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The full Creative Vitality Report is available at:
www.oregonartscommission.org

The Portland area has become a hub for comic book and graphic novel culture – from creating to publishing to reading and collecting. This is a spread from a comic book published by industry leader Dark Horse Comics of Milwaukie. See article, Page 12.

ON THE COVER (FROM LEFT):
Richard (Richard Elmore) performs as in the Oregon Shakespeare Festival’s 2009 season production of Equivocation. The elaborate costumes were designed by Deborah Dryden. See article, Page 14. Photo: Jenny Graham

McMenamins’ artist Lyle Hehn holds a sketch for his painting “The Power Station,” depicting Edgefield’s conversion from a place of agriculture to a place of leisure. See article, Page 8. Photo: Courtesy McMenamins

Portland’s DeSoto Block on NW Broadway is home to many creative businesses, including the Froelick Gallery, seen here. See article, Page 6. Photo: Susan Seubert

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Creative Vitality in Oregon
Index Gauges the Health of Oregon’s Creative Economy

For the past several years, the Oregon Arts Commission has examined the outcomes of its work. How healthy are Oregon’s arts nonprofits? How creative are we as a state? How far does our creative economy reach, and do local communities share in its benefits? Is Oregon competitive in the global creative economy? How have we, through policy and funding, made a difference?

The innovative Creative Vitality Index, developed by the Washington State Arts Commission in partnership with the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF), enables one to look at the health of the creative economy in a city, county, state or other geographic area compared to a national index. Using readily available, inexpensive data on employment and community participation, the index is a reflection of the vigor of the creative sector of the economy.

The analysis details both for-profit (architecture and graphic design jobs, for instance) and nonprofit arts-related activities (museum admissions, among many examples), and measures participation in the arts. In doing so, it adds depth to traditional arts economic impact studies. The CVI enhances our understanding by counting the thousands of people who make their living using creativity outside of the nonprofit arts world: visual artists, graphic and product designers, musicians and singers, writers and architects. It also counts the many individuals who participate in the arts by buying music, musical instruments, books and works of art. It’s a fuller and more accurate picture of the range of artistic creativity in Oregon.

In four years of measuring Oregon’s Creative Vitality, the state has performed above the national norm of 1.0. This year, WESTAF’s researchers changed the CVI methodology, resulting in a small shift in the overall CVI values for Oregon. With a new overall index of 1.02, Oregon ranks above the national average of 1.0 and slightly ahead of Washington State’s 1.01. The index remains the strongest in the Portland metro region (1.58) and Jackson and Josephine counties (1.30).

Statistics are the foundation of the report, but it’s the people behind the numbers who bring Oregon’s creative economy to life. In this report, we include profiles that highlight the variety of ways creativity contributes to Oregon’s economy and communities: how designers in Mosier and Portland are using green practices to create 21st century products, how a cadre of artists is transforming historic properties into unique lodgings and how Oregon has become a center of the American comic book industry.

Taken together, the Index and the profiles reinforce the fact that creative workers, nonprofit arts organizations, for-profit arts enterprises, and thousands of supporters everywhere are part of a mutually-supporting whole, the strength of which is essential to continuing health and vitality of the greater economy and community.

Art, culture, innovation and economic development don’t happen accidentally. They have to be nurtured, out of creativity, talent, ambition, and opportunity - qualities that live in every Oregon community. There are hundreds of stories from around Oregon about how creativity makes a difference in people’s lives. Share yours with us: oregon.artscomm@state.or.us

Christine D’Arcy
Executive Director

Artist Myrna Yoder depicts Oregon’s Pink Martini founder, bandleader and pianist Thomas Lauderdale’s exuberance for music and life in her woodcut, “Let’s Never Stop Falling In Love (Pink Martini)” to be installed in McMenamins’ Crystal Hotel. Yoder received an MFA in printmaking from Indiana University and has worked for McMenamins as an artist since the early 1990s. Photo: Courtesy McMenamins

Oregon Arts Commission
CREATIVE VITALITY INDEX QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

UNDERSTANDING THE CREATIVE VITALITY INDEX

The CVI Defined
The Creative Vitality Index (CVI) is an annual measure of the economic health of the arts-related creative economy in Oregon. In the CVI, the creative economy is defined as including for-profit and nonprofit arts-related creative enterprises and the key support and service activities that sustain them. Using readily available, inexpensive data on employment and community participation, the Creative Vitality Index reflects the vigor of this sector of the economy.

Definition of an Index
An index is designed to summarize the content, scope, and dynamics of a complicated phenomenon, to provide a single indicator to describe a complex set of variables, activities, and events. The best known examples of indexes are the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the Consumer Price Index, both of which measure the health of our economy.

Centered on the Arts
This Index is centered on creative vitality related to the arts as it is broadly defined and not the culture field in general. Cultural activities that are not included in the scope of this study are endeavors such as science museums, botanical gardens, and the affiliated external education and outreach programs of these types of organizations. This Index is organized around the concept that while activities may have strong creative elements, they differ substantially from creative work that is focused on and through the arts.

