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first mobile social justice museum. It's mobile partly because she can't afford a brick and mortar space in New York City, where she lives and works, but also because she wants to "hit people at all levels of society" — from established museums to church basements.

Smith was not able to make it to a community reception held Jan. 28 for the exhibit's opening, but his wife, Julie Kern Smith, addressed the crowd of more than 100 people briefly on his behalf.

"Portland needs more visibility for Black art and Black culture," Kern

“I was told, ‘Your politics aren't welcome here. You're too radical. You're fired’”

Montgomery is working with the Portland Art Museum on a series of community projects in conjunction with "Constructing Identity," an exhibition of African American art that opened at the museum Jan. 28 and will remain on display through June 18. That includes community discussions, talks by local artists, collaborative events with local schools and a project wherein local artists will create work responding to the collection — and that work will be displayed later in the spring.

The Petrucci Family Foundation loaned its collection of African American art to the museum, and, according to Michael Murawski, director of education and public programs for the Portland Art Museum, this is the largest exhibition from the Petrucci collection ever publicly displayed. Works in the exhibit date back more than 130 years, and include creations by Black artists from all over the country, including several works by African American artists local to the Pacific Northwest, including Portland painter Arvie Smith.

Smith said. "More than ever, we need to celebrate our differences."

In remarks to the crowd and in a brief interview with *The Skanner*, Murawski said the exhibit and attendant events reflect an emphasis that the museum should belong and respond to the community.

"This is a public institution. You are here because this is your museum," Murawski told the crowd.

Museums have not traditionally featured Black artists, and traditionally museums have engaged curators who "tell you what to think of the show," Murawski said.

In addition to engaging local artists to create responsive works, the museum is planning an artist panel discussion Feb. 11, engaging artists whose works are on display in the exhibit. The Museum of Impact is working with Don't Shoot Portland to involve more local artists, and Hana Layson, the Portland Art Museum's school and teacher programs specialist, said she's working with local schools on response projects, including a planned display of student art later in the spring.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Kali Thorne-Ladd to Serve as PCC's Board

On Jan. 19, the Portland Community College Board of Directors named Kali Thorne-Ladd as chair of the board from her previous position as vice chair. She replaces former chair Gene Pitts (Zone 6) who resigned last month. Appointed in 2012 and elected in 2013, Thorne-Ladd represents Zone 2, which includes North Portland and portions of Columbia County. She is the first African American woman to serve as PCC's board chair, and at 39 years old, she is also the youngest. Thorne-Ladd is co-founder of KairosPDX, a non-profit organization focused on access to quality early learning opportunities for historically underserved children. She also worked for the City of Portland Mayor's Office as the education strategies director overseeing policy and direction for the mayor's key education initiatives. Her involvement with the college's Future Connect Scholarship Program is where Thorne-Ladd was first introduced to PCC, which prompted her to pursue a board position. She holds a master's in Education Policy and Management from Harvard University.

COAB cont'd from pg 1

brought on by the DOJ, which found police to be using excessive force, including stun guns, against people with mental illness.

As part of a 2014 Settlement Agreement, the COAB was tasked with monitoring and recommending solutions for police reform, thereby enhancing a solution to community outreach and to enhance public safety.

But on Jan. 31, the volunteers' terms of service came to a bitter end. While stakeholders, including the Portland Police Association and the Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform (AMAC), have expressed their commitment to continued community oversight, the City of Portland told *The Skanner* it has no intentions of re-appointing the board's members.

For some, the COAB's dissolution comes as no surprise, given its stormy past. But that hasn't stopped other remaining members from feeling ultimately dis-

appointed.

"I feel pretty sad about it all," said COAB chair Philip Wolfe. "I believe that the COAB could have changed some things. And I saw how much that change was needed, because it seemed like the

“The city did everything it possibly could to stop the COAB, and they blamed the COAB for its failure’

Portland community wasn't holding the police accountable."

The board lost around half of its original 15 members due to personal reasons, arguments and misunderstandings.

Progress was locked in stalemate. Wolfe said the COAB made more than 50 recommendations, but felt they were generally dismissed by the DOJ and the City.

"A few recommendations did pass, but afterwards it seemed like there was no change," said Wolfe. "The city did everything it

possibly could to stop the COAB, and they blamed the COAB for its failure. But I was trying to do my best to continue it."

Meanwhile, the AMAC — which Federal Judge Michael Simon granted "enhanced amicus," de-

finied as having a seat at the negotiation table — has continued to urge the City to re-appoint the members of the COAB whose past experience, it said, is an asset.

"We'd like to see that current board members remain because they bring a history as to what has been done, what has worked, and what has not worked well," said Dr. T. Allen Bethel, president of the Albina Ministerial Alliance.

Read the full story at TheSkanner.com

Gary-Smith cont'd from pg 1

sion with closed-door corporations.

"I'm an angry, gentle woman," laughed Gary-Smith. "So I've tried to use that, to have conversations in places that so seldom we're allowed, or anyone who is 'other-ized,' particularly in philanthropy, with all that money, power and historically embedded racism."

When she found out that the MRG Foundation was looking for a new executive director, she wondered if the organization would be ready for someone like her — an engaged and public figure and a woman of color.

But it was the foundation's unique take on philanthropy that ultimately won her over. Rather than leave the decision making to an often disconnected wealthy few, MRG embraces a "by the community, for the community" approach. In truth, it relies on a committee of boots-on-the-ground activists that recommend groups for funding. And that culminates in hands-on, intentional relationships with potential

grantees.

"That's powerful, change-making philanthropy," she said of MRG's tactic.

In 2011, she would become the first African American woman to run a philanthropic foundation in Oregon.

“Rather than leave the decision making to an often disconnected wealthy few, MRG embraces a ‘by the community, for the community’ approach

For five and a half years, Gary-Smith helped take MRG from being a highly effective "little engine that could" to an outspoken foundation with an equal place at the table of big players.

From that advantage point, the foundation was able to discuss its strategies and community engagement, while inviting other funders to try its practice of long-term equity work.

"We had something that they didn't

have, in how we built credibility in communities of color," she said.

Gary-Smith helped ensure that MRG's funding was representative and reflective of the places with the greatest struggles for equity and opportunity; African American, Latino and Native American communities, among them.

Having the selective power to grant millions is a difficult position to give up, admits Gary-Smith. "But it's important to me that we make space and be willing to open doors to places that have been barred to us, intentionally and deliberately, to let more bright, capable and engaged people in."

In order to do that, said Gary-Smith, you need to be able to walk away.

"I think we have to inform (founda-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MRG FOUNDATION

MRG's new executive director, Roberta Phillip-Robbins, left, with Sharon Gary-Smith, right.

tions) with more people — men, women, people of different color, faith, race, perspectives — in order to make the best decisions about moving money to make change."

Read the full story at TheSkanner.com