



Art Attack

Portland's annual Time-Based Art festival

Every September since 2003, the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art brings some of the planet's most original vanguard dance, music, theater, visual and multimedia artists to the city's Time-Based Art Festival. One of several world fringe festivals, TBA offers the Northwest's best opportunity to experience works you're otherwise unlikely to encounter anywhere but in artistic capitals.

For Eugeneans, TBA offers an excellent opportunity to maximize travel/sojourn time, because it's pretty easy to pack in a dozen events at various venues in a long weekend.

With more than 50 art attacks occurring over ten days, we can only hit a few of the highlights here. And some of these brand-new creations are notoriously difficult to evaluate in advance; I've been surprised at how much I enjoyed something that sounded silly or lame in the descriptions, and occasionally how what seemed to be a promising idea turned out to be pretentious, undercooked or otherwise disappointing. Most TBA events, however, present something worth experiencing.

This opening weekend includes a collaboration between sound artist **Tim DuRoche** and Brooklyn video artist **Ed Purver** that turns two of Portland's bridges into a sound source and a video projection that reveal the beauty of those amazing structures and the surprisingly poetic thoughts of the people who operate them.

Past TBA marathons like a staged reading of *The Great Gatsby* have been some of the most acclaimed performances. This year, brilliant **New York author-monologist Mike Daisey** pulls an all-nighter — a 24-hour series of connected monologues on the theme of American Puritanism and anarchism “combining song, dioramas, pageantry, surprise guests, unexpected developments, devastating reversals and the keen possibility of failure.”

Daisey's earned deserved plaudits for his intense, thoughtful, politically charged and often very funny takes on subjects as diverse as Microsoft, homeland security, Amazon.com and more.

Other theatrical recommendations include Austin's acclaimed **Rude Mechs'** theater piece, based on the life of notorious 1960s-70s acting guru Stella Burden, chronicling the conflicts between what happens onstage and off. Glittery New Yorker **Taylor Mac's** campy drag show trots out another in the festival's seemingly endless stream of gender bending spectacles, this one including music from David Bowie and Tiny Tim.

On the dancy side, New York **choreographer Kyle Abraham's** solo dance mixes messages about Alzheimer's disease and community radio with a soundtrack that ranges from soul and hip hop to contemporary classical. Seattle-based **Zoe | Juniper's** mix of dance and visual projections conjures provocative dream like worlds on stage.

Japan's **Offsite Dance Project** drops its dancers in the industrial district's bridges, loading docks and warehouses. Algerian French choreographer **Rachid Ouramdane** combines video and movement to explore concepts of national identity and politics. And Portland-based **teeth's Home Made** is one of the most disturbingly beautiful dance performances I've seen in years.

Mostly musical highlights include opening night's **Songs in Wartime** project that includes songs from some of the 700 places that hold American military bases despite there being no declaration of war. **Dean & Britta** contribute original scores to some of Andy Warhol's famous screen test films. **Sarah Dougher** has created a song cycle, accompanied by video and chamber ensemble, that reinterprets American poet Leslie Scalapino's experimental poem plays about labor and class struggle.

Some of TBA's most memorable moments have happened at the late night party/performance/social mixer called The Works, at the city's old Washington High School. This year's highlights include **Shana Moulton and Nick Hallett's** video opera *Whispering Pines* (about her hallucinating, hypochondriacal alter ego), **Miwa Matreyek's** dazzling interactive animation, and the always



fascinating **Ten Tiny Dances**, in which choreographers cram an amazing amount of ingenuity into small spaces and short time limits.

TBA also offers a wealth of visual and film art and installations at Washington High and elsewhere around town. The best way to get a sense of the amazing range of offerings is to visit TBA's website at pica.org/tba and sample the preview videos in the resource room. **EW**

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