Index Components
The Index has two major components. One component measures seven indicators of community participation in the arts (i.e., per capita museum and art gallery revenue from ticket and product sales). The other component measures arts-related employment.

The Creative Vitality Index favors participation and employment in the nonprofit arts, but defines the creative sector as a continuum ranging from the nonprofit arts through related for-profit activities; the index seeks to capture a wide range of arts-related activities. The components are weighted 60% towards participation and 40% towards employment. The rationale for this approach relates to the cause-and-effect relationship between participation levels and jobs. The underlying theory is that public participation in the arts or public demand for arts experiences and events ultimately is what drives budgets and organizational funding levels, which in turn support artists and art-related jobs within the economy.

Index Data Streams
Index data streams are taken from the Urban Institute’s National Center for Charitable Statistics, and Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.

The Urban Institute’s National Center for Charitable Statistics aggregates information from the Internal Revenue Service’s 990 forms. The forms are required from nonprofit 501(c) organizations with annual gross receipts of $25,000 or more. Organizations with more than $25,000 but less than $250,000 in annual gross receipts can file a 990 EZ form that collects less information. The CVI uses the information contained in the 990 forms to identify changes in charitable giving in an area.


Geographic Boundaries
The CVI is an indicator of the economic health of the creative economy in Oregon. Although any defined geographic region can be studied, the basic geographic building block for the cvi in Oregon is Workforce Development Areas (WDA). A WDA is an artificial geographic subdivision of a state designated for employment-development purposes. Their boundaries coincide with county or multi-county borders. Although constructed on a county/multi-county basis, the WDA occupation statistics can be further broken down into much smaller geographic regions.

Using the Creative Vitality Index
The Creative Vitality Index is designed to serve as a tool to inform public policy decision making and to support the work of advocates for the development of the creative economy. The Index can be used for the following purposes:

• To consistently define the parameters of a locality’s creative economy;
• To explain the components and dynamics of the creative economy;
• As a source of information for arts advocacy messaging;
• To call attention to significant changes in the creative economy ecosystem;
• To underscore the economic relationships between the for-profit sector and the nonprofit sector;
• To benchmark the status of a local creative economy to diagnose weaknesses in that economy.
BUILDING THE CREATIVE VITALITY INDEX

The Creative Vitality Index measures the health of the creative economy in a city, county, state or other geographic area compared to the national index, and creates a benchmark for future measurement. The Index has two major components. One component measures seven indicators of community PARTICIPATION in the arts, the other measures concentrations of arts-related EMPLOYMENT.

60% Seven indicators of community PARTICIPATION in the arts.

40% Arts-related EMPLOYMENT in more than 30 professional categories.

CREATIVE OCCUPATIONS

The Creative Vitality Index’s greatest power is its ability to inform a community, and contribute to assessment and planning.

The Creative Vitality Index can be used as a tool for comparison; however, its greatest power is its ability to inform a community, and contribute to assessment and planning. A state or community’s index rating should be understood in the context of an economy’s size and trading position. For example, a community with a relatively small population that is not a trading center may continually have a relatively modest Creative Vitality Index rating. Such a rating may not indicate failure for an area, but that it has the opportunity to grow in different ways.

CVI and Economic Impact Studies
The CVI is not an economic impact study of the arts. Economic impact studies attempt to measure the total economic value and impact of a limited range of arts activities, taking into account estimates of the ripple effect on jobs and revenues in other non-related industries. The majority of such studies focus on the nonprofit art sector and either measure its impact exclusively or introduce measures of the impact of selected for-profit activities in a supplementary manner. The CVI utilizes some of the data typically included in arts economic impact studies, but draws on many more data streams. The goal of the CVI is quite different in that it seeks to provide an indicator of the relative health of the economic elements of the creative economy.

**Note on Changes in CVI Methodology, Results**

Since the last Creative Vitality Index report, there have been several changes within the CVI methodology, resulting in a small shift in the overall CVI values for Oregon. These changes included the omission of movie theater sales figures and the inclusion of a number of performing arts participation measurements as well as revenues from individual artists, writers, and performers. Also, discrepancies between past year and current year reports are due to changes in third party source data. While past year reports used occupational information from the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries and sales data from Nielsen Claritas, reports now gather both labor and industry data from Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. This change has allowed for both a greater level of detail within data sets and consistent comparison data for the entire country. WESTAF believes the adjustments made to the CVI have created a more accurate and relevant tool for arts administrators nationwide.

Additionally, employment included in the current year report shows full-time, part-time and the self-employed by WDA. Given large percentages of self-employment within creative occupations, the inclusion of this full data set, was seen as a more appropriate measure. WESTAF researchers made these methodological changes after examining multiple years of data over a number of geographies. Also taken into consideration were recommendations from an audit of CVI data performed by Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.

