

## FEATURE

## ArtWalk of life

■ Downtown Eugene will liven up every Friday when art galleries stay open late to show off opening shows

By Diane Huber  
for the Emerald

Jacobs Gallery employees are repainting walls eggshell white and midnight blue. Local artists Megan O'Connell, Libby Wadsworth and Rebecca Urlacher are measuring wall space, examining angles and carefully placing their works of art in preparation for today's First Friday ArtWalk.

The first Friday of every month, downtown Eugene liven up when local galleries stay open late to show off their opening shows, local musicians play on the sidewalks and the Lane Arts Council leads a tour of the galleries. Students can begin their evening meandering through local art galleries, snacking on cheese puffs and learning about Eugene's local art scene.

"The purpose is to coordinate (the galleries') openings, then provide a tour," Lane Arts Council Director Douglas Beauchamp said. "The focus is to highlight the visual art downtown."

Usually 100 to 200 people participate in the free monthly tour of four to six galleries, he said.

Today's tour begins at 5:30 p.m. at Scan/Design Furniture. The gallery will feature local clay artists, photographs by Adrienne Adam and a woodworking demonstration by Ben Ferrell.

The next stop is Criterion Gallery for a look at beginning artist Jean Denis' oil and pastel portraits of people, trees, landscapes and still lifes.

Criterion's manager Ronda Cobb said the gallery has been participating in the ArtWalk since January.

First Friday  
ArtWalk tour

5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. today

Stop #1: Scan/Design Furniture,  
856 Willamette St.

Stop #2: Criterion Gallery,  
35 W. Eighth Ave.

Stop #3: Jacobs Gallery, lower level  
of Hult Center

Stop #4: Vivace Gallery, 207 E. Fifth Ave.

Also open late, but not part of the tour:

White Lotus Gallery, 767 Willamette St.

Circle of Hands, 1030 W. Broadway

New Zone Artist Collective at the

Downtown Lounge, 959 Pearl St.

Mobelwerks, 180 E. Fifth Ave.

Maude Kerns Art Center,

1910 E. 15th Ave.

Source: Lane Arts Council

"In a way, it brings customers into the gallery. It's a way of advertising," Cobb said. "And it helps the artist at the same time."

Jacobs Gallery will be the third stop. The gallery is a "main stop" in almost every ArtWalk, gallery assistant Corinna Freeman said.

Jacobs Gallery has no permanent artists, she said, which gives it the opportunity to reorganize the interior with each new show.

"Every new exhibition is an opportunity to completely change the space," she said. "We involve the artists, look at the artwork and see how it will be best displayed."

O'Connell and Wadsworth decided to display their paintings, tablets and letterpress printings together at Jacobs Gallery because they say their work connects well together.

"We are both interested in the visual qualities of language by opening up interpretation and questioning the authority of the declarative nature of text," O'Connell said.

"You believe what you read and you believe what you see," Wadsworth added.

O'Connell and Wadsworth question these principles through their art, she said.

For example, Wadsworth breaks up longer words that have words within them. "Titillate" is broken into a grid of three words: "tit," "ill,"

and "ate" in one of her pieces. She often incorporates diagrams, phrases and grids into her paintings.

"I'm interested in words becoming visual objects," she said.

O'Connell primarily uses passages from Virginia Woolf's novel, "Orlando," because of Woolf's exploration of the "rules and codes" of gender, which she said relates to rules of language.

"The way she forms phrases and words really speaks to me," she said. "The challenge is trying to put those in a contemporary context."

Rebecca Urlacher will also show her porcelain forms at Jacobs gallery.

The tour will conclude around 8:30 p.m. at the "Vivacious Gardens" show at Vivace Gallery, which features a variety of outdoor sculpture.

Beauchamp encourages people to continue the tour on their own to other galleries in town that also coordinate their openings with First Friday.

For example, Maude Kerns Art Center will be open from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. to display its group fabric show.

Freeman of Jacobs Gallery said she the ArtWalk appeals to a variety of people.

"It allows anyone in the community to get into the local art scene," she said.

Diane Huber is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.



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