

DIVERSIONS

**Out
With
It!**

by Lisa Bradshaw



Armored queer

Are we all sick of hearing about the Portland Armory already? The thing isn't built out yet, and the mention of it already makes people's eyes glaze over in a coma-inducing trance: Armory, good or bad, don't know, ugh.

Everyone wants the armory building, a block north of Powell's at the edge of the Pearl District, to deliver because the city has pumped money into it like nobody's business. Taxpayers just hate failing city economic endeavors. Oh, and I'm sure the city hates them, too.

But it's hard for me to fault my city for financially supporting the arts, namely Portland Center Stage's plan to be the armory's anchor tenant. OK, I'm biased, I sorta work in the arts, but still. When your city invests in theater, it rather shows that it understands the ways that theater provides a certain camaraderie for citizens. (Dare I say "building community"?)

We all experience the same theater performance in different ways, but we do all experience it together in the same room with live actors. Sometimes it feels explosive—like anything could happen. The arts in general lend a richness to life that transcends difference—how we experience it can be based on gender, race, sexuality and other identities—but how it's presented is a blanket that covers us all.

And every live performance is a different colored blanket. It belongs to you and your theater comrades—not last night's, not tomorrow's. Just yours. When the city invests in local theater, it invests in you.

The challenge now really belongs to Portland Center Stage. Not only are they beholden to their city-backed loans, but they have to convince all of us they were worth the risk. And that conviction will be good for queers.

Portland Center Stage produces some of the highest-quality queer theater in the city. Take a look at last season alone: David Sedaris' *The SantaLand Diaries* was followed by the theater group bringing a gay Hungarian playwright to Portland to direct the U.S. premiere of his new version of *The Merchant of Venice*, which boldly embodied the previously theoretical-only physical relationship between Bassanio and Antonio.

Then the production *36 Views* calmly and subtly hooked up two women.

Because PCS' ticket prices have always been modest, a large number of Portlanders attend these shows and are exposed to queer theater whether they intended to be or not.

To fund the move, the company plans to increase the price of tickets, possibly doubling them. That would be a shame on the company and a shame for queers, too, when low- and middle-incomeers begin to drop their monthly trip to the theater.

It would be good for you if Portland Center Stage survives this move and becomes the world-class company its new surroundings will suggest. It would be good for Portland Center Stage to focus on outreach and ways to foster interest in underserved theater markets. Becoming world-class shouldn't mean outclassing most Portlanders. **J**



Rhea Shapiro rattles your cage through June 19 at Disjecta Theater

Shake, rattle and roll

Don't you just hate those ranting lesbians? No? Oh, well we don't either, in fact we love 'em, which is why we suggest you line up to see

Rhea Shapiro's one-woman show *Rattle: Dreams & Scenes, Rants & Prayers* through June 19 at Disjecta Theater, 116 N.E. Russell St.

Rattle is "a mythic story about a woman, a lesbian, an activist, a feminist, a Buddhist meditator," informs Shapiro. She "has been around the block and has stories to tell."

Shapiro acted in San Francisco street theater and other one-woman shows before moving to Portland in the early '90s. Her art is both spiritual and theatrical, no doubt informed by her day job at the Process Work Center, which supports process-oriented psychological change with roots in Jungian methods, physics and Taoism.

This new show, says Shapiro, explores death and dying. "I am fascinated with death as the final destination, so to speak, of life.... How do we show up for all aspects of living so when death comes we can be ready to meet that moment?"

Tickets are \$12 from 503-222-4478.

Former Portlander makes nude history

Rick Dinihanian started modeling seriously just two years ago. This month the former Portlander, who graduated from Grant High in 1967, graces the cover and the centerfold of *Playgirl* magazine.

No doubt you've done the math. Dinihanian just turned 55, making him the oldest cover boy in the mag's history—beautifully filling out their "Lusting After Older Men" theme of the month. "I wasn't really comfortable in my body," admits the gay San Francisco artist, in discussing the change that led to this additional career. "Emotionally, other areas of my life weren't working well either, so this started as a way of reclaiming myself."

In short, he lost a bunch of weight and began working out. "One aspect of physical transformation...we can shed aspects of ourselves we no longer want.... I am now happier in my relationships and have a deeper connection to myself and my art."

Dinihanian is a painter—mostly bright, abstract acrylics on canvas—and *Playgirl* did the photo shoot in his studio. "What incredible exposure," he exclaims. "OK, for me, but for my artwork as well."

