

EL OBSERVADOR

Theatre Observers Women's Day

On Sunday, March 8, in observance of International Women's Day, the Milagro Theatre, 525 S.E. Stark St., will feature a staged reading and community forum in Spanish about the vital work of women in the Latino community.

The theatre's Teatro Espanol troupe will perform "Entre Nos" ("Between Us"), by Santiago Serrano. The one act play illuminates sexism still routinely visited upon women despite the strides made toward equality.

Visitors to The Miracle Theatre Group will be greeted with a newly installed, custom-built marquee, one of the more visible renovations the theatre has made as of late, as it concludes a makeover that included new carpeting, lighting, exterior paint, and others.

The flashy, neon-lit style sign is meant to have a retro feel and is bilingual, with one side reading



"Milagro Teatro" and the other its English translation.

Funding for the renovations came from individual donations, Spirit Mountain Community Fund, and the Collins Foundation. The theatre has grown significantly from when it got its permanent home 1995, with more than 100,000 people passing through its doors.

The lobby will feature the work of local Latino artists and plans are in the works for improved amenities for artists using the rehearsal studio and a community meeting room.

◀ The Milagro Theatre, 525 S.E. Stark St., has a new marquee that advertises the Latino theater in Spanish on one side and English on the other side.

Local Artist Works



Onda Gallery, 2215 N.E. Alberta St., will unveil the work of three Latin American artists. Rita Urdaneta, a Venezuelan artist, has a distinct graphic style that features an innovative and abstract use of colors to convey space and motion.

The work of Wilson Neto, a young Brazilian artist with

a burgeoning presence in Europe and the U.S., uses brightly colored and intricately textured paint to depict women from various backgrounds.

Zulay Quintana, another Venezuelan, features sculptures of women in athletic poses.

All three artists have had their work shown extensively throughout Canada and the U.S. as well as their home countries.

Wilson Neto's 'Rainha Inca.'



Zulay Quintana's 'Law of Remera.'

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Shining Light on Prison System

continued ▲ from Front

At least four other states— Iowa, Connecticut, Minnesota, and Wisconsin— have something similar.

Marc Mauer, the executive director of the Sentencing Project— a non-profit working to reform the nation's sentencing policies that collaborated with Shields on the bill— said that states already look at the fiscal or environmental impact of a policy, and should begin to look at how sentencing policy will affect race. He also said that it may spur the legislature to look at alternatives to incarceration.

"It represents a very rational criminal justice policy," he said.

The "get tough on crime" approach adopted by voters

over the last decade has only exacerbated the problem.

The most recent revision to Oregon's sentencing policy was Measure 57, which voters passed last year. It mandated treatment for some drug offenses and prison terms for other crimes.

In 1994, voters passed the controversial Measure 11, which prevented judges from imposing more lenient sentences on defendants, and mandated hefty jail terms for many violent crimes, with no time off for good behavior.

According to statistics from the Oregon Department of Corrections nearly 18 percent of people prosecuted under Measure 11 have been African American, even though the group makes up about 2 percent of the

state's total population. For Hispanics, that number is over 21 percent, even though the group makes up about 10 percent of Oregon's population.

Mauer explained that long sentences tend to affect low-income communities of color most acutely. They rip families apart and remove individuals from society for long stretches of time, making it more difficult for them to reconnect once out of jail, he said.

Alfred Blumstein, the J. Erik Jonsson University Professor of Urban Systems and Operations Research at Carnegie Mellon University, said that the proposed measure could sensitize legislators to the disproportionately of sentencing policy. In particular, it could bring attention to how certain sentencing policies have a greater impact on some ethnic groups.

For example, he cited na-

tional laws that impose harsher sentences for possessing crack cocaine (a drug used more by African Americans) and more lenient ones for cocaine possession (a drug used more by whites).

Shields said his bill is still being considered by the House Rules committee. He gives the bill a 50 percent chance of becoming law.

But not so fast, says Kevin Neely, representative for Oregon District Attorneys Association.

Neely said that the association is fine with the bill if it also includes a statement looking at what ethnic communities are impacted by crime, since studies show minorities are disproportionately victims of crime.

He hopes impact statements in both cases will spur a discussion about the best use of resources.



State Rep. Chip Shields

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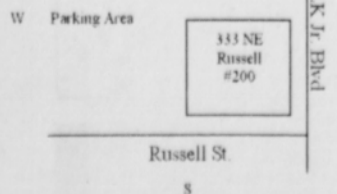
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