

FACE TIME

Artist Bret Pendlebury puts a fresh spin on portraiture

We're all well acquainted with portraits. We've all seen da Vinci's "Mona Lisa," Johannes Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring" and Van Gogh's self-portrait with bandaged ear. We've been subjects in our own portraits, from selfies snapped at wild house parties to those bizarre, neck-cracking high-school IDs. Portraits are displayed in magazine ads, on business cards, in mugshots, passports and newspaper headlines.

So perhaps it's this abundance of portraits — the fact that faces are all around us — that pushes them out of the popular canon.

In recent years, artistic focus has strayed toward abstraction and kitschy cat paintings. But some out there still embrace the portrait, and Miami-born painter **Bret Pendlebury** is no exception. Nine months ago, this 33-year-old artist came to Eugene from Philadelphia, seeking relaxation and a solid dose of the great outdoors. He's had plenty of time to explore since, and it seems he doesn't stray far from nature.

Hunkered down in a small, shared studio in the shadow of Skinner's Butte, Pendlebury sets to painting his portraits. This is where his true love lies. After inheriting a collection of old yearbook photos from his grandmother, he was immediately drawn to the faces.

"It was this unlimited amount of people to paint from," Pendlebury says. "[The photos] were from an all-women's school in the '30s, which is when my grandmother went to college. I just loved the old blank smiles, and I liked the hairstyles. That's just what happened to inspire me."

However vintage his subject matter, though, Pendlebury's paintings are lemony fresh. Like all great painters, he uses his source material sparingly, shadowing the initial product while creating something entirely new. His paintings are lush, unique and technically profound, a result of his keen internal palette and creative use of brushstrokes. Unlike many portrait artists, Pendlebury also shuns the grid technique, in which features are drawn on a ruled framework in order to keep proportions correct. He sketches freehand straight from the photos. This technique has its trials and errors, but with practice comes eventual success.



DETAIL OF 'LINNA' BY BRET PENDLEBURY

Hunkered down in a small, shared studio in the shadow of Skinner's Butte, Pendlebury sets to painting his portraits. This is where his true love lies. After inheriting a collection of old yearbook photos from his grandmother, he was immediately drawn to the faces.

"Portraits were hard for me for a while," he says. "But I think it was the challenge that I liked. Getting the eyes right and the lips somewhat proportioned. It's just something that I've stuck with."

When Pendlebury was 10, his grandfather, a Carolina native and watercolor artist, taught him how to paint. An architect by day, his grandfather's work leaned more toward landscapes and buildings. The fact that such structure flows in his veins speaks to Pendlebury's talent for working freehand. It also provides insight into his process, which starts from a dense brushstroke foundation and works up toward finer details.

"I use a hatching brushstroke, which a lot of people would compare to Impressionism," he says. "I never

intentionally did it to be like Impressionism but it turned out that way. That's just how I started painting."

Pendlebury paints on tan paper — another of his many idiosyncrasies — which forces him to start with dark colors and work toward light. As anyone with a muddy brown splotch at the center of their palette will tell you, starting dark can lead to a mess. This technique hinges on careful planning, but this local artist pulls it off perfectly. The result is a vibrant, distinctive work of art, a face you'd be glad to pass on the street.

So let's remember — it's not the face that's lost its magic; it's how we see it that's turned things stale. ■

To view more of Bret's artwork, visit bretpendlebury.com or see it face to face at the Starlight Lounge, 830 Olive St., through April 1.

Music that goes
straight to the heart

Tchaikovsky's

**EUGENE
ONEGIN**

March 11 & 13
7:30 Friday • 2:30 Sunday

**EUGENE
OPERA**

541-682-5000
eugeneopera.com

Hult Center
for the Performing Arts

DAVID MINOR THEATRE
TIX \$6 | \$2 SUN | \$2 TUES | MATINEE \$2 | \$1 OFF STUDENT
"NEW" ALL AGES
762-1700 | 180 E. 5TH AVE
DAVIDMINORTHEATRE.COM
FRI MAR 4TH - THUR MAR 10TH

6 OSCAR WINS MAD MAX 5:00	3 OSCAR NOMINATIONS BROOKLYN 5:10	FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "PITCH PERFECT" SISTERS 7:05
1 OSCAR NOMINATION HAIL, CAESAR! 7:10	1 OSCAR NOMINATION JOY 9:05	1 OSCAR NOMINATION AMY 9:10

ALL AGES, ALL THE TIME

CINEMARK
\$3.75* SENIOR MONDAY
CINEMARK 17
Gateway Mall
Bellline @ Gateway
*Visit cinemark.com for restrictions that apply.

10 CLOVERFIELD LANE (DIG) (PG-13) 11:20, 12:30, 2:05, 3:10, 4:45, 6:05, 7:25, 8:55, 10:05	RISEN (DIG) (PG-13) 11:15, 2:00, 4:40, 7:40, 10:30
THE BROTHERS GRIMSBY (DIG) (R) 10:50, 1:05, 3:20, 5:35, 7:55, 10:10	SPOTLIGHT (DIG) (R) 12:05, 7:05
DEADPOOL (DIG) (R) 11:05, 1:50, 4:30, 7:30, 10:20	STAR WARS: EPISODE VII - THE FORCE AWAKENS (DIG) (PG-13) 12:10, 3:30, 7:15, 10:25
EDDIE THE EAGLE (DIG) (PG-13) 11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:50	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR (DIG) (R) 11:35, 4:50, 10:25
GODS OF EGYPT (DIG) (PG-13) 12:15, 3:35, 7:15, 10:15	WHISKEY TANGO FOXTROT (DIG) (R) 12:20, 3:25, 7:10, 10:00
HOW TO BE SINGLE (DIG) (R) 3:40, 10:10	THE WITCH (DIG) (R) 2:20, 7:35
KUNG FU PANDA 3 (DIG) (PG) 11:30, 2:15, 4:55, 7:50, 10:15	THE YOUNG MESSIAH (DIG) (PG-13) 11:25, 2:10, 5:00, 7:45, 10:30
LONDON HAS FALLEN (DIG) (R) 11:10, 1:45, 4:35, 7:30, 10:20	SPECIAL EVENT PRICING: \$3.00 UPGRADE ALL TICKETS 10:45, 4:25, 9:00, 10:05
THE REVENANT (DIG) (R) 10:55, 2:25, 6:25, 9:55	ZOOTOPIA (DIG) (PG) 12:25, 1:35, 3:15, 6:15, 7:20

SHOWTIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE • VALID FOR FRIDAY ONLY
CC Assistive Listening & Captioning System Avail