First, WESTAF researchers have found information on movie theater sales to be somewhat volatile, showing the greatest variation and standard deviations out of all measurements within the CVI. Further research into the motion picture industry showed general volatility due to individual motion picture releases from year to year and the overall economic condition of an area. Due to this analysis, WESTAF researchers determined that motion picture sales should be omitted, given the intentions of the CVI to measure creative participation within a geographic area. Also, recommendations from EMSI noted the need for additional measurements for arts-services, given the already substantial contribution of arts-related goods in the CVI. Substituted for movie theater sales is the inclusion of multiple performing arts revenue inputs, including revenues from local theater and dance companies, both for-profit and non-profit, and the reported revenues of musicians. Additionally, the index now captures revenues for independent artists, writers and performers, a measurement included to show the often large economic contribution of these independent artists.

Unfortunately, these changes have resulted in a lower overall CVI value for the State of Oregon than what has previously been reported. While this value is lower, it does not mean that there was a decrease in the overall Oregon creative economy. It simply means that the Index has been re-calibrated and that the relevant trending information can now be gleaned from the current report, which shows consistent data from 2006 through 2008.
## Creative Vitality Index

*Per capita by Workforce Development Area for 2008*

The Creative Vitality Index is based on a national average of 1.0. Indexes above 1.0 are above average; below 1.0 is less than the national average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WDA</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WDA 1</td>
<td>Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook Counties</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>WDA 2</td>
<td>Multnomah and Washington Counties</td>
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<td>WDA 3</td>
<td>Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties</td>
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<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WDA 4</td>
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<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WDA 5</td>
<td>Lane County</td>
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<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.93</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Coos and Curry Counties</td>
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<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.39</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jackson and Josephine Counties</td>
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<td>Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wheeler and Wasco Counties</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Grant, Harney and Malheur Counties</td>
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<td>Oregon State</td>
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<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.99</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Against a national baseline of 1.00, Oregon’s counties, measured in Workforce Development Areas (WDA), ranked from 1.58 to 0.30 in the Creative Vitality Index for 2008.

Source: WESTAF
On the first Thursday evening of every month, tourists and locals, collectors and casual connoisseurs alike converge on the art galleries of Portland to nibble on crackers and feast on art. First Thursday’s humble beginnings in 1986 as a loose affiliation of six galleries open late on the same night, has become a well-loved part of Portland’s cultural fabric.

Over the past 24 years, those original six galleries grew to become the Portland Art Dealers Association (PADA), officially founded in 2003 after years of informal affiliation. PADA’s 14 invitation-only members represent Portland’s oldest and most established galleries including Augen Gallery, Laura Russo Gallery, and Blackfish Gallery, each dedicated to the idea that the success of one gallery did not spell the failure of another.

PADA’s “all for one and one for all” approach extends from First Thursday openings to their pooled client mailing lists in order to reach the maximum number of collectors locally, nationally, and internationally with marketing materials.

“Collective marketing means we’re combining our mailings lists and pooling funds for the printing and mailing,” explains Charles Froelick of Froelick Gallery. “Let’s say I met a collector in my gallery who’s visiting from Chicago. If I send him the First Thursday booklet, they might be more inclined to come back if they can see there is a broad range of galleries with changing shows and many artists.”

Attracting these collectors from outside of Oregon is crucial to the continued success of the galleries, as out-of-state sales accounted for 46% of PADA member galleries’ total sales in 2009, (a one percent increase over the previous year). While not all of the galleries report this split (Augen Gallery, for instance, has a higher number of out-of-state sales), Froelick finds his gallery sustained by both non- and local collectors.

“If I wouldn’t be able to stay in business if my only sales are in the area or in outside the area,” says Charles Froelick, Owner, Froelick Gallery.

“Beyond the Gallery

Buyers are not content to view art only in galleries and in response, six of 14 PADA members took their shows on the road to art fairs in ten cities from Chicago to London.

“The galleries that are doing the best are the ones taking the most risk,” dealer Elizabeth Leach told the Oregonian. “It isn’t easy to spend money on art fairs in New York or Miami, but the rewards always come back to you.”

Crossing the River

By inviting eastside galleries 23 Sandy and New American Art Union, a move once thought improbable, PADA increased both membership and street cred by including galleries featuring Portland’s most challenging works.

Courting Tourists

PADA’s close connection to the tourism industry and related groups insures a steady stream of customers into their galleries. In fact, 77% of their out-of-area sales came directly from people who visited the galleries. Out-of-area customer sales totaled $2.8 million or 46% of their yearly totals in 2009.
Froelick, who opened his gallery in 1995, “I have [local] collectors who only buy one painting a year from me but that’s a significant contribution to my bottom line, and I’m really grateful for them.”

PADA reports sales of just over $6 million in 2009, a 33% decrease over 2008 sales totaling over $9 million. With fewer people buying, it seems counterintuitive that the crowds on First Thursday haven’t thinned, a fact that Froelick points to as an indication that Portland is an art lover’s as well as an art buyer’s town.

“There is value in having an art experience,” says Froelick. “People still want to look, listen, learn, and view art. We can’t live on bread alone.”

Of course bread can’t pay for employees or rent, so all of PADA’s members have made difficult cuts in staff and overhead. Not all galleries have weathered the storm and 2009 saw the closing of venerable PADA member Mark Wolley Gallery. PADA’s membership has also had to expand and the organization invited two new members in 2009, 23 Sandy and New American Art Union, both galleries open less than five years.

