

The Work Continues, at [PCC Sylvania's North View Gallery](#) (the exhibition closed on Saturday), emerged from a unanimous functional depression felt by its six artists and two curators. We may easily guess the source of this unrest, even without curator Sam Hopple's explanation that this artistic survey first took form in 2016 as a direct response to a numbness following the Presidential election.



"The Work Continues" (installation view), 2018; PCC North View Gallery/Image courtesy of Maria T.D. Inocencio

However, the manner in which these six artists chose to further engage with this unsettling environment—through a complex exploration of identity—gives this show its place in contemporary art activism. Each of these artists, through their own respective processes and mediums, toggles the question of "Who are we?"—as artists, as advocates, and as humans. Tapping into something deeply personal, each piece in this show is a vulnerable and raw demonstration of art that does not compromise.

At North View, gallery-goers are meant to meander through the space in a clockwise direction, beginning with Jiseon Lee Isbara's textile work, *Stare*, to the left of the entrance. Isbara is a fiber artist, exhibiting both nationally and internationally, and an educator at Oregon College of Art

and Craft. For *The Work Continues* she plays the roles of artist and co-curator with Hopple.

Stare measures roughly 2.5 x 2.5 feet and at first glance may invoke a quizzical turn of the head. The googly eyes affixed to the cream-colored cloth, tucked around embroidered circles of various neutral tones, give the impression that a double voyeurism is occurring between the work and the viewer. Unsurprisingly, the colored circles are meant to symbolize a variety of skin tones, and this particular work of fiber art was inspired by a real event in Isbara's life.



Sean Healy, "Sugar Pill, Blue", 2018, detail; gel caps, resin, sugar and plexi; 40" x 40" / Courtesy of Elizabeth Leach Gallery/ Image courtesy of Maria T.D. Inocencio

As a woman of color and a first generation immigrant, Isbara shares in her Artist Statement that her identity and her the sense of displacement that results from often being stared at, is deeply embedded in her work. In this sense, the cloth becomes symbolic of her body and is here elevated to the vulnerable place of the gallery wall for all to see. The inclusion of the (somewhat comical) eyes allow for her own agency in the visual exchange.

The exhibition also features another of Isbara's works, *Who Am I?*—an installation of stacked cards that form a pillar in the far right corner of the viewing room. Each card is first printed with her English name in black ink and then stamped over with her Korean name in red. Subtly representing a sort of cultural erasure that occurs through assimilation, this work purposefully confuses how visitors may choose to engage with Isbara's identity, and is another example of how she herself seeks to command the space.

The title of the exhibition works as a double entendre: it exists as both a literal display of how individuals can continue to produce artistically in times of trial, as well as a more subtle call-to-action aimed at a larger general consciousness. This pressure, felt by each artist, has the potential to perpetuate a hyper-awareness of how we observe ourselves and how we in turn are

observed by others. Undoubtedly, the labels we receive and give ourselves in such times abound endlessly.

Samantha Wall's three monochromatic ink figure drawings enter a place of quiet introspection that explore identity through a diasporic lens. Wall, an artist originally from Seoul, South Korea, and now based in Portland, works primarily in ink to create sinewy and mysterious renditions of the female form. The interconnectedness of *Gatekeeper*, *Initiate*, and *Grace*, in their execution and their thematics, embody the artist's interest in what it means to navigate multiculturalism, a notion of constant flux. The three works appear to have a black-marbled texture, interspersed with a careful dotwork that serves to highlight certain features such as a chest or a neck. Done in this style, it is as if the profiles and full-body forms are rendered in water, in a state of flowing motion and change, despite being affixed behind glass. Easily recognizable as female forms, the question of whose forms they are is still open to interpretation. At once, these meticulously crafted bodies have everything to do with the artist, perhaps as a mirror of her own experience, and maybe nothing at all, promoting a greater, universal interpretation.

Sharing a similar hyperawareness, Sean Healy's *Sugar Pill, Blue* is unflinching in its openness. Healy, a sculptor and multimedia artist, creates work that is inextricably linked to his life as a father, husband, and friend. In molding art practice to everyday life, *Sugar Pill, Blue* tells a humbling narrative of self-medication and self-care. The piece is molded out of hundreds of gel caps suffused together with resin on plexi and hoisted up onto the gallery wall. Healy's visible inclusion of sugar to some of the gel cap halves resembles what may have once filled the interior of the pill capsule and adds a confessional tone to the piece. The inch of space between the wall and work creates the illusion that *Sugar Pill, Blue* is floating freely in air. The opacity of the gel caps reflecting the stark blue of the wall painted behind the work further augments this distance and imbues it with a reverent tone. While the piece may appear light enough to float, it is heavy with significance for the artist. What Healy seems to be communicating the very real successes and failures of both an artist and a human being; one could not exist without the other.

Duality and pluralism are the forefront of this exhibition, but exist most palpably in that of Hiro Toyo and Ricardo Nagaoka. Toyo and Nagaoka are in fact one individual: he resides in the liminal between-space of his Japanese-Latino identity while living and working in the context of his current American residence. His fractured artistic self, he writes, stems from his growing up as an outsider in his own homes. Toyo's sculptural practice, seen here in his site-specific installation *Arranged Space, 1*, is an exploration of the body in a tangible format. In working with concrete, brick, gravel, steel and clay to create this domicile, Toyo is responding not only to the viewing space but to a more inherent desire for stability and structure. The use of these concrete materials provide a bridge into a more conjectural and philosophical arena for discussing space and place. The interlocking forms made of disparate materials have the appearance of a whole structure, but one that retains distance even within itself. What is at stake is a sense of belonging.



