

Campus buzz

Wednesday

Fine arts exhibit (painting, ceramics, photography), 10 a.m.-5 p.m., LaVerne Krause Gallery, Lawrence Hall, free.

"We're Not Widget Workers: Sexuality and Class in the Unionization of Northwest AIDS Foundation, 1985-1995" (talk by Christa Orth sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women in Society), noon-1 p.m., 330 Hendricks, free, 346-5015.

Copyright Online Workshop (sponsored by the UO Libraries), 2-3:20 p.m., Media Services Studio A, Knight Library, free, 346-1746.

"The Creation of a Federal Aviation Administration" (talk by FAA Airworthy Safety Program manager Gordan Reed), 2-3:20 p.m., 216 Allen, free, 484-4032
 YWCA Open House, 4-6 p.m., 841 E. 18th Ave., free, 346-4439.

Johnson

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"I would love for students to leave my class with a different set of priorities that they are prepared to honor or validate," he said.

Johnson's own love for design was born out of political posters. Growing up in South Africa during the apartheid era, Johnson, 43, was mesmerized by how posters challenged government authority and white privilege.

"It was through the political poster that I wanted to be a designer," he explained. "It was through my experience in designing that I wanted to become a teacher."

The professor's teaching is centered around themes and concepts which he said are not usually considered by most designers. In one visual continuity class, titled "The Gift," students created a restaurant in Lawrence Hall and fed people for free for a week. In another themed "Third Geography," his students addressed dominant images of masculinity and femininity in society and explored identities that didn't fit in with either camp. In his current class, "Home," Johnson said he hopes his students will explore their own personal conceptions of the domestic setting.

He said his teaching style is "restless, rooted in pleasurable inquiry."

In Johnson's class, ideas are not static. The teacher starts with an outline and then allows the class to find a direction of its own over time.

"I find it hard to invite them to play and experiment if I have a very secure, clearly defined template."

Johnson's teaching earned him the Ersted Award for Distinguished Teaching in 1998 and the University's William's Fellowship for Distinguished Undergraduate teaching. His commitment as a teacher is what makes him so endearing to his students and those who know him.

"There's a presence to him," senior Wayne Bund said. "When you hear him speak, he has an articulate passion for speaking."

Bund said the most important

lesson he learned from Johnson was how to connect art with daily life. He added that Johnson maintains the same intimacy in a class of 80 people that he has in one-on-one interactions.

Third-year graduate student Daniel Peabody, who was a graduate teaching fellow for Johnson's class, said Johnson gives students the ability to find their own voices and create the work they want to create.

"For a lot of people, his basic design class is where people stop being artsy and start being artists," Peabody said. He said the professor is not afraid of controversy or stating what he believes, adding that Johnson is probably the only faculty member who can wear leather pants to class and get away with it.

Many of Johnson's colleagues also are inspired by his work.

Art department Chairwoman Kate Wagle said Johnson has the ability to motivate students to exceed their own expectations with energy and spirit and embrace their work with passion and vigor.

"Professor Johnson is the 'rare' individual and artist sought by most academic institutions," Wagle said in an e-mail interview. "He is gifted, prolific and ambitious. The breadth and complexity of his own practice is seamlessly connected to strongly related teaching."

Yet, school is just one part of Johnson's life; he said he is dedicated to his "happy, precocious" sons as well as his partner. He is also working on several projects, including a series of paintings, a film, a pamphlet and preparations for a performance piece in London later this year called Remembering Wilde, a collaboration with music Professor Jeffrey Stolet and theater Professor John Schmor.

"I would hope that I've provided students opportunities to play, to experiment, to scrutinize, to criticize and, most of all, to deconstruct less as a critique than in the spirit of inquiry," he said.