Regardless of the economic downturn, PADA remains positive about future of art dealing in Portland. “Early in 2009 a collector remorsefully said he would never be able to buy art again,” recalls Jane Beebe, owner of PADA member gallery PDX Contemporary Art. “In November of 2009, he bought a piece which cost $4,500. That was reassuring about the state of the economy in the art world.”

As Portlanders visit galleries on First Thursday, strolling the rainy streets beneath umbrellas this year, PADA members certainly see the economic cloud’s silver lining.
A Freewheeling Time: McMenamins’ Famously Anonymous Artists

Walk into any one of McMenamins’ 56 properties scattered across Oregon (and a few in Washington) and a particular visual aesthetic becomes apparent.

“There’s always been a hippie kind of decorative art vibe, like Ken Kesey’s bus,” says Lyle Hehn, one of McMenamins’ three full-time artists, who has worked for the company since 1988. Like a Volkswagen covered in psychedelic spray paint, each McMenamins pub, theater, and hotel is adorned from floor to ceiling with decorative art, mosaics, and tiles. Nothing escapes embellishment, from the huge metal beer-brewing tanks to doorknobs and every surface in-between.

During McMenamins’ early days, “people could just paint whatever they liked,” says Hehn who also admits, “there was a lot of bad stuff – a lot of it by me.” At the outset, it seemed clear that fun had to be a key ingredient. “Be wary of things too formal, too complicated and too orthodox” became the company’s rallying cry. As the company expanded operations, two more artists, Jenny Joyce and Myrna Yoder joined Hehn to keep up with the rapid growth. Joyce got her start in 1993, after a friend told her that Mike McMenamin’s newest venture, Edgefield, needed paintings on 110 doors. And subject matter? “It was pretty wide open,” she recalls. While encouraged to utilize the building’s history and location as inspiration, “The topics were everywhere, you name it,” says Joyce. “It was a freewheeling time.”

Nonetheless, it was the taste of one critic that mattered most: owner Mike McMenamin. “We consider him the master artist; he’s the one that puts it all together,” says Joyce. “As Lyle says, we’re painters in the school of Mike.”

“Along the way, we came to understand the power of art, live music and history to draw people of all backgrounds together under one roof, reinforcing a sense of community,” McMenamin has said about his pub décor philosophy. “Ultimately, the most important realization has been that the essence of a pub is its people. Trendy decor doesn’t attract a lasting clientele. Instead, it’s the clientele itself that makes the atmosphere.”

While Mike McMenamin (who co-owns McMenamins with his brother Brian) establishes the vibe for the interior decoration, “He doesn’t dictate our individual styles,” says Hehn. Instead, the decoration program for each new facility is planned with a team that includes McMenamins’ staff historian Tim Hills, who provides the artists with historical background, oral histories, and visual references of the building’s former life and place in the community. From there, the artists can paint what they like, and since nothing is signed, their brushwork remains largely anonymous.

“I really enjoy doing decorative work,” writes Myrna Yoder on the newly created artist’s blog on the McMenamins’ website — a sign that these artists may be pushed into the spotlight more often. “It may not seem like the most exciting artwork that I get to do for McMenamins, but I find it to be very relaxing and satisfying. Once I have designed the border and figured out the colors, all I have to do is put on my headphones and paint, paint, paint!”

Artists have embellished virtually all of the surfaces in the McMenamin properties, even the equipment in the brewery at the Kennedy School. Originally, the artwork served a practical purpose – as Mike McMenamin puts it, “We had good-sized walls to cover.” But over the course of twenty-plus years, the art evolved into an expression of the buildings’ history, the company’s mission and of McMenamins itself. Photo: Courtesy McMenamins.

1,835
Number of fine artists, including painters, sculptors and illustrators, employed in Oregon, up 6.81% since 2006.

Source: Economic Modeling Specialist, Inc.
“There’s a lot of work to do,” says Joyce of the never-ending cycle of new pub openings and older properties whose art requires frequent touch-ups. “You lose that sense of ‘Oh, this is the most precious thing in the world and I have to protect this.’ Instead, it’s like, let’s get it done, do the best we can, and move on to the next thing.”

“That’s fine,” agrees Hehn, whose own illustrations grace everything from coasters to the label on McMenamins’ Terminator Stout Mustard. “The idea that this stuff is in people’s pocket and spread out all over the place is fun. It’s a feeling of mischief,” he says.

One of Hehn’s most recognizable images, the Hammerhead, typifies his fondness for the absurd. Influenced by pre-WWII advertising featuring heroic workers, Hehn’s illustration shows a worker with a hammer for a head, who’s standing triumphantly in front of a pile of boards he’s nailed and ready to take a much-desired swig of beer. “Of course he can’t drink it,” says Hehn. “I love putting stuff up that’s totally ridiculous. It’s nonsense.”