Ricardo Nagaoka, "Kevin", 2018; inkjet print; 24" x 30" / Image courtesy of Maria T.D. Inocencio

Toyo's own trace as maker weighs more heavily in his sculptural than his photographic practice, where he takes a more reserved approach, choosing to remain behind the lens. The subject of *Kevin* is set in a bare, pink bedroom, wearing house clothes. The intimacy of this portrait lies in its surfaces—there is little to hide in this setting. Yet, Nagaoka blurs this invasion of privacy by negating access to the figure itself, posing Kevin with his hand over his face. Viewers can get a sense of the intimacy of this image, but the true nature remains hidden. With his photography, Nagaoka does not shy away from topics such as gender, expression, vulnerability and the self, but without including himself in the frame. Instead, he conveys his own wrestling with identity and existence through his poignantly staged subjects.

For "*The Work Continues*", painter Jeremy Okai Davis has included four paintings done in his distinctive, vaguely pointlistic style. While highly figural, the dotted approach and, at times, inclusion of non-traditional colors, adds a certain level of abstraction to the paintings. One can recognize the shape of the hands in *Hand I (White)* and *Hand II (Black)*, as well as the muscled, lower body of a man in *Untitled (I Won't Leave)*, yet they are far from depicting how one may encounter a body in real life.

All four paintings are shown together on the right side of the gallery, where a square portion of the wall has been purposefully painted black. Creating a mini-installation, the themes Davis navigates are ones that serve as a retrospective of the artist's background and history, while

also looking ahead towards the future. Davis writes in his statement, "It is important for me to express myself, but to do that I must investigate and know myself." In this near future he he considers what legacy he may one day leave behind.

As a result, *Family Dollar (Legacy)*, situated prominently in the center of the installation, holds the weight of familial and personal responsibility. The piece depicts a headshot of a black man in a suit, an unreadable expression on his face, with everything from the nose up painted over with black acrylic. The intentional exclusion of the eyes seems to be playing on matters of seeing and being seen, of what is public knowledge and what is kept from us. Knowing oneself and expressing oneself are inextricably tied together, and Davis poses here a question that is pointed as much to himself as to any other father, maker, and son: Is what I am leaving behind truly emblematic of me, and what will its effect be? As an audience, we in turn are left to wonder if this work is reflective of Davis' own musings and frustrations, that of a larger community's, or both?

Lisa Jarrett, multimedia artist and educator, works in a medium that exists primarily in the form of questions. Her pieces on view for *"The Work Continues"* are part of a larger series entitled *Reconciliations*. The three digital collages (*On Truth*), (*On Love*), and V(*On Beauty*) meld together two images each, of black individuals, young and old alike, posing by cars, holding babies, or engaged in other daily activities. These are framed with the inclusion of tufts of black hair on the lip of each frame. The grander themes of truth, love and beauty are instantaneously and universally recognizable.

Jarrett suggests her own trace and questioning by calling into examination how exactly truth, beauty, and love may come to be exemplified and understood by varying histories and existences. The bodies and the type of hair on display in these socially engaged works are distinct to the artist and the African-American community she wishes to address. Three other words that are printed on these collages, respectively, are "Motherland", "Mother Water", and "Mother Tongues." Whereas "Mother" may be a universally recognizable word, Jarrett is pinpointing a mother and a nurturing experience exclusive to the African diaspora. Therefore, depending on the individual observing these collages, each viewing experience will be inherently unique. Jarrett's social practice resonates here as a result of the open-endedness of the three collages; they provide an ambiguous outline for thought and discourse that has the potential to diverge in a multitude of directions.

The themes of introspection and protest expressed by the six artists in *The Work Continues* are still resonant even as current events have continued developing and, unfortunately, devolving. Despite the multitude of mediums and themes explored in these works, what visitors are meant to take away is the kindred and powerful desire to question a state of self and that self's external impact on a fluctuating world. What these individuals also share is the overarching desire to continue producing work, be it as a form of meditation or as a response to fear and immobilization.

