

Artist-in-residence Linda K. Johnson coordinates art projects in South Waterfront

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

In the South Waterfront, across from the looming John Ross condominium tower, there is a two-square block expanse of lawn. Someday, it will be a community park that serves the growing area in a variety of ways. For now the lawn, suitable for dog walking and other informal outdoor activities, is a place-maker for what is to come.

On the other side of the John Ross is the lair of another place-maker: Artist in residence Linda K. Johnson.

Since last August, she is there to provide art projects that promote and celebrate the new area, with the participation of its new residents and the public at large.

Her chief function has been to commission a new work by an artist each month. The artists have been painters, sculptors, a dancer, a writer and a photographer with widely different styles, but all have had this in common: they are about the South Waterfront, they are displayed or performed there, they are free to the general public, and they involve some sort of public participation.

Of this last Johnson told the Post, "There are some artists who just like to sit in their studio and paint – that's great, but it's not appropriate here."

Photographer Christopher Rauschenberg took pictures of people and things

in the district, then had an exhibition there of his work. Dancer Tahni Holt staged performances in three different places, at and above ground level, and invited the public to view them from different places as well. Dancer Bill Will is scheduled to perform a recital on July 19.

On August 2nd, 10 choreographers and theater companies will give 10 short performances simultaneously at 10 different locations in the district, with the performers rotating their performance spaces and the audience free to do so as well.

Funding for the project comes from "the principal developers of the district," as Johnson put it, but especially Williams and Dame and the Gerding-Edlen Company. The idea was Johnson's.

Long one of Portland's most respected dancers, choreographers and performance artists, she has taken special interest in the city's communities and geographic locations. One year, at the downtown Artquake festival, she and fellow performers spent all day constructing and re-constructing a metal structure that mimicked the changing face of downtown.

A later work, "The View From Here," examined the much-discussed but little-understood Urban Growth Boundary, the official dividing line between urban and rural development; for that work, Johnson personally toured the boundary.



Linda K. Johnson at South Waterfront Park. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)

She was especially intrigued by the possibilities of the South Waterfront. "Here we've reconstituted a neighborhood that for years was an uninhabitable brown field," she said. "It's a chance for everyone in the city to re-draw their internal maps."

She wrote an unsolicited proposal for the project to Homer Williams and Mark Edlen – who agreed to fund the project. It is not a great surprise. Williams, in particular, has always believed strongly in the components other than housing that create a true community. In the Pearl he contributed to what eventually became Jameson Square, and to art projects to utilize it.

To those who suggested that the new open spaces would become problem hangouts for the homeless he said, "We can't control who will come here, but if

we program it properly we can have a lot of control over what happens here."

Johnson says that the funds were given freely, with no attempt to direct or interfere with her artistic plans. Once the money was approved, she "drew on my roots and connective tissue" to recruit participating artists. Each of the performances has brought 200 to 300 people into the area, and engaged 40 to 50 immediate residents.

Johnson herself is easy to spot during the day. As a work uniform she has adopted a red jump suit reminiscent of the construction workers still employed in building the area. Her last performance, under the contract, will be something connected to the annual Time Based Art festival in September. At that point, Johnson says, "I'll find another project."

<p><i>Garden Home</i></p>  <p>Updated Farmhouse on over 1/2 acre. Spacious 3500 sq ft of living space, 4 bed, 3 bath home. 3500 sq ft includes separate apt/studio over the 3 car garage. Vaulted Master & family room. \$549,000.</p>	<p><i>Hillsdale</i></p>  <p>First time on the market! Custom built in 1956. 4 bedrooms & 2 fireplaces, family room & workshop. Vaulted ceilings and hardwoods. Beautiful lot with SW views. Great location in Hillsdale. \$435,000</p>	<p><i>Stephenson</i></p>  <p>Pearched way up high on a .63 acre mostly flat lot. This mid century has a nice view, privacy and character. 3 bedrooms, hardwoods, sunroom & double garage \$398,000.</p>	<p><i>Bridlemile</i></p>  <p>Quality one level home w/ 3 BR 2 BA. Gardeners paradise w/ beautiful grounds. Covered private patio. Hardwood floors, family room off kitchen w/ brick fireplace, large living room w/ built-ins and fireplace. \$424,500</p>	<p><i>Wilson Park</i></p>  <p>Quality Tri-Level home in Wilson Park. Hardwood floors and 2 brick fireplaces. Large bedrooms and closets. Plenty of storage space. Nice backyard with patio. \$395,000</p>
<p><i>Vermont Hills</i></p>  <p>Wonderful Vermont Hills home! Living room w/ hardwoods, fireplace & bay window. 4 BR, 2 BA. Bonus rooms on lower level. Huge deck overlooking level fenced yard. Hot tub and large shop. \$389,000</p>	<p><i>Multnomah Village</i></p>  <p>View of the coast range! 3 bedroom, 2 bath home. 1,652 square feet. Light & bright living room w/ woodstove & slider to large deck. 2 kitchens & Oak floors. View & private deck from master bedroom. Driveway & garage below. \$387,500</p>	<p><i>Vermont Hills</i></p>  <p>Charm & character! 2+ BR 2 BA. Located on a quiet street. Hardwood floors & remodeled baths. Skylight in kitchen w/ eating area. Fireplace in living room. Full unfinished basement. \$284,500</p>	<p><i>Multnomah Village</i></p>  <p>Cozy Bungalow w/view located in Multnomah Village. Living room with hardwood floors and fireplace. Master bedroom upstairs with full bath. Unfinished basement. Great yard with deck. \$375,000</p>	<p><i>Garden Home</i></p>  <p>Your own oasis! 3 BR 2 BA. Beautiful large backyard. Impeccable home w/ gleaming hardwood floors & fireplace in living room. Master suite w/ loft. Remodeled baths & new windows. \$369,000</p>
<p><i>Vermont Hills</i></p>  <p>Ideally located in quiet, secluded neighborhood. Master w/ bath & walk in closet. 2 car garage with large storage area. Large private, landscaped backyard w/ tool shed. Auto sprinkler system. AC installed in 2007. Walk to Hayhurst Elementary & Pendleton Park. \$345,000</p>	<p><i>Vermont Hills</i></p>  <p>Same owner for the last 27 years. Solid Mid Century home, blocks to Gabriel Park. Dry full concrete basement with tall ceilings. Newer vinyl windows. Neil Kelly remodeled bathroom. \$319,000</p>	<p><i>Multnomah Village</i></p>  <p>Traditional 1940s Multnomah Bungalow. Quiet secluded living. Walk to Popular Multnomah Village. Family room w/ bamboo flooring. Newly updated kitchen w/ newer cabinets & BI Dishwasher. Newly built out building can be used for tools or converted to a creative studio. \$285,000</p>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <h2>Parker Realty, Inc.</h2> <p>503.977.1888 www.parkerrealtyportland.com 7830 SW 35th Ave</p> <p><i>Jeff Parker</i> Your neighborhood Realtor Since 1980</p>  </div>	

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