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By Joshua Baird  
Arts & Culture Editor

## 21+: Absinthe: Hallucinogen or hearsay?

The green fairy, a mythical little creature that floats about during the reported hallucinations caused by the legendary absinthe, seems to have caused a bit of mischief over the last century or so. It seems whenever you mention the herbal concoction called absinthe, most people will begin to tell you all about the numerous hallucinations they have "experienced" while under the influence. They may also tell you about how the stuff is illegal worldwide and can only be purchased over the Internet as a kit. These kits require you to add the ingredients to grain alcohol, such as everclear, and then stir it into water and sugar to make an absinthe cocktail.

Historically speaking, these people are at least half right in these assumptions. Though currently legal in most of the world, absinthe was once outlawed due to the reported hallucinogenic nature of the beast. Thujone, a toxic ingredient derived from worm-

wood, is very much a hallucinogen in high doses, however in the trace amounts found in absinthe you are unlikely to experience any of the side effects.

In fact, if you are going to experience any hallucinations, it may be due to the excessive amount of alcohol you are imbibing or, if you're a diabetic, you may be experiencing high blood sugar hallucinations caused by drinking too much alcohol mixed with sugar cubes.

Absinthe was banned throughout most of Europe and all of America by approximately 1912 because of thujone content. Though it was legalized again in 2007, the Food and Drug Administration has stated that absinthe is legal to sell, though it cannot contain more than 10 parts per million of thujone.

Absinthe was a favorite of a great many historical artistic contributors, artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Aleister Crowley and Oscar Wilde, for example. All three are known for being a bit... how can I put this into psychiatric terms? ...loony.

All that being said, I myself am a big fan of the flavor of an absinthe cocktail, which is made

by placing an absinthe spoon, flat spoon with holes punched in it, over an Irish coffee mug and pouring absinthe over a single sugar cube. Once you have added the preferred amount of the emerald liquid into your glass, you can fully light the sugar cube on fire (for this to work the absinthe must be 100 proof at least) then allow the sugar cube to melt through the holes in the spoon. Pour cold water into the glass, stir with your absinthe spoon and enjoy.

**Disclaimer:** We at *The Clackamas Print* do not encourage drinking to excess or under the influence of any kind. Remember to drink responsibly.

Follow Joshua Baird's blog "21+" online at [www.twinklplus.com](http://www.twinklplus.com), for additional articles not posted anywhere else. The website may be in transition at this week; if so go to <http://jbaibaird21plus.blogspot.com>.



## Portland Art Museum promotes 'Safety in Numbers' at exhibit

African American art featured as a point of interest at PAM

By Cristi Powers  
The Clackamas Print

Art museums are one of the best places to see some of the most amazing pieces of history. On any given day, you may find dozens of people from any walk of life enjoying the exhibits. This has not always been the case.

On March 23, 1960, Memphis' daily newspaper *The Commercial Appeal* ran a photo titled "Students under arrest." The photo caption tells of a group of black students who were arrested for not obeying segregation laws in a museum.

"A group of black students from Lemoyne College found themselves under arrest when they visited Brooks Memorial Art Gallery in Overton Park yesterday morning. They had gone there to protest against segregation policies under which the gallery upholds."

Because a museum does not consist of physical borders as a bus does, the gallery established segregation based on temporal divisions. According to municipal laws governing the museum, every Thursday was "negro day." The students had chosen to go on a Tuesday, and 13 were arrested.

Fast-forward 41 years to the present, a time when the word "public" means available to everyone, where public art museums are open to everyone,

every day, and the collection of art being displayed is the only thing that can be considered segregated.

On Jan. 8, African American art pieces from the Portland Art Museum's private collection and from outside sources were revealed in a new exhibit called "Safety in Numbers." The display of African American art is an event that has not taken place nearly as often as Jennifer Harper, curatorial assistant and curator of "Safety in Numbers," would like to see.

"I'm not sure if it will happen annually, but I would like to see it happen more than that," Harper said.

After receiving positive feedback from adults and children of all races, Harper felt she had met her objective to get people to look at the pieces and inspire them to ask for more. This would ultimately help drive the quest for more knowledge of African American culture.

"My hope is that people will think and explore more and get more understanding of the items," Harper said.

Portland Art Museum has the least amount of African American artwork compared to surrounding museums. However, it possesses some of the best pieces representing a time of struggle along with modern pieces that convey a strong emotion and attitude about the era that helped shape African American history.

"I found every piece displayed very interesting, and it left me curious to research certain events and what part they played in my heritage," said Kevin Blair. "I was encouraged to see pictures and paintings about things I only got to hear about. It put a mental picture

in my mind to connect to the stories."

The museum's collection of more than 42,000 objects, displayed in 112,000 square feet of galleries, reflects the history of art from ancient times to today. The collection is distinguished for its holdings of the native peoples of North America, English silver and graphic arts.

For children like Sarah Garding, age 11, they are concerned with all those details when they come visit the pieces. "I think it's neat, even if I don't get what a picture means, there's the part my mom can read so she can smarter about it and tell me," she said. "I feel like my brain is so filled up now on it I didn't know I didn't know about."

Through April 17 you can visit the wonderful African American "Safety in Numbers" exhibit. You can also catch the other quality events at the Portland Art Museum together, providing viewers with the beautiful pieces of art that most don't get the opportunity to see every day.

The museum is open five days a week; admission is free for adults, free for those 18 and under and special rates are available for groups of various sizes. The museum offers free admission on the fourth Friday of every month from 5-8 p.m. Call them at 503-226-2811 for further information.

- If you have any questions or comments about this article (or have suggestions about something else you would like to read about) you can contact Cristi Powers at [cristipowers@msn.com](mailto:cristipowers@msn.com) or call 503-839-4272.