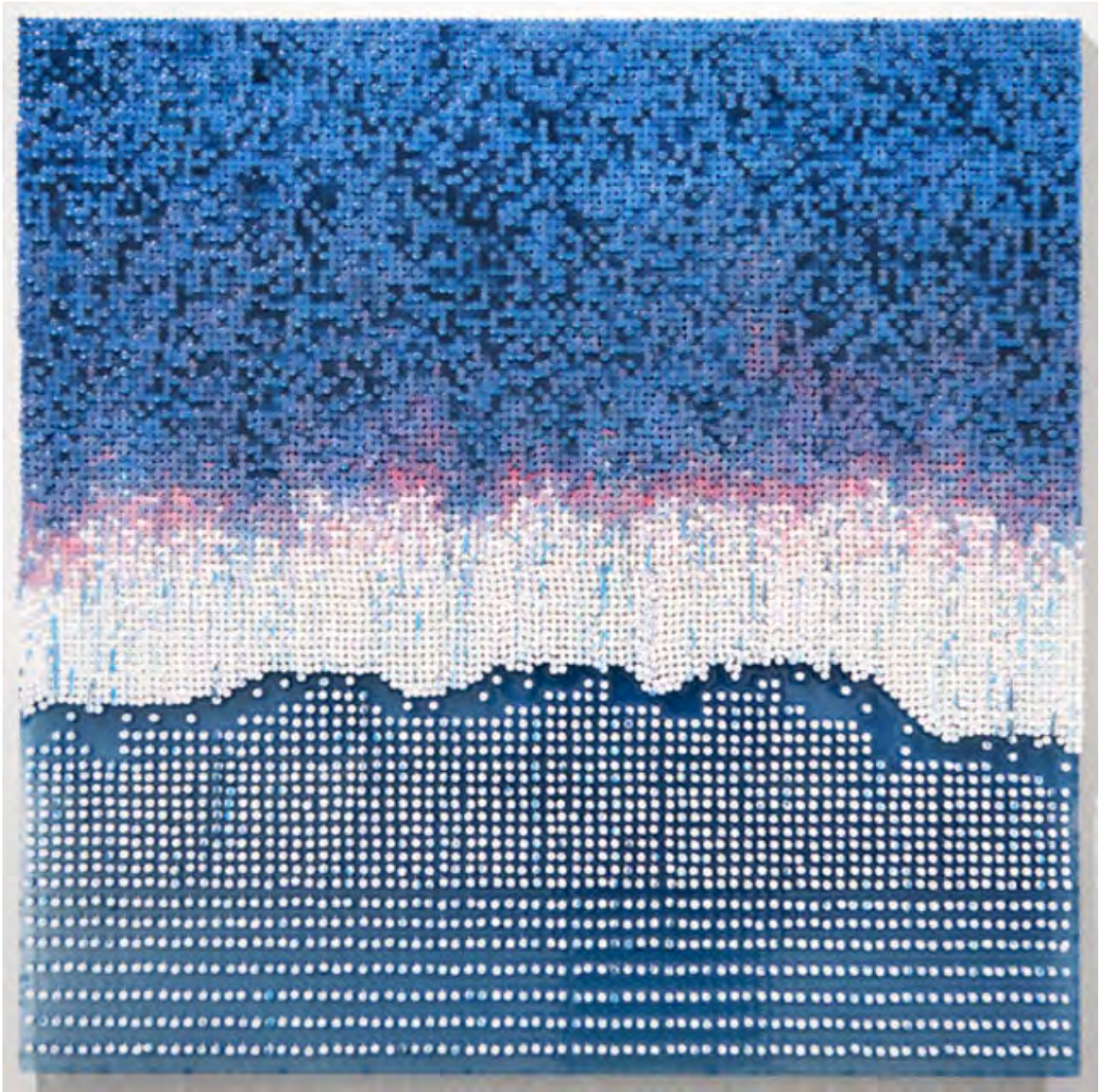


The Work Continues (installation view), 2018; PCC North View Gallery/Image courtesy of Maria T.D. Inocencio

In highlighting the very intimate nature of each individual's personal practice, a cohesive portrait of a multifaceted selfhood becomes common knowledge in the gallery, particularly as it exists in our divisive and pluralized politics. Ultimately, in times of uncertainty and unrest, all we may hope to find is an accessible emotional ground within our own cultural communities. Now, more than ever, there is an urgency within the arts and within our society to continue the work that promotes intercultural dialogue and addresses issues that may be more resistant to change.

Intestinal Fortitude as Art: Sean Healy's Gut

pdxmonthly.com/slideshows/2016/12/20/intestinal-fortitude-as-art-sean-healy-s-gut



Aging. With the exceptions of Dorian Gray and Peter Pan, it happens to us all. And the resulting battle against our sagging, drooping, expanding bodies is witnessed in our obsessions with exercise, cleanses, cosmetic surgery, and diets. **Artist Sean Healy mines this theme in his recent exhibition, Gut—an artistic exploration of his own struggles with a waistline expanding with age.**

"I'm in the thick of middle age right now," says Healy. "It's a little harder to do things that come naturally anymore. [*Gut* is] kind of a reaction. Sort of a mid-life crisis."

Using warped wood, cigarette filters, and bellybutton lint in conjunction with traditional materials, Healy has taken a snapshot of his own aging process. In one piece, *Speed Bump Headache*, resin and paint droop and leak from tightly packed cigarette filters. In *Roil*, brightly colored resin stalactites pool on the floor. His sculptures explore the everyday things we slough off, like the bellybutton lint used in *Memory of Muscle Tees* and the mountain of cigarette butts in *Middle Aged Sex*.

"Some of the materials I have used before—like cigarette filters—took on a different connotation then in past shows," says Healy. "In past shows they were more about masculinity. In this show they were more about cast-offs, things we discard."

While Healy may be drooping physically, creatively he feels more vigorous than ever. Bodily toll is one thing, but a lifetime engaged in the mental exercise of making art has only strengthened his practice.

"You keep going," he says simply of the lessons he took from *Gut*. "It's not dependent on physicality. [Making art] is not like athletics. That was the realization. That it was still there. This is what I do."

Gut is at the Elizabeth Leach Gallery through December 30.

Contemporary Art, Galleries



Sean Healy, *American Muscle*, (black cherry), 2014, resin-coated cigarette filters, 46" x 46" x 3".

SEAN HEALY

ELIZABETH LEACH, PORTLAND, OREGON
JUNE 5 - AUGUST 2

In "Extroverts" Sean Healy deployed a broad array of mediums to render and subtly undercut such archetypal symbols of masculinity as big-game trophies, laurel wreaths, and the "grill" of gold teeth sported by hip-hop stars. *Winner* (all the works were from 2014), a wreath cut from sheet aluminum, is painted mint-green and butterscotch, its calmativ colors an ironic counterpoint to the image's associations with Greco-Roman conquests. In *Minor Body Damage*, an image of a jawbone fitted with gold teeth, one of the teeth is conspicuously missing.

Cigarettes, which the artist has used as a material since 2008, were deployed in abstract "paintings" made of cigarette filters coated with auto-body enamel and collectively titled "American Muscle." The show also included large-scale drawings of animal horns rendered in cigarette ash. Here the artist's delicacy of line contrasted with the drawings' gritty texture, imparted by stray chunks of burnt tobacco. And a lone cigarette is central, literally and metaphorically, to the video installation *Smudge*. The title refers to smudge sticks used in Native American purification rituals, but in Healy's film, what is burned is a pollutant: a cigarette standing obelisk-like, smoke rising from it as it slowly burns into a column of ash. In this work, and throughout the exhibition, Healy suggests that machismo inevitably carries with it an embedded Achilles' heel.

RICHARD SPEER



Peter Regli, *Deer Clan*, 2014, marble, dimensions variable.

PETER REGLI

KARMA, AMAGANSETT, NEW YORK
JULY 5 - SEPTEMBER 7

Nothing is sacred in Peter Regli's world. And nothing's not sacred. For "Sleeping Stone," his sculpture installation outside Karma bookstore and gallery's Long Island outpost, the Swiss-born sculptor assembled a garden of curiosities based on religion, myth, and plain-old fantasy.

