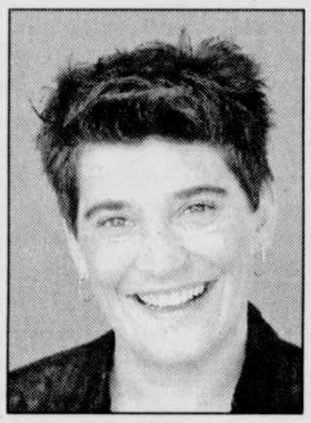
She also played a lot of volleyball in high school and once was told by a scout she was too short to play college ball. Edmunds' lip curls. "I was like, 'Oh yeah?' " She went to Montana State University soon after on a volleyball scholarship.

Edmunds' nomadic youth prompted her to think about ways in which people can connect and communicate, which led her to study filmmaking. She was one of only two women in a department she calls "the good ole boys club."

She recalls one of her male professors saying to her, "I don't know why you are pursuing majoring in cinematography and directing when the only job you're going to get in Hollywood is a script girl." Much like the volleyball incident, she says, "It galvanized me right into overachieving." (Gee, isn't this the familiar story of half the lesbians you know?)

Edmunds went to Berlin on an educational program with other students to work on a film and eventually came back to Montana State to teach avant-garde cinema. Bursting the good ole boys bubble, she was given the task of writing and directing an art piece combining different disciplines that were in the process of being departmentally merged. She created a multimedia program utilizing visual art, architecture, film, theater and dance. To round out her experience, she took acting classes.



Kristy Edmunds

"I started realizing all these huge connections between the different art forms and the language that goes on in visual art, in film, in theater, in dancing, in all of them," Edmunds shares, "and I started thinking about how to bring these different elements together." She went to grad school at Western Washington University, earning a master's degree in both playwriting and directing theater. Then she came to Portland.

Besides acting as director and curator for PICA, Edmunds sits on the boards of the Northwest Business Committee for the Arts, Artists for a Hate-Free America, the Western Front Alternative Space and the Portland Arts Alliance. She is also a creative consultant for various architectural firms.

Somehow she found time to serve on the Governor's Executive Task Force for Developing a Cultural Policy as well as on various national arts panels. In addition, she is the lead consultant to the Ford Foundation for their Internationalizing New Works Initiative, which is developing practices for international performing arts exchanges.

Oh, and then there's her own art. Her series of monoprints and wall drawings will be on view at Savage Gallery through Aug. 4. Edmunds was between out-of-town jaunts when she created the drawings directly on the wall.

"I had one day to do the wall piece. It's a big experiment; I don't know what it's going to look like, what it's going to be. I've got 24 hours to finish it, and if it sucks, well, so be it, right?" (It didn't.)

The wall drawing is a series of symbols that make up a kind of shorthand text only Edmunds can decipher. At the opening people spoke with her about creating similar pieces in their homes. "They have to give me a story that they would want to say to someone, and then I abstract it into this translation," Edmunds explains.

The ink monoprints were finished in similarly speedy fashion. "My time is very fragmented and fractured, so I deploy myself with absolute focus for short bursts of time."

In the course of our discussion, I have become concerned about something. Does she ever sleep?

Amid laughter, Edmunds admits she does. "Again, in short bursts of highly focused concentrated time," she jokes. "Sleep to me is this thing that I wish we didn't need. Because, damn, there's a lot to be done."

Edmunds does her sleeping in her inner Southeast Portland home with two cats and one Irish wolfhound. "Have you ever seen an Irish wolfhound? They're *huge* and really laid-back, sweet. He comes to work with me sometimes."

What does Edmunds do when she's not sleeping or working? She can't think of anything.

I make several suggestions. Yoga? Gourmet cooking? Clubs?

"Nope, none of it," she insists. "In fact, it's actually hard for me to take vacations because when I'm on vacation, it's like, what do I enjoy doing? I enjoy seeing art. So pretty soon, no matter where I am, if there's any art around.... Then I'm meeting with so-and-so and doing a studio visit. I end up working again."

