



KID KOALA'S
'NUFONIA
MUST FALL'

SIGHT AND SOUND

(sub)Urban Projections multi-media festival returns to Hult Center

PHOTO BY AJ KORKIDAKIS

The (sub)Urban Projections Digital Art & Media Festival returns April 21 with a two-night multi-sensory, multi-discipline experience.

Sponsored by the city of Eugene in partnership with Harmonic Laboratory, the festival — now celebrating its fifth year — seeks to “champion emerging artists, cultivate community and generate vibrancy in downtown Eugene.”

This year’s offerings include “Ritual,” starting at 8 pm Thursday, April 21, and featuring the work of more than 60 local artists, thinkers, educators and innovators.

“Ritual” brings together digital art technologies like projection mapping with more traditional artistic forms like dance, music and visual art, including 18 visual-art installations placed throughout the Hult Center lobby’s seven levels and elevator.

“It will be immersive to say the least,” the city of Eugene’s public art manager Isaac Marquez says, adding that the city “is proud to provide this platform for risk-taking and experimentation with our local talent, because it demonstrates how Eugene is participating in this moment the arts are having right now.”

And, after Thursday’s happening, don’t miss “Nufonia Must Fall” at 8 pm Friday, April 22. Based on the 2003 graphic novel of the same name by Canadian scratch DJ, music producer and graphic novelist Kid Koala (aka Eric San), “Nufonia” is animated in real time, with a live soundtrack provided by Mr. Koala and the renowned Afiara Quartet, all under the direction of filmmaker K.K. Barrett.

“This is a large, projected silent movie being scored live,” says Barrett, production designer for such iconic films as *Her*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *I Heart Huckabees* and *Being John Malkovich*.

In “Nufonia Must Fall,” the 2D world of San’s charming graphic novel about a cute little robot that falls in love is translated into puppets and miniature sets ranging in size from 1 to 10 inches. These are manipulated live onstage under exquisite filmic lighting, and the resulting moments are captured on camera and projected for the audience.

“You’re getting to see the making-of down below the screen, as everything comes together above the action,” Barrett says.

Adds San: “The show is dynamic and fun. It’s like there are 15 of us on one surfboard.”

San studied classical piano as a kid, “and almost majored in physics in college,” he says.

As a self-proclaimed “turntablist,” San says he figured out how to elevate seemingly simple scratching — a technique used to produce distinctive percussive or

rhythmic sounds and sound effects by moving a vinyl record back and forth on a turntable — to create new melodies and tone. “From chipmunk range to whale song,” he explains.

And, as an artist, San’s earliest introduction to drawing was his dad. “My father’s not an artist,” he says. “He’s a scientist. But he could draw battleships very well.”

(When San was bored in a restaurant, he says, “my dad would just draw.”)

San’s own work plays with the intersection between these two seemingly disparate art forms — visual art and music — that, for him, are inexorably intertwined.

“Sound and light are just part of the same spectrum,” San says. “We’ve all seen and experienced music that can

really move you, the same way line, shape, a look, movement, dance can have that effect. They can’t be separated.”

When he’s drawing, San says, he can’t help hearing a musical score develop in his head, and that when he’s writing music, he sees pictures.

And when visual art and music come together onstage? “It becomes a very urgent event,” San says.

Adds Barrett: “Through the acting, the sets, story, the audience is a part of the ensemble. If they’re not connected, if they’re not included, it’s like having a band member sit one out.” ■

“Ritual” fills the Hult Center lobby starting at 8 pm Friday, April 22; FREE, but tickets with timed entry are required and available at hultcenter.org. Tickets (\$26-\$62) for “Nufonia Must Fall” are also available at hultcenter.org.



'RITUAL'

PHOTO BY DMITRI VON KLEIN