Made of marble and installed in groupings, the monuments included outsize piggy banks, a couple of rabbits about to do what bunnies do best, a Zen mouse, a black snowperson, a Japanese Maneki-Neko fortune-cat statue that luckily can't wave its arm, and a statue of Hayagriva, the horse-headed avatar of the Indian god Vishnu. We got to meet all the clans, as Regli refers to them, and, through their improbable juxtapositions, consider how irreverence, passion, and humor link traditions ranging from classical Greek through Egyptian, Chinese, Indian, and our own contemporary pop.

These historical disruptions and cultural interpretations, and misinterpretations, were a witty demonstration of Regli's "reality hacking," which he equates with hacking on the Web, entailing often anonymous interventions in landscapes and other public spaces. He has staged sound compositions using foghorns, sirens, and motorboats on a Zurich lake, for instance, and filled train cars with blue fog. Here, he set up a level playing field that united the real, the esthetic, and the absurd.

BARBARA A. MACADAM



Sean Healy's Extroverts: An Intuitive Read On Masculinity

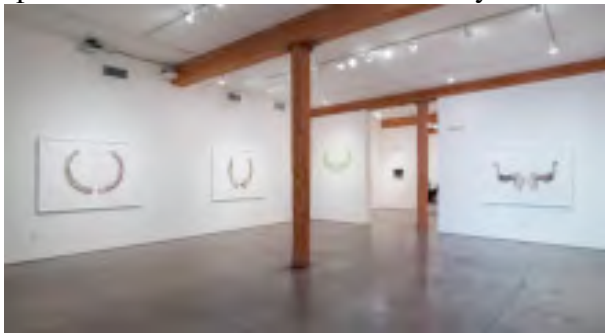
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Sean Healy's Extroverts: An Intuitive Read On Masculinity

OPB | June 6, 2014 10:25 p.m. | Updated: June 7, 2014 11:35 a.m. | Portland

[April Baer](#)

[Sean Healy's *Extroverts*](#) is his first Portland show in several years. Healy's [business](#), doing commissioned works with his friend, the artist Joe Thurston, has brought several large site-specific installations to life in recent years.



But a collection of more personal work, on view through August at Elizabeth Leach Gallery, finds Healy thinking about the archetypes of men in his childhood and beyond. Healy made large expanses formed by hundreds of cigarette filters, and slathered them with glittering enamels in the colors evoking '70s muscle cars.

"I think it's all tied into this concept of masculinity - this hard veneer when you don't show that something's bothering you, but really, day-to-day stresses in life, you're carrying that around.

Witty depictions of snaggle-toothed grins share wall-space with enormous, elegant studies of animal horns.



"American Muscle", Sean Healy. Healy says it took months to glue each cigarette filter, one by one, to the plexiglass surface forming the base.

Healy talked to April about the show, his techniques, and his ongoing fascination with that most self-destructive and inescapably masculine accessory, the cigarette.

Healy will give a free talk on the show June 28th at 11AM.



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 Public Art

Public Art Network Highlights 2 GSA Art in Architecture Projects

August 13, 2010

The Public Art Network recently included two GSA Art in Architecture projects in its "2010 Year in Review."

Since 2000, the group's "Year in Review" annually recognizes outstanding public art projects that represent the most compelling works from around the country. This year, the network selected "Third Bank of the River" by Alan Michelson and "Gesture Politics" by Sean Healy, both installed at federal facilities through the GSA art program, from more than 390 submissions of public art from around the country. The two works were among the 40 public art projects featured at the group's annual conference in June in Baltimore.

"Third Bank of the River," an art glass window panorama documenting several miles of the local border shoreline between the United States and Canada, is installed at the Massena, N.Y., Land Port of Entry. "Gesture Politics," in the lobby of the FBI Building in Houston, is a wall of glass that visually documents the site before construction of the building and includes film portals depicting FBI employees in universal human gestures such as embracing and shaking hands.

GSA's art collection is one of the oldest and largest public art collections in the country. It includes permanently installed and moveable murals, paintings, sculpture, and architectural or environmental works of art. The collection dates from 1850. With nearly 18,000 works of art made by American painters, sculptors and artisans that enliven public buildings across the nation, the government is the nation's most important steward of the arts.

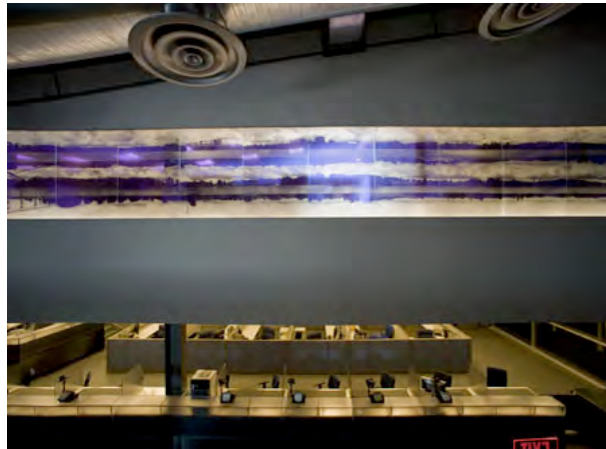
The agency's Art in Architecture program today continues the government's commitment to art by commissioning public artworks from some of the most important contemporary American artists for federal buildings. In doing so, GSA creates buildings that express the vision, leadership, and commitment of the government in serving the public and the communities in which these works are located, as well as expressing the values of our nation.



"Gesture Politics" is a work by Sean Healy and is on display in the lobby of the FBI Building in Houston. It is a wall of glass that includes film portals depicting FBI employees in universal human gestures such as embracing and shaking hands.

[Read more about GSA's Art in Architecture Program](#)

[Read about the Public Art Network](#)



"Third Bank of the River" by Alan Michelson is installed at the Massena, N.Y., Land Port of Entry. It is a glass panorama documenting several miles of border between the United States and Canada.