Nonsense or not, the artists at McMenamins continue to find new ways to tell the stories only the walls know, but in a style that’s familiar to McMenamins’ patrons. Would they ever consider bringing the 1960s vibe into the 21st Century? “No,” says Hehn, flashing a playful grin. “We’re all too old and set in our ways.”
How easy is it to be green? Pretty easy, if one believes the claims of nearly every product on the market today, however dubious the “green” label appears. In this post-green world, companies claiming their environmental bona fides must go beyond the diluted green label towards innovation that’s truly unique. Three Oregon businesses are doing just that. Looptworks, Resource Revival, and Icebreaker apply their green philosophy to every part of their business plan, creating products that transcend their origins.

Resource Revival: From Trash to Treasure

In the early days of Resource Revival, owner Graham Bergh utilized the office paper dumped in recycling bins at Portland State for his stationery. “I just printed on the other side,” he recalls. While he now buys his paper (recycled of course) his philosophy of reuse remains. Revival takes used bike parts – chains, sprockets, gears, and tires – to create new products such as bottle openers, frames, bowls, or clock faces. “We make a beautiful product from a greasy bike chain,” says Bergh, who began the company in 1994 in Portland and moved operations to Mosier (population 421) in 2004.

Five artist employees design and fabricate Resource’s wares, while 50% of the company’s products are assembled by Oregon contractors, including Hood River’s Opportunity Connection which provides jobs to developmentally disabled adults. It all comes down to job satisfaction, says Graham, who believes utilizing contractors to take care of the more repetitive aspects of the business frees Graham and his staff to create new products. “This keeps the artists interested in their work,” he says. “I started this company as an obligation, to be passionate about something, not just punching a clock,” says Graham.

That is, unless the clock is made of bike chains.

Icebreaker: Touchy-Feely Wool

Forget wool’s scratchy reputation and walk into Icebreaker’s Touch Lab located in Portland’s Pearl District. “We called it the Touch Lab because our garments are all about the touch,” explains Icebreaker’s Creative Director & Vice President of Product, Rob Achten. “When you feel it for the first time, it feels quite different from anything else you might wear. The moment that someone tries a garment on, it’s a tipping point.”

Founded in New Zealand in 1994, Icebreaker was one of the first companies to use 100% Merino wool for outdoor apparel. While other companies use synthetic and petroleum-based fibers, Icebreaker weaves their own biodegradable and sustainable fabric from wool gathered directly from 120 stations in New Zealand. For proof, customers can use their garment’s particular “Baacode” to track the wool’s journey from sheep to shop.

Icebreaker’s journey from New Zealand to Portland three years ago proved as organic. “We knew there was an abundance of design talent in the city, we wanted
From Rubbish to Ravishing: PDX Exhibit Highlights the Fashionable Possibilities of Garbage

Most travelers bustling through the Portland International Airport are too concerned with catching their flights let alone thinking about their carbon footprint. But a new exhibit at PDX (on display until September, 2010) may make a few of them stop and think. Just past security, six pieces from the past four Junk to Funk annual fashion shows in Portland are on display featuring clothing crafted from 100 percent recycled and reused materials.

Hoping to emphasize responsible consumerism and generate waste reduction ideas, the show reinvents lowly items such as plastic kitty litter bags into a matching jacket and pants. Other runway-ready outfits include a bustier with a giant bubble skirt made from metal blinds and a mini-dress with a matching umbrella constructed from a kaleidoscope of colorful gelato cups and spoons.

Behind this experiment in the modern rag trade is Portland’s Junk to Funk, a collective of local fashion designers and artists that “inspire individuals towards responsible consumerism, creative re-use and conscientious disposal by providing unique fashion based entertainment and educational opportunities.”

Displayed with garbage bags at the mannequins’ feet, the show offers an alternative to what viewers might perceive as garbage and instead invites them to see creative possibilities in what we throw away. Who knows, maybe that humble item so mindlessly tossed into the garbage could have a second life on the catwalk.

http://junktofunk.org
“In college in the 1960s,” recalls Mike Richardson, founder of Milwaukie-based Dark Horse Comics, “I’d go out at midnight, park across the street from the 7-Eleven and wait until there was no one else in the store. I’d run in, grab my comics, take them to the counter and throw them in a paper bag and get out of there as fast as I could before I was seen. It was ridiculous.”

How times have changed. These days, comic books and their close cousins, graphic novels, represent a multimillion dollar industry whose paper bag days are over. Dark Horse, the nation’s third largest comics publisher and home to such titles as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Hellboy*, is known for publishing innovative work that transcends the genre beyond superheroes and supervillains. “That’s always been what we’ve done, from day one,” explains Richardson. “We want to surprise people.”

Richardson started Dark Horse in 1986 and found his first success upon the 1987 publication of Paul Chadwick’s *Concrete*, the story of a man whose brain was transferred into a stone body by aliens. With steady growth and a string of bestsellers, Dark Horse commanded a 6.5% share of the $393.8 million comics market in 2009, while the two other largest publishers, Marvel and DC held 41% and 29% percent respectively.