I suggest loving your work isn't such a bad thing. "My life is very intertwined with my work," Edmunds replies.

And now that PICA finally has enough of a staff to depend upon, she can slow down just a wee bit. "It's not quite the Mach 10, hair-on-fire, if-you-don't-do-it-nobody-will" it was for the first few years. "Now it's much more about being able to step back and have a more humane life."

Like, maybe she'll take some yoga?

Edmunds hesitates.

"Maybe...*maybe*. It's probably going to be letting myself make more art, making my own thing. Because there are so many things I want to do." jo

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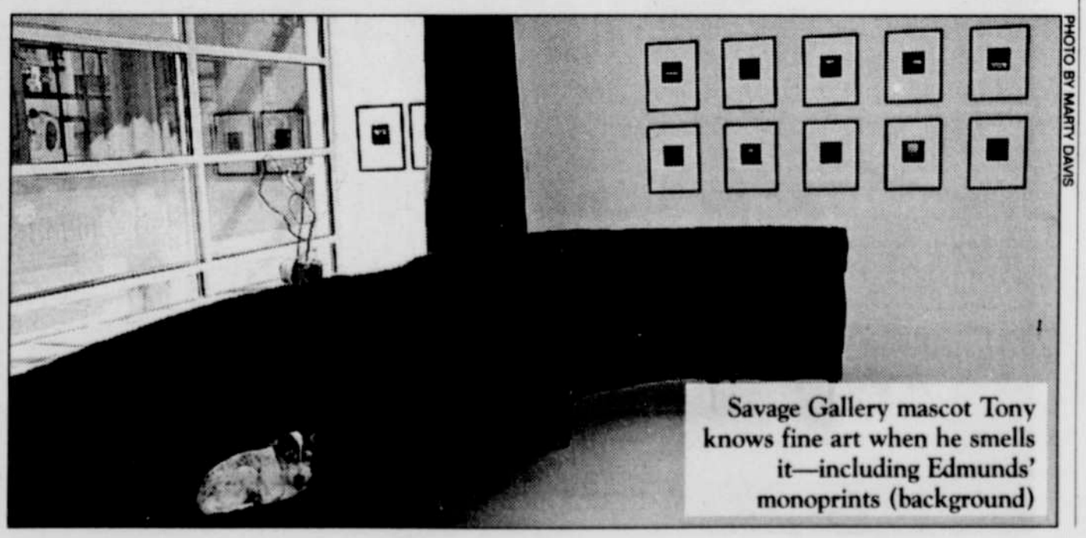
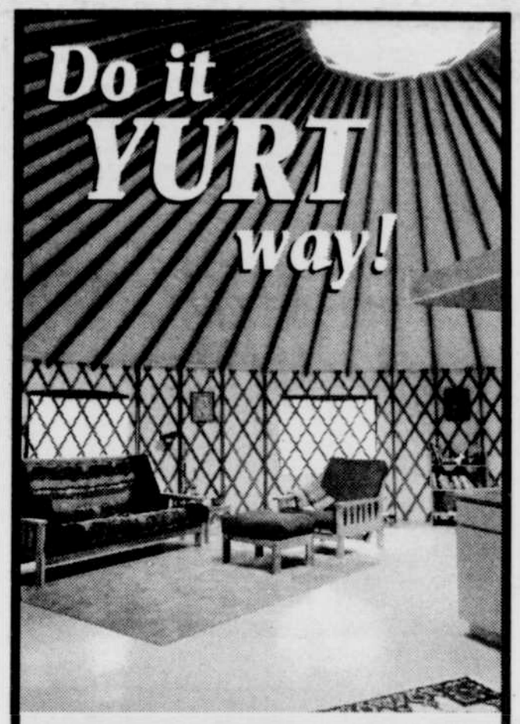


PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

Savage Gallery mascot Tony knows fine art when he smells it—including Edmunds' monoprints (background)



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