

INVEST IN THE ARTS

By Alex V. Cipolle

Ninety-three years ago, cheeky cubist Pablo Picasso reflected on his career choice, on a life spent scratching away at reality.

“We all know that art is not truth,” he said. “Art is a lie that makes us realize the truth.”

Oh, the truth. In 2016, that pesky know-it-all took a punch to the gut. Facts have been shoved to the back of the line behind our aunt’s Facebook rants and the president-elects gas-lighting Twitter feed.

Fortunately, the arts don’t care about popular or unpopular opinion. Art won’t coddle insularity. Art is an act of revolution. Art keeps us honest.

Art: We need it more than ever. So this holiday season, consider an investment — whether it be time, money, materials, space or something else — in the arts, which will pay dividends in protecting a healthy, vibrant democracy.

Galleries have had a tough go in this town, so let’s help them out: The **Karin Clarke Gallery** (karinclarkegallery.com or 541-684-7963), the **White Lotus Gallery** (wlotus.com or 541-345-3276) and the recently reopened volunteer-run nonprofit **New Zone Gallery** (newzonegallery.org or 541-683-0759) are a few options. As is **Shadowfox** (shadowfoxdesign.com or 541-953-9408), which recently kicked off multiple series, including Art Bar 7 pm Wednesdays — “an open, judgment-free creative space where everyone is encouraged to express themselves in good company.”

Or perhaps you can support **Alexi Era Gallery** (alexieragallery.com or 541-525-7978), which recently closed its doors downtown but still operates online, and will host pop-ups shows around the city. In its short brick-and-mortar existence, the gallery hosted some of the most intriguing, relevant local exhibits in recent memory.

If you’re interested in something more mischievous, consider the scrappy art collective **Tropical Contemporary** (tropicalcontemporary.space) — if anyone is pushing boundaries in the Eugene art scene, it’s this “nomadic contemporary arts organization.” TC has hosted pop-up shows in Eugene warehouses and even a Penske truck in Kesey Square.

The **Whiteaker Community Art Team** is beautifying blank walls around the neighborhood. Email whiteakermurals@gmail.com to get involved. Also in the Whit is **Whiteaker Printmakers** (whitprint.com), a 2,400-square-foot community art studio for printmakers that is becoming its own creative hub.

Eugene also has some art nonprofit stalwarts to donate to or volunteer at, such as **Maude Kerns Art Center** (mkartcenter.org or 541-345-1571), which continues to support and nurture the art community after

more than six decades with vibrant shows and art classes. There’s also **MECCA**, or the Materials Exchange Center for the Community Arts (materials-exchange.org or 541-302-1810). Do you know how cool MECCA is? The nonprofit redirects waste and surplus materials into the hands of artists and creatives. MECCA also hosts its own shows and provides studio space, as well as maintaining the Teacher Resource Center, which offers free supplies to educators and nonprofits.

The **OSLP Arts & Culture Program** and its **Lincoln Gallery** (artsandcultureeugene.org or 541-636-3119), located in the red brick building at 4th and Lincoln, never stops working for the arts. The program helps people of all abilities engage with their creative side.

And don’t forget **Lane Arts Council** (lanearts.org or 541-349-2493), which, among its myriad efforts, hosts the monthly First Friday ArtWalk downtown, doles out grants and helps bring arts education back into schools.

The **Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art** (jsma.uoregon.edu or 541-346-0974) is always looking for new patrons, members and volunteers. Consider donating to its Fill Up the Bus program, which connects kids with art by providing “scholarships for schoolchildren K-12 to participate in tours in which they were otherwise unable to participate.”

Meanwhile, the **Emerald Art Center** (emeraldartcenter.org or 541-726-8595) keeps the Springfield art scene, including Second Friday art walks, humming.

You can escape politics at a performance or, more importantly, performances give us an insight into who we are and how we got to this juncture. For local performing arts, **Ballet Fantastique** (balletfantastique.org or 541-342-4611) has been giving well-known tales a new spin (e.g., the upcoming *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) as well as premiering new ballets (*Zorro*) since 2000, while the **Eugene Ballet Company** (eugeneballet.org or 541-485-3992) is the community’s classical ballet anchor, attracting renowned dancers and presenting 100-plus ballets, like the April 2017 premiere of *The Snow Queen*, for the local dance community since 1978. The

Oregon Ballet Academy (oregonballetacademy.com or 541-338-7800) has been bringing boys to the barre with its popular Boys Program — tuition-free weekly dance classes that offer “a place for boys to feel encouraged to pursue the art of dance.”

