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Make Time For TBA:11

In its ninth year, Time-Based Art Festival ups the ante

BY RYAN J. PRADO

As the summer event calendar winds down and the clouds begin to creep back over Portland, a flurry of global artists descends on the Rose City. While for some folks September means MusicfestNW, or that tingly feeling of an impending Trail Blazers season—providing there even is an NBA season this year—for many more the month means three letters: TBA.

No, not the acronym for “to be announced.” The Time-Based Art Festival, now in its ninth outing, has secured its place in the art world, *thankyouverymuch*. Curated by the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA) and headquartered once again at Washington High School, TBA is a whirlwind of anything-goes art installations, stage and screen disciplines, once-in-a-lifetime musical performances, comedy, movement and anything—and likely everything—in between.

Running September 8–18, TBA:11 opens up a crucial avenue for unique, genre-defying artists from around the world. Cathy Edwards, the festival's outgoing artistic director, explains that it remains critical for Portland to be part of a national and international conversation about contemporary art and performance.

“TBA Festival is still the only significant contemporary, multidisciplinary arts festival happening in the United States,” says Edwards. “It’s a point of entry to the [United States] for important international work.”

As the first festival of its kind in the country, TBA organizers considered how artists test boundaries in many different ways. To Kristan Kennedy, the event's visual art curator,

what has kept the festival fresh is the swell of new and exciting artists willing to go where few dare, as well as the level of engagement from increasingly larger audiences.

“In its ninth year, the audience is so educated, they are even more curious, they push us to bring more, to do more, and they push the artists too,” Kennedy says. “I always have loved this line our founder Kristy Edmunds came up with: ‘PICA is about a community using its energy.’ TBA feels like that to me, and that is why it is such a force.”

With no consistent, driving theme behind the event, audiences are in for a merry-go-round of swirling, often heady but never dull exhibitions. Outside of performances by post-drag dynamo Taylor Mac, or the explosive dance vignettes of Kyle Abraham (see profiles), TBA's got a bit of everything covered. Andrew Dinwiddie's one-man performance piece *Get Mad at Sin!* channels a 1971 Jimmy Swaggart sermon, and will take place in a revival tent on the Washington High lawn (September 13–17, 6:30 p.m.). Following in the one-man milieu will be Mike Daisey and his 24-hour monologue—yes, you read that correctly—*All the Hours in the Day*, an epic saga that weaves together “stories from every time zone into an electric road movie for our time.” The daylong effort starts at 6 p.m. Saturday, September 17.

Other must-see installments include Jesse Sugarmann's *Lido (the pride is back)*—a slow-motion car crash monument executed by way of positioning three Chrysler minivans atop 42 inflatable air beds. The performance can be seen at TBA:11's free opening reception Thursday, September 8 at THE WORKS on the Washington High campus. And we'd be remiss if we didn't mention Patrick J. Rock's *Oscar's Delirium Tremens*—an homage to Oscar Wilde in the form of an air-inflated, interactive jump room shaped like a giant pink elephant, on view for the run of the festival.

Yes, it's a jam-packed lineup, one you likely won't be able to take all in. But for those who've never experienced the monster that is TBA, rest assured that it's possibly the most engaging affair in Portland's already rich arts scene.

“It is fun, it is out of the ordinary, and the artists showing their work will make you sit up straight and feel alive to new ideas!” says Edwards.

“Plus people tend to fall in love at TBA, it is just a fact,” Kennedy adds. “Love and art go hand in hand.”

TBA:11 takes place Sept. 8–18 at Washington High School (SE Stark and 12th Ave.). Visual art galleries and installations are free and open to the public through Oct. 30. For ticket prices, show times, venues and more, call 503-224-7422 or visit pica.org/tba.

Princess of Pastiche

Taylor Mac tackles the clumsy art of comparison through cabaret

BY ERIN ROOK

Taylor Mac is one-of-a-kind performer. But if you feel you must compare Mac to other artists, be prepared for him to turn that comparison on its head and feed it back to you. That's exactly what he does in *Comparison is Violence* or *The Ziggy Stardust Meets Tiny Tim Songbook*, the cabaret performance he has lined up for the 2011 Time-Based Art Festival.

More than 20 international publications have described Mac's flamboyant pastiche of theater, music and drag as “Ziggy Stardust meets Tiny Tim”—a comparison whose virility Mac attributes to the copy-and-pasting of one reviewer's “reductive” analysis.

In reality, Mac is no more like David Bowie or the ukulele-playing Herbert Khaury than are most members of Portland's own Drag Mansion.

“[Tiny Tim] always performed on a ukulele, and because I perform on a ukulele sometimes that's why [it happened]. It had nothing to do with performance style,” Mac explains. “And then David Bowie, I don't sound like David Bowie, but I put glitter on my face, and anyone that's genderbending and puts glitter on their face [is] described as David Bowie or, nowadays, Lady Gaga.”

The last comparison seems particularly backward given that Gaga used to attend Mac's shows in New York. Still, the whole

