

# arts SHORTS



## An Excellent Exhibit of Emek's Aaarght

This year's Oregon Country Fair poster is a dandy. A sort of elongated rock flyer, the gorgeous sketch depicts in surreal, mock-scientific, neo-religious gestures a Tree of Life with roots as deep as the submerged part of an iceberg. Now look again: Deep in the strata those roots become anthropomorphic, and they bear the tree's only fruit – a single, heart-shaped peach. It is a work at once impossibly simple and endlessly deep, with a quick, revitalizing nod to rococo Deadhead nostalgia that refuses to wallow in the been-there, done-that of homage. This OCF poster is a genuine work of art. As R. Crumb said of the artist's work: "Great design and impeccable political sentiments – what more could you ask for on a poster?"

The poster was created by Emek, an Israeli-born illustrator and graphic artist based in Portland who is rapidly climbing to the top of the art world, and for all the right reasons. In his big, beautiful new book, *Emek ... the thinking man's poster artist: Collected Works of Aaarght*, the man *Billboard* named one of the top 25 rock poster artists of all time proves he is no one-trick pony. Of course, the 300-page book meticulously reproduces a slew of great posters for bands like Wilco, Mercury Rev, Kraftwerk, Radiohead, Jane's Addiction and the Pixies, to name a few – each poster different, each a foray into an adventurous, courageous, sort of *sui generis* style that always captures something esoterically essential about the band – but there are further forays into an array of styles and media, ranging from collage and political sketch to illustrated vinyl and acrylic on canvas. When countercultural icons like cartoonist R. Crumb and graphic artist Art Chantry blurb your book, you know you have arrived. Emek is, quite simply, a crackerjack artist possessed of the kind of talent that endures. Sure, it's only rock and roll, but this man's work transcends its own boundaries.

Emek's poster art will be featured throughout the month of July at WOW Hall, with a closing reception for the artist 5-7pm Friday, July 29; [www.wowhall.org/gallery](http://www.wowhall.org/gallery) – Rick Levin

## Shadow-Boxing

Screenwriter/director/visual artist Johnnie Mazzocco gets really into her characters – so deep, in fact, that she considers her new artwork to be derived from the mind of her recent film's protagonist.

The "shadowbox" medium Mazzocco works with is a hands-on form of art that is well represented in contemporary museum forums. Looking at Mazzocco's shadowboxes, the attentive viewer cannot help but think that the Eugene artist must be influenced by the work of Joseph Cornell. Cornell, a frequent contributor to some of the country's most distinguished museum collections (MOMA, MOCHA, AIC), is renowned for his boxed assemblages – elaborate box constructions and collages made from found objects. Cornell's work is surreal and nostalgic – Victorian in its focus on collecting and creating cabinets of curiosities. Mazzocco's boxes could be seen as a freshly unique continuation of what Cornell was doing before his death in the early '70s.

"A lot of my work (with the shadowboxes) is dictated by what I find," Mazzocco says. Her film *Found Objects*, which is in production, presents a main character who creates these boxes, much like Mazzocco. As is the case in "reality," the boxes provide an insight into the creator, as well as the surrounding world that the objects were found in. Mazzocco scoured antique shops and junkyards to acquire the things she's juxtaposed in her shadowboxes. The most fulfilling part about her process, she says, is that it "brings together the exterior world and the subconscious."

Johnnie Mazzocco's "Found Object Shadowboxes" will be exhibited July 1 – July 30 at M.E.C.A. Gallery. – Dante Zuñiga-West

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