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"We wanted to drop glowing glass cubes into the space, to emphasize the interesting light levels and contrasts," says Stuart Emmons of his design for the capacious Guardian Management lobby. **BELOW:** Artist Sean Healy's wall of cast-glass houses, inspired by Monopoly pieces, adds a "splash of colorful abstraction" to the lobby.

A refined renovation illuminates the character of a great historic interior.

Certain Slants of Light

AN AFTERNOON spent in the second-floor lobby of the historic Crane Building at NW 14th Avenue and Irving Street offers a stunning study in light. As the sun drops through west-facing windows, shards and pools of light bring the space to life, sweeping over its 100-year-old details and illuminating the contrasting contemporary glasswork. "It's all about shape and shadow," explains design leader Stuart Emmons, principal at Emmons Architects.

Emmons and his team approached real estate firm Guardian Management's new space with a simple philosophy based on juxtaposition: "Preserve and emphasize everything historic; introduce only contemporary elements." To that end, five stately original columns with meticulously restored capitals

stand guard inside the 3,075-square-foot lobby, rising into a thick geometry of cornices overhead. Original oak woodwork, leaded glass doorways and windows, a built-in bench, and even the door of a 1910 Crane Company safe remain exquisitely intact.

To offset the building's muscular historic character, Emmons offers some ethereal contrasts in the form of glass. Three conference rooms walled in tall sheets of semi-translucent glass line the south and west sides of the lobby like a sharp-edged bank of fog. The chunky walnut reception desk is nearly concealed by a single blade of lustrous glass stretching across its front. Behind the desk, the wall is studded with 72 cast-glass houses by Portland artist Sean Healy, their brilliant



colors tinting the shadows they cast in the room's changing light.

The overall effect is an optical treat, as milky blue surfaces of the conference rooms capture the light, shadows, and reflection every carefully crafted detail—both the old and the new. ■

➔ See The List, page 62

CALENDAR VISUAL ARTS

[ARTHOUSTON] Welcome to G-Mart

Political cartoonist and painter Bonnie Young draws life-size, minimalist cartoons of stereotypical Wal-Mart shoppers in black and white. The desired social statement? That's a gray area. **July 5-21.** Opening reception July 5, 6PM. G Gallery, 301 E. 11th St., 713.869.4770, www.ggalleryhouston.com

American Watercolor Society Traveling Show

The top watercolor painters in the country bring their work to Houston. Look for local artists H.C. Dodd, Kieko Yasuoka and David Maxwell. **July 7-Aug. 24.** Opening reception July 11, 6PM. The Watercolor Art Society-Houston, 1601 W. Alabama St., 713.942.9966, www.watercolorhouston.org

Bering & James' 100th Opening

After eight years on the Houston art scene, this local fave makes its centennial show a family affair—mixed media “oil slicks” by Blakely Bering and Austin James. **Through July 9.** Bering & James, 805 Rhodes Pl., 713.524.0101, www.beringandjames.com

[ARTHOUSTON] Ordinary Narratives

Area artists Lauren Boldon and Wesley Harvey revamp routine in this sculpture exhibit. Look for dream-enhanced elements to invade everyday scenarios in Boldon's work—we spotted an installation featuring the proverbial workplace water cooler sporting a unicorn horn and animal ears. **July 9-Aug. 3.** Opening reception July 12, 7PM. M2 Gallery, 325 W. 10th St., 713.861.6070, www.m2-houston.com

[ARTHOUSTON] Group Show

International artists take over both of Thornwood's H-Town locations. Look for Houston-based artist Bob Chrzanoski's *Heart of the Matter* at the Colquitt location and Sabine Stromeyer's *Poppy-Lation* at the Birdsall gallery. **July 11-25.** Thornwood Gallery, 1201 Birdsall St., 713.861.2787 and 2641 Colquitt St., 713.528.4278, www.thornwoodgallery.com

[ARTHOUSTON] In the Wake of Awake

Recent University of Houston grad Jeanne Cassanova layers outlined figures, bold blasts of color and varying elements of texture in her large-scale painted dreamscapes. The drawn figures are inspired by random snapshots of individuals collected by the artist as well as societal references (one piece features a dinosaur and a pistol-wielding cowboy). **July 11-Aug. 2.** Joan Wich & Co. Gallery, 4411 Montrose Blvd., 713.526.1551, www.joanwichgallery.com

Sherri Angels

This area artist is known for her three-dimensional sculpted frames paintings—which boast individually sculpted wooden frames embellished with color and textures. **July 11-31.** Meet the artist on July 11, 5PM. The Tasting Room, Uptown Park, 1101-18 Uptown Park Blvd., 713.993.9800, www.tastingroomvines.com

[ARTHOUSTON] Gladys Poerte

In oil paintings by this Argentina-born and now Austin-based artist, small, everyday objects like toy figurines, blocks and utensils come to life as characters in a narrative. Look for “Talks” where two teams of tools face off. **July 12-Aug. 16.** Hooks-Epstein Galleries, Inc., 2631 Colquitt St., 713.522.0718, www.hooksepsiteingalleries.com

[ARTHOUSTON] Miguel Abugattas and Janice Mann

Fresh from San Antonio, these budding artists display their ceramic compositions. Abugattas uses innovative shapes to construct pedestal pieces while Janice Mann's colorful figures are crafted from clay and glass frits. **July 12-Aug. 9.** Goldsberry Gallery, 2625 Colquitt St., 713.528.0405, www.goldsberrygallery.com

[ARTHOUSTON] Red

Local artists go red: See how participating artists Ali Cavanaugh, Andrew Scott Dejesse, John Jenkins, Peggy Port, Lin Swanner, Carole Holt and Dana Sparks responded to the challenge of incorporating the emotion-invoking color into their latest works. **July 12-17.** Opening reception July 12, 6PM. Bering & James, 805 Rhodes Pl., 713.524.0101, www.beringandjames.com



Healy's "Circle the Airstream"