He became a model by mere chance when a friend invited him along to a photo shoot. Photographers network, and soon Dinihanian was a hot property in the 40-plus areas. "It all happened because I had changed

not only my physical appearance but developed an inner confidence that I hadn't had before."

Since the artist's family still lives in Portland, he's here from time to time and will return in July to help with a Camp Starlight fund-raiser. He has certainly held onto that Portland sensibility around body image. "Beauty start[s] from the inside out," he says. "I'm referring to developing that sense of centeredness, happiness and a glowing sexiness that anyone at any age can create."

New queer dragon boat team

The Amazon Dragons are gearing up for their 12th year on the river in the annual Rose Festival Dragon Boat Races June 12 and 13. The team was founded in 1992 by the Lesbian Community Project.

Two years ago the women won first place in Division B and last year placed to race in Division A, where they came in third. "We are...improving with each practice," says membership coordinator Ellen Morrison, "and feel we will



Portland's queer deaf and hearing dragon boat team, Silent Dragons, practices on the Willamette

be a strong presence at the Rose Festival races."

But this year they won't be the only queer presence on the water. *Deaf & Hearing OUT Reach* celebrates its inaugural season as a Dragon Boat team called *Silent Dragons*.

Team coordinator Jeska Duckworth went to the races a few years ago and saw two deaf students with a high school team. "They were using an interpreter because no one else on the team seemed to know sign language. I kept thinking how great it would be to have a deaf and hearing signing team."

So the group set out on previously uncharted waters. "We realized the need to establish signs for all of the boat commands," explains coach Tami Johnson. "We set up signs for everything from 'paddles up' to 'hold the boat.'"

To cheer on both dragon crews, visit www.rosefestival.com for details.

Portland bartender featured in Out

In your face, San Francisco and New York! According to *Out* magazine, it's Portland that has the "Hottest Reason to Drink," highlighted in this month's "Hot" issue.

That hottest reason is Silverado's own Trevor Wion, apparently the cutest bartender in the whole country. The mag runs a little bio on our Trevor and a photo of him shaking up a drink. (Looking kinda bored, actually. Stardom, who needs it?)

See much more of Rick Dinihanian in the June issue of *Playgirl*

Tread lightly on art

Recent Oregon College of Arts & Crafts queer grad Kelly Hoepfner has imbued sidewalks in Portland and Vancouver, Wash., with images of everyday life.

Using a photographic transfer process, Hoepfner imprints photo images onto cement, after which the average pedestrian becomes an unsuspecting art viewer. Hoepfner's first major public art installation, *ENVIRONMENT: temporary conversations*, runs concurrently with an exhibit of her thesis work at Contemporary Crafts Gallery, 3934 S.W. Corbett Ave.

Just outside the gallery lies a series of three rectangular images that hover like shadows on the sidewalk. A closer look reveals three different black and white images from an artist's studio: a clay pot half-formed, a small bucket of art materials, a spray of flowered appliques.

Inside, a wall is adorned with several partial slabs of sidewalk, each imprinted with a close-up impression of an object: sunglasses, a typewriter, train tracks. Like seeing a ghost, the effect is both eerie and compelling.

Hoepfner says she is "intrigued by the contrast

of impermanence and the potential lasting effect this temporary art may leave on the viewer."

Maps to the six sidewalk sites are available at the gallery.

The Fox flop

It's a new reality (TV show not included) in which a major television network sweeps its homophobia under the rug in a 14-day housecleaning frenzy.

Scene 1: On May 13, Fox issues a news release hyping a forthcoming reality show called *Seriously, Dude, I'm Gay*, in which they giddily state that "turning gay overnight" would be "a heterosexual male's worst nightmare."

Scene 2: On May 14, *Washington Post* columnist Lisa de Moraes exposes Fox's blatantly homophobic idea to pit two heterosexual males against each other in an effort to fool people into thinking they're gay. She suggests that "if Fox wanted to do a really interesting reality series in which heterosexual men experience what it is like to be a gay man...they ought to also send them someplace like Laramie, Wyo."

Scene 3: The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation asks Fox for a tape of the show. The network stalls to "re-edit." Meanwhile, it issues an official apology for its "inappropriate" news release.

Scene 4: Turns out the release wasn't all that was inappropriate. Two weeks after releasing news of their "outrageously satirical" new special, Fox cancels it altogether after GLAAD executive director Joan M. Garry calls it "an exercise in systematic humiliation."

Grand finale: Garry issues a glowing statement May 27 applauding Fox for "doing the right thing." **J**

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