

THE SPLIT-HEADEDNESS PARADIGM

Painter Kaila Farrell-Smith explores her Klamath roots at Ditch Projects

Kaila Farrell-Smith wants to decolonize her mind, and yours. She wants to repair the damage of the brutal concept from her father's childhood: "Kill the Indian. Save the Man." The Portland-based painter is exploring "split-headedness," which she says "comes from being raised within an indigenous/tribal paradigm as well as having education in linear, Western concepts and society," through her oil portraits and landscapes.

Her textured landscapes will go on display, along with the work of 11 other artists, as part of Portland State University's MFA Exhibition Exchange Project at Springfield's Ditch Projects gallery on March 8. Each year, PSU participates in the exchange project, in which MFA students share and show their work at different schools (and affiliated galleries); last year, they were paired with University of Montana Missoula and the San Francisco Art Institute; this year they are joining forces with the UO. The 2013 exhibit, *Sometimes Between Notions*, which will also feature photography, time-based media and installations, pays homage to Ken Kesey because, as Farrell-Smith puts it, he "embodied exploring ideas."

Farrell-Smith, who moved to Portland from Eugene when she was 18 to pursue painting, wants to explore her heritage. "I'm Klamath Indian," she says. "It took me a while to understand that there's this need to return and start looking at my indigenous identity, looking at how painting explores what that means in a contemporary society — how indigenous people identify with displacement from their ancestral homelands."

She is the daughter of Al Smith — perhaps best known to the greater public as the defendant in *Employment Division, Department of Human Resources of Oregon v. Smith* — who was fired from his job for ingesting peyote during a religious ritual. She describes how, as a child, her father was taken away from his home and placed in a Catholic boarding school for assimilation, which, along with her own ambivalence toward her roots, has brought her to the idea of split-headedness.

"It's really emotional," she says. "How much do you share?" Farrell-Smith has visited the Klamath lands of Southern Oregon and says she feels "kind of like a traveler" there, but that "having that connection to a landscape" is important to her. This connection can be seen in paintings like "Lavafield Stronghold," a somewhat abstracted landscape of organic lines, slate blues and pops of burnt orange and lemon yellow. The piece's serene and beautiful rusty, earthy quality looks like it was executed with crushed minerals rather than oil paints.

"I was thinking of the lava beds in Northern California and Southern Oregon where my tribe is from," she says.

The art world has taken notice of the poignant explorations of her heritage — in 2012, the Portland Art Museum purchased "After Boarding School: In Mourning," a portrait that depicts a Klamath girl whose hair has been chopped off, a common practice at boarding schools. Farrell-Smith points out that in her culture, "cutting hair is really only when someone dies. It's mourning." ■

Sometimes Between Notions runs March 8-11 at Ditch Projects, Springfield, 303 S. 5th St. #165. Opening reception runs 6 to 9 pm Friday, March 8.

'LAVAFIELD STRONGHOLD,'
30 INCHES BY 40 INCHES, OIL ON CANVAS



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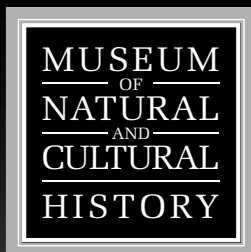
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Silent Spaces

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON MEYERS MARCH 6-JULY 21, 2013

Journey with Eugene photographer Jon Meyers to the Four Corners region of the American Southwest, exploring the sagebrush-covered ruins of Hovenweep and Chaco Canyon.

Meet the artist at the opening reception on Friday, March 8, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Admission is free.

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THE UNESCO CHAIR IN TRANSCULTURAL STUDIES, INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE, AND PEACE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON PRESENTS

UNESCO/UO Conference on Prisons and Peace KNIGHT LAW CENTER, ROOM 175

MARCH 14

OPENING AND KEYNOTE, **4-5:30**

"SOLITARY CONFINEMENT: A LIVING DEATH SENTENCE"

Keynote by Lisa Guenther,
Professor of Philosophy, Vanderbilt University
with a reception to follow.

MARCH 15

PANEL COLLOQUIUM, **9-10:30**

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEATH PENALTY

with UNESCO Chairs Pascale Boucaud (Lyon, France) and Dimitri Spivak (St. Petersburg, Russia), and UO Professor of History Randall McGowen

"On the Inside Looking Out," 10:45-11

Showing of award-winning documentary about a class on Literature and Ethics taught at the Oregon State Penitentiary as part of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

Address by Colette Peters, 11-noon

Address by Colette Peters, Director, Oregon Department of Corrections
Discussion led by Professor Steven Shankman and Sr. Helen Prejean

From Book to Libretto, 2-3:30

Author Sr. Helen Prejean, composer Jake Heggie, and the Eugene Opera artistic team discuss the transition of Sr. Prejean's life story to art and the role of art in public policy