[ARTHOUSTON] HARD LOOKS

Sean Healy shows off his latest installation-based exhibit. The multimedia artist has also been busy with the Bureau—Healy was hand-picked to work on the Houston FBI headquarters, set to open later this year. **July 12-Aug. 9.** Moody Gallery, 2815 Colquitt St., 713.526.9911, www.moodygallery.com



For Immediate Release: February 20th 2008

galleryHomeland presents
"FWD: Dudes Night Out"
March 7th - March 30th, 2008
2505 SE 11th Ave.
Portland, Oregon 97202
Exhibition hours are 12pm - 6pm Friday - Monday

opening reception March 7th at the Ford Building 6pm - 9pm

Come join us for our third show at our new building. Through identical circumstances a sequel is born. Works by thirteen talented Portland artists Opens in March 7th - March 30th

In February of 2007 curator and artist Cris Moss put together "RE: Dudes Night Out, Random Conversations That Lead to Meetings and Exhibitions". The goal of the exhibit was not to address the relationship between the works being displayed but rather to highlight the relationship and support that developed between the artists who created the work and the overall supportiveness of the art community, stated Mr. Moss.

Now galleryHomeland is pleased to host and curate once again this grand exhibition of some of Portland's most prolific artists. The group exhibition includes installation art, painting, photography, multi-media and sculpture. The title of the exhibit represents the dialogues and casual encounters that take place in the Portland art community, and was taken from the email messages that led to the creation of the exhibit last year and springs back once more.

Artists include Karl Burkheimer, David Corbett, Arcy Douglass, Jeff Jahn, Todd Johnson, Jesse Hayward, Sean Healy, Cris Moss, Jenene Nagy, Joe Thurston, Josh Smith, and Ryan Suther.

Founded in 2005, galleryHomeland fosters emerging and challenging concepts in art. Our goal is to work closely with the city and community to provide some the finest exhibitions and projects for the greater creative economy. galleryHomeland's resides in its new long term home at the Historic Ford Building as part of a collaboration and partnership with Mike and Amanda Tevis and Intrinsic Ventures.

For more information contact Director / Curator Paul Middendorf at 503-819-9656 or email at paul@galleryhomeland.org



"INVINCIBLE AIR," 2008

Sean Healy

WATER JET CUT ALUMINUM, NEON, AND ENAMEL

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND
THE ELIZABETH LEACH GALLERY

PORTLAND

Sean Healy: "Life in Black and White" at Elizabeth Leach Gallery

In his clean, polished, and ultimately optimistic show, "Life in Black and White," Sean Healy evolves his previous body of work, which critiqued the social structures we learned in high school, into the adult world, with its corporate strictures and imperative toward competitive consumerism. Healy is a master of diverse media but presents himself here primarily as a sculptor. A favorite motif is the animal as guardian angel. With a water jet he cuts graphic shapes into aluminum: big cats and birds of prey, which recall the stuffed animals and cartoon heroes of childhood and function in adulthood as talismans against the insecurities that dog us. *Invincible Air* portrays two eagles in flight, one backlit with neon, both covered in glossy white enamel. In *Security Blankets*, a duo of tigers dives out of the artist's childhood quilt, which he has split in half and proffered for the sake of art and profit. *Catholic Guilt* riffs similarly on predatory felines but

uses antique doilies instead of quilts. Faux-fierce in their whimsical juxtaposition of wild animal and fussy lace, the works have a winning insouciance. Similarly, the wildly colorful concentric cast-resin bricks that make up *Circle the Airstreams* ostensibly critique the vapidness of our TV- and Internet-driven culture, but nevertheless come across as unadulterated eye candy, lending the piece a potent and intended hypocrisy.

It is only when his concerns (and titles) are more literal—as in *Bored Meeting*, a photograph of four drone-like business executives—that Healy's work becomes prosaic and preachy. The same is true of *Good Fences Make Good Neighbors*, a picket fence comprised of stacked credit cards in an all-too-obvious warning against "keeping up with the Joneses." These are rare missteps in a show otherwise spot-on in its portrait of Generation X at the moment when unnaturally prolonged adolescence curdles inexorably into early middle age. Healy handles this tragicomedy with earnestness, an immaculate respect for materials, and an enduring obsession with the seductiveness of early life, even as Big Wheels and keg parties give way to minivans and PSA tests. Growing older is a messy province of sprawls and sags, but in the artist's worldview, containment and whimsy counterbalance these indignities and offer hope of a youthfulness that outlasts youth.

—RICHARD SPEER

HOTSEAT: SEAN HEALY

AN ART WUNDERKIND SPEAKS ON FINALLY GROWING UP, MAKING ALUMINUM TIGERS AND TURNING FEAR INTO ART.



SEAN HEALY WITH DOG & WORK.

BY RICHARD SPEER rspeer@week.com

Being in your 30s is weird. You have more responsibilities than you had in your 20s but less money and self-assurance than you'll (hopefully) have in your 40s. That's kind of what artist Sean Healy's new show at Elizabeth Leach is about. *Life in Black and White* finds the 36-year-old Portlander at the end of "emerging artist" status and the beginning of what is politely called "midcareer."

No longer a wunderkind, his work selling respectably but not stratospherically (works in the Leach show range from \$3,000 to \$12,000), he's at that juncture where the glamour of the bohemian life gives way to more pragmatic realities. He has been married and divorced, fathered a son, and recently bought a house in North Portland, which he shares with a partner who has a son of her own. He also owns two Boston terriers, which hump one another vigorously as Healy and I sit down to chat in his converted shed studio. Surrounding us on the walls and propped against every surface are the artworks—oversized photo prints, pastel-colored resin sculptures, and metal cut-outs in the shape of animals—that debut in *Life in Black and White*.

WW: Your last show was all about high school. Tell me about the current show.

Sean Healy: It's about insecurity and fear. In my last show I couched the same ideas in the universal experience of high school, but now I'm seeing how the clique mentality we learned in school propagates into adulthood. The show's also about maturing. Personally, I'm finally feeling like an adult. I don't need to be that person who feels the need to fit in. It's more, "How do I provide for my family? How can I be a good father, a good person, a responsible citizen?"