“We continue to grow,” says Richardson, “because we have an approach to comics that is different than other companies.” Their approach is artist- and writer-centered and a wholly different business model than used by his competitors. (Richardson points to the cautionary tale of Superman creators Siegel and Shuster, who never shared in the vast riches of the Man of Steel’s franchise after publication by DC Comics.) In contrast, at Dark Horse, artists retain control over their artistic creations and assist in the marketing and promotion of their products. “My sympathies are with the artists, not the company,” says Richardson, a former art student and graphic artist himself.

This pro-artist corporate philosophy has, since Dark Horse’s inception, attracted some of the best talent in the comics field to relocate to Milwaukie as editors, storyboard artists, and graphic designers. A few Dark Horse employees have left the company to start their own comic publishing companies, in turn bringing more talent to the Portland area. “Over the past 25 years,” says Richardson, “There’s has been a chain reaction with all of these publishers and readers and now we’ve built a major comics community.”

Dark Horse Comics employs 150 people and has 6.5% of the national comics market. Among the company’s top titles are *Hellboy* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The Mask is among Dark Horse’s most successful series. Based on a concept by publisher Mike Richardson, it was created in association with writer John Arcudi and artist Doug Mahnke and ultimately made into a major motion picture featuring actor Jim Carrey.
Holy Economic Impact, Batman! A Snapshot of Portland’s Comic Book Industry

Portland is a comic book and graphic novel lover’s paradise. A perfect loop finds local artists creating comic art, local publishing houses printing it, and fans purchasing or checking out comic books and graphic out at the library. “I think Portland embraces comics in a way the rest of the country doesn’t,” Kaebel Hashitani, of Stumptown Comics Fest, has said. “Portland lives comics year-round.” In fact, Hashitani estimates a full third of the U.S. comics industry now lives and works in Portland. Here are a few indicators of the comic book’s reach in the Rose City.

55,895
Number of graphic novels in the collection of Multnomah County Library. (Number of times checked out: 700,000+)

34
Number of years Portland’s Excalibur Comics, the oldest comic book store in Oregon has been open. (There are at least sixteen other stores in the area that only sell comic books, while most bookstores sell them as well.)

200
Number of artists and publishers participating in the 2010 Stumptown Comics Fest, one of the largest independent comic book conventions.

7
Number of comics publishing houses in the Portland Metro area.

While committed to hiring locally, Richardson concedes that recruiting from the pool of Oregon workers has at times proven difficult.

“Some of the things we do are specialized skills,” says Richardson. “We’ve been in discussion with Portland State University to establish classes to teach these publishing skills, like editing.” As the Portland’s comics publishing industry grows (there are now seven independent comic publishers based in Portland) training a local workforce is crucial. “It’s our opinion that if a university offered classes on the different disciplines involved with comics, that Portland and the university would be a national magnet.”

Today, Dark Horse employs 150 full-time staff in its offices in downtown Milwaukie. One Dark Horse building with views of the Willamette River once housed a pharmacy where Richardson would buy comics growing up in the town.

When asked if he’d ever move operations from his hometown closer to publishing centers such as Los Angeles or New York, his answer is unequivocal.

“Part of the reason for the name Dark Horse was because we were sitting out here in Portland, Oregon, while all of the publishing industry was in New York,” says Richardson. “You just can’t replace the lifestyle here. It’s clean, the air is clean, we have elements of a big city without the problems associated with a city like LA,” he says. “Whenever I’d drive over the Interstate Bridge, I use to tell my kids, you’ll never see another city that’s as nice as this. I feel lucky to be where we are, when we are.”
In theater and in life, there are times when a person’s outside fails to match his inside. “People love when I tell them that my dad was a Green Bay Packer in the 1950s,” laughs Jeff Cone, the burly and bearded Resident Costume Designer at Portland Center Stage. “As the first big boy born, I was expected to follow in my father’s footsteps as a professional athlete. From my earliest memories I had absolutely no interest in sports, whatsoever. I was interested in art.”

Too bad for the NFL, but what a boon to the Portland theatergoers who’ve enjoyed Cone’s designs during his eleven years at Portland Center Stage. With a mischievous laugh and a penchant for musicals, Cone presides over PCS’s costume department and its seven full-time employees including seamstresses, wig masters, and drapers for PCS’s nine productions per year.

Most theater-goers never notice the subtle details of the costumes worn on stage, and while the costumes aren’t generally the stars, they are crucial supporting players. “Costume design is a facilitator for the story telling,” explains Deborah Dryden, Resident Costume Designer at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and a friend of Cone’s. “It is a visual way to assist in the story telling,” she says, where every sartorial detail gives the audience clues to the character from the big picture (What era is this?) to more detailed insights into the emotional journey of the character.

Hamlet, the ultimate story of psychological turmoil at conflict with outward appearances, is not surprisingly, one of her favorite plays. A new production of Hamlet (this time in contemporary dress) opened at OSF in 2010. “I’ve designed for the play many times, but each time I come to it, it feels rich,” says Dryden. “People say, ‘Oh, you’re doing Hamlet again?’ like I should be tired of it, but in actuality, the opposite is true.”

