



PHOTOS BY HELEN HILL

Artist Abigail DeVille sets up her installation, "The American Future," at Portland's Institute for Contemporary Art. The exhibit, which uses trash from local sites to showcase Portland and its history of oppression and racism, runs through Jan. 12.

## Portland's story of oppression, through art

Abigail DeVille's installation at PICA features Street Roots papers, vendor artwork

BY HELEN HILL  
STAFF REPORTER

Portland's Institute for Contemporary Art's 16,000-square-foot exhibition space in Northeast Portland is the site of Bronx-based artist Abigail DeVille's massive installation piece. And thousands of

### PICA

Portland's Institute for Contemporary Art

15 NE Hancock St., Portland

Hours: Noon-6 p.m. Wednesday-Friday; noon-4 p.m. Saturday

back issues of Street Roots, as well as the art of many Street Roots vendors, are an intentional element.

DeVille's commissioned work has a purpose deep and wide. She has long been perfecting her craft as an archaeologist who

unearths a dark, invisible America with massive installations created from detritus, often trash gleaned from local dumps, bins and recycling centers. With these cast-off objects, DeVille creates meticulous and immersive installations designed to reveal a site-specific past.

"History is deep; it's dark and affects everything happening in this very moment," DeVille said. "History is the tale of the victor. And it's garbage."

DeVille's work repeatedly references the victor's tale with structures that are associated with the systemic racism and oppression that have defined America for centuries.

DeVille calls the exhibit "The American



"The American Future" includes artwork by Street Roots vendors. This wall features pieces that appear in Street Roots' 2018 holiday zine, which will be sold by Street Roots vendors.

Future." She used Thomas Jefferson as her entry point for this reflection on the Portland experience. It was Jefferson, after all, the father of Manifest Destiny, who commissioned the Lewis and Clark expedition that opened up the Oregon Territory to white settlers.

DeVille said Jefferson "is an interesting figure but fraught because he had all these aspirations and high-minded ideals that never really translated. He said all men are created equal, but I'm going to own over 250 people. These things I feel have proliferated and filtered down into the way Americans think of themselves. I read a housing statistic (from Portland) that said the families that are the most vulnerable to being homeless are Native Americans and

African-Americans."

The exhibit, which runs through Jan. 12, features a massive representation of the stepped Pyramid of Djoser in Egypt, saturated in a blue light that suggests memory. The foundational "stones" of this pyramid are made up of 20 years of back issues of Street Roots newspapers.

Nothing is accidental in DeVille's work. She chose to incorporate the newspapers, stored in the basement beneath Street Roots' offices at 211 NW Davis St., because Street Roots is a voice for the voiceless and marginalized. Intermingled throughout the bricks of the Street Roots bundles are hundreds of crumpled copies of the

See PICA, page 12

## Ban sought on use of police dogs on inmates

Disability advocates say the practice, allowed in Oregon, is dangerous and unnecessary

BY JOANNE ZUHL  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Oregon's leading civil rights group for people with disabilities is calling for an end to using dogs in jails to forcibly control inmates.

Disability Rights Oregon is calling for a statewide ban of the practice in a report that focuses on the Columbia County Jail, the scene of a violent interaction between a police dog and an inmate in 2017.

Oregon is one of only five states that allow police dogs to be applied in use-of-force situations, and Columbia County is the only county in the state that reports using them that way, according to a survey by DRO. On Aug. 1, 2017, Columbia County deputies sicced a police dog on 47-year-old Christopher Bartlett when he failed to follow commands in preparation for leaving his cell. Bartlett suffered a dog bite on his arm, among other injuries, and was sent to the hospital for medical attention.

Bartlett "identifies as having mental illness," said Emily Cooper, legal director with DRO. "The jail records support that, and there was a detailed assessment by a mental health clinician after the attack that showed that he does have auditory and visual hallucinations. He's the exact reason why jails can be difficult for people with disabilities because they're not following the rules or the norms — not because they don't want to but because the disability prevents them from doing it."

A video of the attack recorded on one of the deputy's body cameras shows the dog pulling Bartlett to the floor of his cell and biting him repeatedly with several deputies in attendance.

A grand jury found no evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the officers, and no charges were filed. Bartlett ultimately sued the Columbia County Sheriff's Office for \$500,000, claiming cruel and unusual punishment. In October, the county settled with Bartlett for \$251,000 without admitting any wrongdoing.

In its report titled "You Are Going to Get Bitten," released Tuesday, DRO said that using K-9s to intimidate and control inmates is dangerous to both the inmates and the deputies and that it is unnecessary, given the range of options available to compel inmate compliance. However, Oregon doesn't have a protocol for using K-9s in use-of-force situations like the cell extraction of Bartlett, Cooper said. DRO is

See DOGS, page 12