How does that play out in the show?

There's a piece called *Good Fences Make Good Neighbors* that consists of credit cards cut out to resemble a picket fence. It's about financial insecurity and feeling like you're not doing enough to provide. That's a grown-up concern. There are also some of the aluminum creatures I like to do: tigers, eagles.... They're like talismans against whatever

fears you feel encroaching. In my last show I did vultures and wolves, which had a feeling of domineering. In the new stuff, I'm trying to reverse that, so they feel comforting.

Last year, Liz Leach showed you at the Aqua Wynwood art fair in Miami. Was that a big deal?

It felt like it, yeah. There was a realization that there's a lot of great artists out there, and that if you're going to do this, you've got to take it seriously. You've gotta not fuck around. It was eye-opening. It was like, you either trust where you're coming from or you realize you're a weekend dabbler.

Do you think artists have to project a persona to get noticed?

No. People can see through bullshit. I think

the more real and honest you are, the further you'll get.

Do you ever wonder whether you'll be world-famous and go down in art history—or maybe you won't?

Yeah. It's a matter of, "What am I going to be content with?" The idea of taking the world by storm is not what drives me anymore. I've come to the point where I look at it like a marathon. No matter what happens, I'm still going to go into the studio and do my thing, question myself, push my envelope as much as I can. It's no longer a competition to one-up another artist or become the next "it" kid.

For the past 14 years, your day job has been polishing glass sculptures for Henry Hillman Jr. What do you think about while you're standing there doing that?

It's very Zen. It's taught me patience as a trait. It's allowed me the mental space to think about things, including my art.

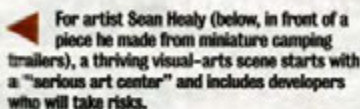
Are you competitive with other artists?

There's a friendly competition that comes into play when I see something by a peer who's exploring the same ideas or materials I am. I always look at it and wonder whether they're doing it in a more concise way.

It sounds like this is an interesting place for you to be as an artist.

Yeah. I'm realizing there's no safety net anymore. There's no going back to Mom or Dad. It's do-or-die time. Before, I was always like, "Wow, I'm an artist, this is fun!" Now, I'm like, "Whoa, I'm an artist—and it's exhausting and exhilarating and scary as shit." And that fear, that's where I get my inspiration.

SEE IT: Sean Healy's *Life in Black and White* at Elizabeth Leach Gallery, 417 NW 9th Ave., 224-0521. Show runs Thursday-Saturday Sept. 4-27.



TRIBUNE PHOTO: SARAH TUCKER



▼ From page 6

"I want the institution to be porous," says

Ferriso, who al-

ready is replacing

On the

On the

agement style of his predecessor.

Web

with a more consensual culture. "I

See all the cocktail parties

cocktail napkins in detail at

able to walk into the museum and

www.portlandtribune.com/

tribune.com/
rethinking

art becomes part of the fabric of the

of the fabric of the city.¹⁰

One of his priorities is to raise \$2.5 million

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endow admission-free evenings every first Thursday and four free family days a year.

"I would like to endorse children under 18

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see all the time," he adds.

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But he is nowhere near raising the money, even that much as Bombardier and the

given that shows such as Rembrandt and the Golden Age of Dutch Art had not been paid

Golden Age of Dutch Art had not been paid when he arrived in 2006. Earnings went

or when he arrived in 2006. Ferriso spent some of his first years scrambling for money.

Some of his first year scrambling for money, Ben hitting up the board for cash.

Sculptor Sam Hook, 35, who moved home

Sculptor Sean Healy, 35, who moved here from Manhattan, New York, in 1994, is one of our

from Upstate New York in 1964, is one of sev-

ral emerging artists who choose to live and work in South Africa have national exhibitions

work in Portland but have national ambitions.

²Taking the back-door approach to the large-

er market is doable here if you're diligent,"

leahy says. He refers to 2003's Core Sample ex-

exhibitions, which brought together emerging

Bruce Conkle, 43, does sculpture/installa-

Jenene Nagy (below, at work on an installation piece at Linfield College's Miller Fine Arts Center) says hard work and high standards are important, too, along with arts funding and places to show and work.



His new project with photographer Marne Lucas, called "Warlord Sun King," is

Conkle would like to see a local institution that supports living artists. "We need something along the *Kunsthal* model (an art exhibition space without a permanent collection) to show brand-new, challenging visual art that deals with current topics, like the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London."

Small canvas, BIG dreams

Some of the best ideas are laid down graphically and on the fly. Legend has it that Kristy Edmunds of the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art sketched out her idea for the Time-Based Art Festival on a cocktail napkin at the Low Brow Lounge in front of various PICA board members. So the Portland Tribune asked about two dozen people in the arts what would improve the scene here, and gave them a paper napkin to sketch out their thoughts.

More money. That's what everyone agrees would boost Portland's visual art scene. Artists want higher prices for their art, bigger grants and cheaper workspaces. Nonprofits want bigger donations from foundations and the public, and businesses want more bang for their arts marketing dollar. On a cocktail napkin Eloise Damrosch, the director of the Regional Arts & Culture Council, sketched a steadily growing rain of dollars on a healthy (arts) forest.

By Joseph Gallivan
The Tribune

2008 and exhibit their "not necessarily marketable work.")

But beyond money, among the napkin responses there was a deeper theme of connectivity. The visual arts here are made up of a fragmented collection of people and institutions that would work far better by cooperating.

Tom Manley, president of the Pacific Northwest College of Art, believes there is a "creativity grid" that could use some strengthening. For once money isn't an issue at PNCA, since the Ford Family Foundation's \$15 million donation in May 2007.

Of that gift, \$10 million will endow the Ford Institute for Visual Education, a sort of artist-in-residence program on steroids. Manley wants to bring in national-caliber artists and designers not just to teach the students, but also to interact with the community as a whole.