Dryden, who, like Cone originally hails from Wisconsin, came to OSF in 1997 after teaching costume design at University of California at San Diego. She leads a team of 50 in the Festival’s costume shop that – with the props department – occupies an entire building in downtown Ashland. Though she is much lauded in the United States for her costume and fabric designs, she’s quick to give credit to the cadre of designers and craftspeople at the Festival. “What people see on stage is not only the work of the design-
A Second Act for OSF Costumes

Once the curtain closes on an OSF production, the costumes so expertly constructed by Deb Dryden and her staff take on a second life in the OSF Costume Rental shop as a part of the Festival's vast collection of 27,000 costumes, accessories, and footwear for rent. Over 300 active customers, including schools, community and regional theatres, television and commercial production companies from all over the country utilize the OSF's enviable closet. "We are known for our period costumes which is the reason so many people contact us," explains Costumes Rental Manager, Karen Rethman-Foll of the collection that naturally includes an extensive range of Elizabethan costumes. Their website features over 8,500 photos of available costumes spanning every era's togs from Greek togas to a futuristic silver sequin unitard, and of course bodices and breeches galore.

Along with the costume rentals that pull in $30,000 in rental fees per year, the Costume Rental Shop also fabricates custom costumes for commercial clients. Rethman-Foll recalls a recent order from Chick-Fil-A restaurants for their 2010 annual calendar that included cows in scenes from literature. (Think swashbuckling "Three Brisketeers.") "It was a very large and intense project for our small department of 1.5 people during our busiest month of the year," says Rethman-Foll.

Who says there's no second act in Shakespeare?
At its most fundamental, art glass is the fusion of sand, soda and coloring oxides, but out of these humble materials come some of the most innovative art shown today. Portland’s Bullseye Glass, started by three friends in 1974, manufactures the raw materials for glass art (specifically kiln-fired glass as opposed to blown glass) in their Southeast Portland factory, but their involvement in the creative possibilities of glass does not stop there.

"Artists come to Bullseye because of our expertise in solving technical problems and creating a product that is as fail-safe as we can make it," says Lani McGregor, co-owner of Bullseye along with her husband and co-founder, Dan Schwoerer. "That is, until an artist decides to do something insane with it."

Bullseye has consistently worked with both experienced glass artists and those coming to the material as painters, printmakers and sculptors, but it is these non-glass users who stretch the medium to its limits. "Artists from other media refuse to believe that glass won’t do something that anyone who’s worked with glass for a long time knows it isn’t designed to do that," says McGregor.

"That’s the most exciting part about working with artists without a great deal of experience working with glass," adds Schwoerer. "They aren’t interested in the rules, and out of that comes innovation and new processes."

One such artist, Judy Cooke, a renowned Portland painter and printmaker, first came to learn about glass art at the Bullseye factory 14 years ago. “The first thing we noticed,” recalls McGregor, “was that Judy was rummaging around in the garbage can. When you have a glass factory, one of the byproducts are glass pieces that have numbers on them to keep track of the pieces.” But where other artists would bypass such materials, Cooke utilized these discarded pieces in her work. “Rough edges, scribbled numbers were fascinating to Judy.”

Returning to Bullseye in 2004 to complete a commission for installation in the Edge Lofts, Cooke relished the opportunity to again work with glass while utilizing the expertise available to her at Bullseye. "Working with glass is a team effort, and Bullseye is generous with time and superior technical help," she says. "The company provides a supportive community of people that are involved with glass on many different levels. (They) encourage innovation and risk taking, a significant Portland attribute."

Not only does the company encourage established users to experiment, but employees as well. Any current or former Bullseye employee is invited to utilize...
a fully equipped glass studio to create their own works and there is even an annual show of employee work in the gallery above Bullseye’s retail store. By creating this facility, Bullseye not only fosters the creative energy of its 130 current employees and cadre of formers, but educates them on the properties of the materials they work with every day.

“Perhaps a supervisor in the factory says, ‘Change the way you’re ladling the glass, we don’t want the bubble track on the surface.’ It might not make sense unless you are a glass user, then you know that bubble tracks spoil a piece.”

All of this experimentation is at the heart of what’s made Bullseye a nexus of glass art in the U.S. and around the world. “We work like crazy to make a product that will perform in a predictable way and then you give it to an artist and they do something with it that you would have never expected them to do,” says McGregor. Traditional R&D testing would never work as well as artists themselves pushing the glass and its limits. “How would you anticipate that someone will take a material designed to be fired at 1500º and decide that they want to boil it at 2600º? It’s not something a normal person would do!” laughs McGregor. But that’s why they’re called artists.

One of the Northwest’s most influential abstract painters, Judy Cooke has investigated abstract imagery and the structure of painting for over 30 years. A residency in Bullseye’s Research and Education Studio enabled her to translate her paintings into kilnformed glass panels. Cooke was commissioned to create multiple glass panels that are installed on eight floors of The Edge Lofts, a residential development in Portland’s Pearl District. Photo: Chris Petreuskas for Bullseye Glass

**Fruitful Partnerships**

Through their workshops, demonstrations and studio, Bullseye fosters talent in emerging artists. However, it’s their long-term relationship to and collaboration with the work of revered artists worldwide that has earned Bullseye its international recognition in the kiln-glass community.

