

# Art, Meet Kickboxing

The Art of War opens downtown

A local creative couple wants to challenge the notion of a traditional art gallery in downtown, mixing east and west, high fashion and fitness.

Art of War, at 251B W. 7th Ave, is the newest addition to Eugene's collection of downtown art galleries; it opened Saturday, Jan. 16. But owners Jason and Alisha Georgianna want to do more than mixing mediums — they're uniting Jason's extensive knowledge of mixed martial arts (MMA) and Alisha's aptitude for design.

The husband and wife team transformed an old automotive repair shop into an art gallery and mixed martial arts school (a fusion of various martial arts techniques, mixed with hand-to-hand combat). The building is divided into two distinct parts. From the street, you enter into a long narrow space filled with white leather furniture, bamboo and a collection of urban art and classic black and white photographs, which then opens into a larger area for martial arts classes. The fitness area is complete with weights, multiple punching bags and changing rooms, and is nearly completely surrounded by a chain link fence. The old car garage doors with windows are still in place, giving the building an open, airy feel.

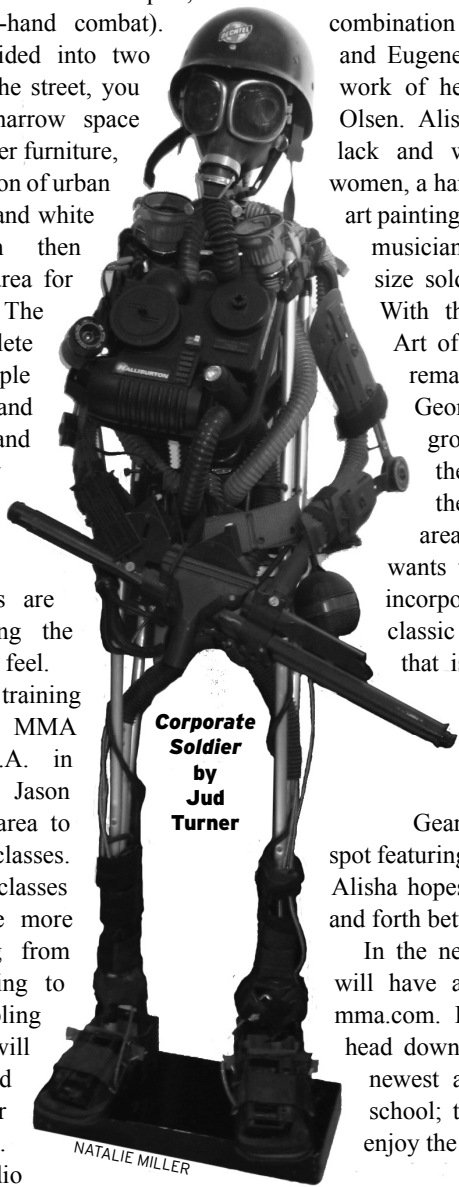
With 12 years of training as a professional MMA fighter and an M.A. in physical education, Jason will use the fitness area to teach self-defense classes. Art of War will offer classes for beginners to the more experienced, ranging from muay Thai kickboxing to jujitsu, yoga, grappling and MMA. A time will also be designated for team practice for professional fighters. And while the studio

promotes self-defense through mixed martial arts, Jason also encourages people to use the personal fitness training and workout equipment, saying, "It's hard to defend yourself if you're not strong."

But Alisha knows that martial arts studios can often feel intimidating. By combining the martial arts with the art gallery, she hopes to create a more welcoming environment that will attract everyone, including children. Alisha has assumed the role of Art of War's curator. Her art background lies in costume design for theater, editorial fashion and film.

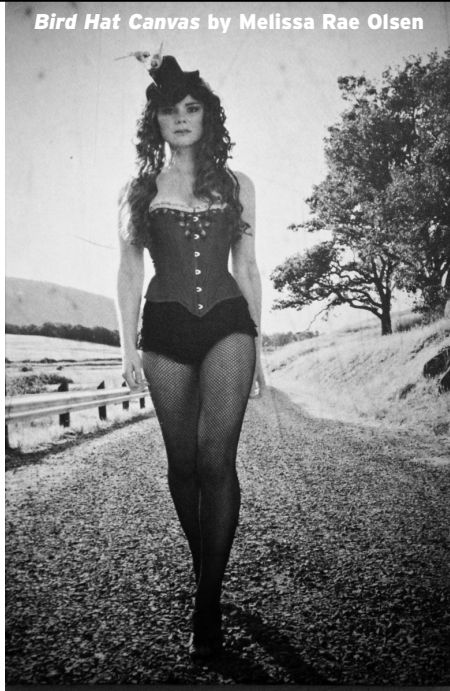
For the Art of War's grand opening, Alisha selected pieces from a combination of mostly Portland and Eugene artists, including the work of her sister, Melissa Rae Olsen. Alisha combined Olsen's lack and white photographs of women, a handful of colorful urban art paintings, photographs of local musician Justin King and a life-size soldier with a gas mask. With the division of space, Art of War's main concepts remain separate. But as the Georgiannas' art collection grows, they plan to unite the two by extending the art into the fitness area. Alisha says she wants to create a space that incorporates both urban and classic art — a "luxury loft" that is also fun and funky, that will appeal to the people working out. Because she has friends at Hoodz n Gearz gallery (another local spot featuring urban art and MMA), Alisha hopes to swap pieces back and forth between galleries.

In the near future, Art of War will have a Web site, artofwar-mma.com. But in the meantime, head downtown to see Eugene's newest art gallery and MMA school; take a class or simply enjoy the art. **EW**



Corporate Soldier by Jud Turner

NATALIE MILLER



Bird Hat Canvas by Melissa Rae Olsen



Graf Pod by Kryst



Ryon Haris and Jason Georgianna sparring

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