He hopes that friends of the school, such as architect Brad Cloepfil and designer Michael Curry, can help lure big names.

Manley also believes in collaborations between groups. For example, PNCA students get free access to the Portland Art Museum, whose staff can take free art classes at PNCA. (The school used to be part of the museum.)

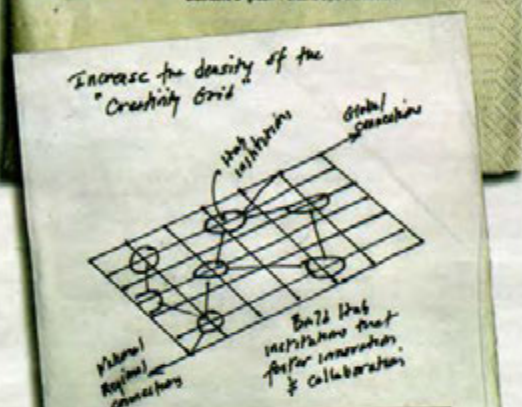
To collaborate with the Portland Opera, for instance, he says a college opera club would be far more beneficial, artistically, than running a set design class.

Taking an idea from Cloepfil, Manley also believes his campus should stretch wide over the River District, which includes the Pearl.

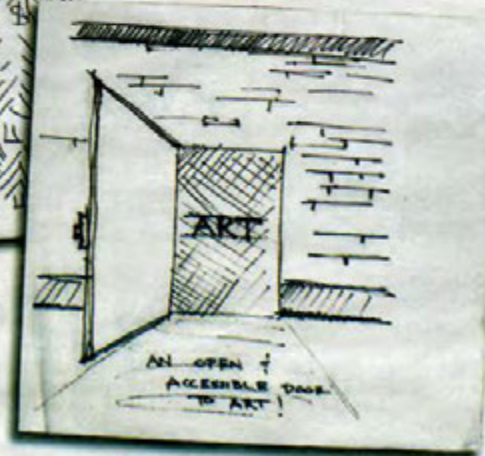
"The Gerding Theater could be part of our campus," Manley says. "We don't need a Lincoln Center, but we can do something interesting. I believe innovation often takes place in the spaces we haven't filled in."

Brian Ferriso, Portland Art Museum's executive director, wants art to be more accessible, especially for kids.

ture. She will give \$8,000 to at least seven emerging artists in



TRIBUNE PHOTOS: L.E. BASKIN
Among other wishes for the city (from top), critic and artist Jeff Jahn wants North Interstate Avenue to keep its name, PNCA's Tom Manley wants a rich arts network with more hub institutions, and RACC's Eloise Damrosch wants money to fall like rain.



recurs in well over half of the works, functions as a crossover symbol between the two domains: it represents and conjoins both the literal biological—petrie dishes and cells—and the figurative sociological—the social circle. But despite such a promising conceptual framework, “Supernormal” failed to dig beneath the surface to explore the psychosocial potency (and latency) of adolescence.

mounted upright on the floor form *Test Protector*. Fence-like, their sharp points slightly foreboding, they suggest the inclusion, exclusion, and tight self-regulation of teenage behavior. And what would an exhibition about high school be without a nod to the photo portrait and yearbook? Healy’s riff is a series of C-prints of guys in a variety of contrived and oxymoronic “casual” poses. Cropped just above the nos-

purpose—to coalesce into a mosaic portrait of Melvil Dewey (father of the Dewey Decimal System) on the underside of an up-ended library table.

Conversely, *Bully and Bullied*—wall-mounted, aluminum cutouts of a vulture and chickens—seemed out of place with the rest of the exhibition. Like most of the work in “Supernormal,” they remain superficial cartoon sketches that skim and

PORTLAND, OREGON

Sean Healy

Elizabeth Leach Gallery

Sean Healy’s “Supernormal” offered an extended remix of a particular temporal theme: high school. His works aim not only to blast us into the past, but also to tap into a collective experience that isn’t necessarily tethered to a single decade. The particular icons—class rings, chewing gum, cigarettes, free weights from the gym, rubber bands—are shorthand for any American teen circa 1940 to 2006. Beyond communal signifiers, Healy has chosen these talismans for their power to represent a very specific dynamic within those hallways and cafeterias—“how individuals identify themselves as ‘bullies’ or ‘bullied.’”

In doing so, he creates a parallel between ecosystems—high school and high plains—and reminds us that, as animals, our social constructs are just highly evolved versions of the quest for survival and propagation. Furthermore, Healy’s use of the circular format, which



Sean Healy, *Gum Drops*, 2006. Fiberglass and cast chewing gum, 19 x 14 x 14 in.

Several works quote the predatory instinct directly: in *Ammo*, rubber-bands—fired across the room when the teacher’s back was turned—are cast in acrylic and pinned like insect samples into a minimal, round amoebal abstraction. Similarly, *Spring Training* (yellow) and *Spring Training* (white) are aggregations of free weight disks. From the other end of campus, the cigarette butts—mounted on the filter ends to reveal an organic nicotine design—in *Behind the Bus Garage* stand in for experimentation, rites of passage, and the classroom iconoclasts—the greasers, punks, or burn-outs.

A phalanx of pencils cast in candy-colored translucent fiberglass and

trills, the images suggest the universality and self-consciousness of clothing and body language in communicating social status.

The most resolved works in “Supernormal” had the least to do with Healy’s explicit thesis, taking as their foundation a subject that holds no social or personal valence (except as a sign of the disrespect endemic to the teenager): the wad of chewed gum. In two *Gum Drops* pieces (green and blue), cast fiberglass chewing gum is mounded into blue and green cairns set within Pepto-Bismol pink water fountains, a wink to Marcel Duchamp and Robert Gober. The chewing gum in *Egghead* is equally cheeky but serves a more representational

skirt prettily around the real action of adolescence. Healy could have packed a bigger punch, building dimension and complexity into the notion of high school as both *bildungsroman* and biosphere.

—Laura Richard Janku