Klaus Moje: A luminary in the kiln-formed glass movement, Australian artist Klaus Moje had a 30-year retrospective in 2009 at New York’s Museum of Arts and Design. A highlight of the exhibit was the massive “Portland Panels: Choreographed Geometry.” The monumental four-paneled piece featured more than 22,000 hand-cut strips of glass fused together in a work that took Moje and the Bullseye team in Portland 600 hours to create. True to their reputation as glass innovators, Bullseye technicians worked with Moje to formulate new glass colors that could withstand the kiln-firing process.

Jun Kaneko: Although known primarily for his monumental ceramic works, Japanese-born Nebraska artist Kaneko’s explorations in kiln glass began at Bullseye in 1997. Ten years later Bullseye’s Gallery mounted a show featuring jewel-colored glass slabs; each weighing hundreds of pounds and standing taller than its viewer. Kaneko’s exhibition at Bullseye required over 20,000 pounds of raw glass and over 10,000 hours of fabrication time from the factory team that executed them to Kaneko’s specifications. “There’ve been times when it felt like we were building a memorial – and hoping it wasn’t our own!” said McGregor.

Christy Wykoff: Portland’s Wykoff, the Printmaking Chair at the Pacific Northwest College of Art and an artist known for his 2-D work, collaborated with Bullseye in 2000 to create “Canyon,” a 26 foot long fused glass work commissioned by and installed at Oregon Health Sciences University.
## Oregon’s Creative Occupations

The Occupational Index of the Arts, which is 40% of the state’s total Creative Vitality Index rating, measures the level of creative occupations per capita. The CVI measures 36 selected creative occupational categories as measured by the Employment and Training Administration’s “O*NET” occupational network database. The following table shows employment in Oregon. WESTAF, using data from EMSI, can report occupations with greater than ten persons, which is a level of detail greater than state employment agencies. Additionally, EMSI data includes the self employed, which can be a significant portion of the creative sector.

Between 2006 and 2008, creative occupations within the state of Oregon increased from 60,499 to 61,680. This is an increase of approximately 2%.

### Total Employment, all creative occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Employment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>60,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>60,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>61,680</td>
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### Table: Creative Occupations in Oregon (2006-2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>1,127</td>
<td>1,126</td>
<td>1,160</td>
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<td>Advertising and Promotions Managers</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>839</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agents, Business Managers of Artists, Performers, and Athletes</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>673</td>
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<tr>
<td>Architects, Except Landscape and Naval</td>
<td>2,371</td>
<td>2,468</td>
<td>2,558</td>
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<td>Art Directors</td>
<td>2,015</td>
<td>2,033</td>
<td>2,142</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audio and Video Equipment Technicians</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>7.85</td>
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<td>Broadcast Technicians</td>
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<td>598</td>
<td>559</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camera Operators, Television, Video, and Motion Picture</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>360</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choreographers</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>272</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial and Industrial Designers</td>
<td>1,118</td>
<td>1,119</td>
<td>1,171</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dancers</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>314</td>
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<td>Directors, Religious Activities</td>
<td>2,234</td>
<td>2,258</td>
<td>2,319</td>
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<td>Editors</td>
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<td>1,731</td>
<td>1,694</td>
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<td>Fashion Designers</td>
<td>933</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>1,031</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film and Video Editors</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>346</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fine Artists including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators</td>
<td>1,718</td>
<td>1,727</td>
<td>1,835</td>
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<td>Floral Designers</td>
<td>1,459</td>
<td>1,451</td>
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<td>Graphic Designers</td>
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<td>3,540</td>
<td>3,633</td>
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<td>Interior Designers</td>
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<td>1,507</td>
<td>1,542</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landscape Architects</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>671</td>
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<td>Librarians</td>
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<td>1,819</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media and Communication Equipment Workers, All Other</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>204</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi-Media Artists and Animators</td>
<td>1,832</td>
<td>1,824</td>
<td>1,770</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Directors and Composers</td>
<td>2,026</td>
<td>2,068</td>
<td>2,154</td>
<td>6.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musical Instrument Repairers and Tuners</td>
<td>2,986</td>
<td>2,999</td>
<td>2,992</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musicians and Singers</td>
<td>3,595</td>
<td>3,594</td>
<td>3,531</td>
<td>-1.78</td>
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<td>Photographers</td>
<td>10,395</td>
<td>10,292</td>
<td>9,906</td>
<td>-4.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Producers and Directors</td>
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<td>1,673</td>
<td>1,814</td>
<td>7.21</td>
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<td>Public Relations Managers</td>
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<td>1,144</td>
<td>1,155</td>
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<td>Public Relations Specialists</td>
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<td>2,278</td>
<td>2,634</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio and Television Announcers</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set and Exhibit Designers</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>9.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sound Engineering Technicians</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>179</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Writers</td>
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<td>765</td>
<td>818</td>
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<td>5,677</td>
<td>5,829</td>
<td>2.71</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>60,499</td>
<td>60,813</td>
<td>61,680</td>
<td>1.95</td>
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Source: Economic Modeling Specialist, Inc.