Contact the freelance editor at ayishayahya@dailymerald.com

'Guerrilla Video Primer' offers alt-media advice

A how-to film produced by the Cascadia Media Collective has garnered attention across the United States and Canada

Aaron Shakra
Pulse Reporter

There are subtle hints in "Guerrilla Video Primer" — a film released by the local Cascadia Media Collective last November — that their goals are nothing less than revolutionary. One example: the little anarchy "A" written over their logo on the back of the box's cover art.

Much of the footage contained in the sixty-minute film is scenes of riots, demonstrations and other activist events. Nevertheless, the tactics proposed in the video are entirely legal. Its content ranges from technical instructions for selecting and using a digital camera to reporting and legal advice for those who will be involved in high-risk situations. Scenes from the Cascadia Media Collective's own films are interspersed with these instructions and serve as examples for potential filmmakers.

University student and UO Survival Center Co-director Marshall Kirkpatrick has worked with the collective for two years. He provided technical assistance for the film and said it shows the thinking behind a part of the activism movement where people usually only see the end product.

"We want to use the video as a tool for organizing and empowerment; to widen the field of activist videographers," Kirkpatrick said.

Collective founding member Randy Shadowwalker, who directed and edited the video, said that the group made it so other people could have the skills to create their own media.

"We're hoping to take the mystery out of the process," he said. "If an eighth grade kid wants to start using a video record, we want that information to be there."

The collective officially started in summer 2000, but Shadowwalker and others had been producing a "Cascadia Alive!" television series since August 1996. That program still airs every Wednesday on public access television.

Shadowwalker said the decision to create the collective came from a desire "to do more than just be a community forum." There are five core members in the group, and it has another eight or nine extra volunteers.



Courtesy

The collective has a non-hierarchical power structure and is a not-for-profit organization; it relies on donations of time and money to allow group members to work on projects.

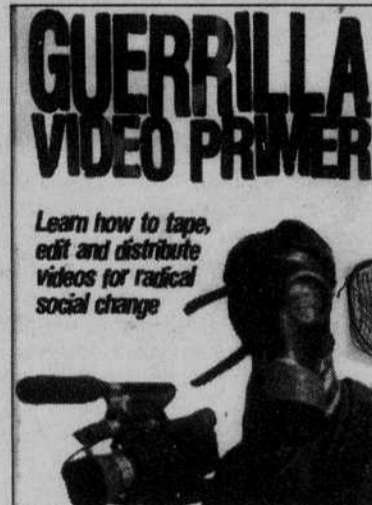
Since its release, "Guerrilla Video Primer" has been shown around the country, in places such as New York, Washington, Denver and Arizona. There have also been screenings in Canada. Shadowwalker called the feedback "amazing" and said Free Speech TV wants to provide the video to its subscribers as an incentive to join its organization. He added that Witness, a group that trains and equips social activists, co-founded by musician Peter Gabriel, also might start including the film with its video equipment.

The next public screening of the film will take place at the University during the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference, Mar. 6 through Mar. 9.

Shadowwalker said the motivation behind the collective calling the video "guerilla" was to subvert traditional media outlets.

"Mainstream media tends to call itself independent," he said. "It's had a strong use as propaganda by the powers that be. Alternative media can have a chilling effect on the rapid propaganda machine that legitimizes itself. Corporate media will never turn its back on corporate sponsors to any significant degree. When it is confronted with the power of an alternative media, they're going to change the way they look at journalism in the future; they're going to be out of date. These movements are growing."

Local ABC affiliate KEZI-9 news



anchor Rick Dancer said he had heard of the Cascadia Media Collective but was not aware of the motivations behind their group. He said he had no problem with guerrilla media, but his only concern regarded potential biases in the reporting process.

"What would concern me is 'Where are you coming from?' You've got to report both sides of the issues fairly," Dancer said. "We're here to educate people with information, we're not here to persuade them to our opinion."

However, Dancer said he welcomes competition from the group, and that its effect is positive overall.

"You've got to have people who disagree with you," he said. "If they're here to give me more competition, I say good, let's go. That's what we're here for."

Contact the Pulse reporter at aaronshakra@dailymerald.com.

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