Eugene has loads more dance schools and groups to support including a wide range of dance, from swing to West African, tap to hip hop. For more ideas, see our dance listings at bit.ly/2hkLTSP.

The **Eugene Opera** (eugeneopera.com or 541-912-5267) brings to town inspiring works like *Sweeney Todd* and *West Side Story* this March; **Oregon Contemporary Theatre** (octheatre.org or 541-684-6988) continues to push quality contemporary drama and comedy (*The Santaland Diaries* and the upcoming *Venus in Fur*) to the next level while smaller outfits in the area — **Actors Cabaret of Eugene** (actorscabaret.org or 541-683-4368), **Very Little Theatre** (thevlt.com or 541-344-7751), **Cottage Theatre** (cottage theatre.org or 541-942-8001) and **Rose Children’s Theatre** (therct.com or 541-431-0444) — keep audiences coming back and provide creative stages for local actors.

The **Richard E. Wildish Community Theater** (wildishtheater.com or 541-868-0689) provides a charming space in downtown Springfield for local dance troupes, theater companies, comedy events, Chamber Music Amici, the SpringFilm series and the Academy of Arts & Academics.

If you’re thinking something more instrumental, **The Jazz Station** (thejazzstation.org), **Eugene Symphony** (eugenesymphony.org or 541-687-9487), **Oregon Mozart Players** (oregonmozartplayers.org or 541-345-6648), **The Boreal** (theboreal.com), **Grrrlz Rock** (grrrlzrock.com) and the **Soromundi Lesbian Chorus of Eugene** (soromundi.wix.com or 342-0535) keep Eugene saturated in all genres of music, while **The Shedd Community Music School** (theshedd.org or 541-434-7015) offers a place for students to engage with music outside of school, where art electives have been cut.

This is by no means an exhaustive list; to find more Lane County arts nonprofits, visit culturaltrust.org.

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people’s civil and human rights aren’t trampled on. Miller says people can take action by donating money to a local organization like Grupo Latino de Acción Directa (GLAD, facebook.com/latinocommunityactiongroup), or making time to volunteer with immigration nonprofits in your community.

If you are an attorney, sign up for pro-bono cases on behalf of an organization of your choosing, she says.

Lastly, encourage your church to become a sanctuary church, she says. The state organization Interfaith Movement For Immigrant Justice “is recruiting churches to pledge to be sanctuary churches so in case of a raid or in the case of somebody being pursued by Immigration Customs Enforcement they have a safe place to go,” Miller says.

For more information about Causa’s work and to donate time or funds, visit their website causaoregon.org. — *Corinne Boyer*

Huerto de la Familia

Trump’s vision of America looks monochromatically white, while **Huerto de la Familia** preserves immigrant

traditions and feeds people. Chili peppers, tomatoes and beans are just some of the fresh vegetables planted and grown each year by Latino families with the help of long-time Eugene nonprofit Huerto.

This nonprofit borrows free plots of gardening land from area institutions and then opens that land up to farming for Latino families.

Donations to this tiny (two paid staff) but determined (400 families served a year) nonprofit helps pay for water, seeds and other gardening materials to support its Latino clients.

“Basically, we work to help immigrant families to have enough to eat that is nutrient dense and also culturally appropriate,” says Executive Director Marissa Garcia. Many members who farm bring up seeds from Mexico and South America that aren’t always for sale in Lane County or would be too pricey to buy as seedlings.

Garcia says the recent Trump election has put Huerto on the alert to have a better safety plan in place for immigrants as they garden outside in public spaces around Eugene.

Their office also offers gardening classes and business start-up classes in Spanish. “We’ve seen a direct correlation between families in the gardening program become more involved in school and church. They feel like they get to have a voice there,” Garcia says.

Donations can be made at the Huerto de la Familia website at huertodelafamilia.org. — *Jeslyn Lemke*

Fight Islamophobia: The Council on American Islamic Relations

If you’re concerned by the alarming post-election rise in Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crimes and hate speech, consider donating to the **Council on American-Islamic Relations**.

Founded in 1995, CAIR is America’s largest Muslim civil liberties organization. Often considered the ACLU of the Muslim community, CAIR is a nonprofit, grassroots civil rights and advocacy organization. Its mission is “to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.”