

8 Portland spring art exhibits you'll want to catch (spring arts guide)

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By **A.L. Adams | For The Oregonian/OregonLive**

This spring, Portland galleries feature some intriguing conceptual group shows, some timeless and some avant-garde photography, a range of abstract visions, and a once-scattered masterpiece "reunited" at last. Here are eight critic's picks for the season.

Cooley Gallery, "Iconoclastic"

Reed College's Cooley Gallery hosts a group show on the theme of "iconoclasm," the destruction of sacred works of art. Noting that (among other historical instances) the Islamic State group is smashing relics in the Middle East, eight artists interpret and react to the practice through a variety of media.

Through April 28, Cooley Gallery, Reed College, 3203 S.E. Woodstock Blvd.; reed.edu/gallery or 503-517-7851

Portland Art Museum, "Reunited: Franciscuccio Ghissi's St. John Altarpiece"

Collectors and appreciators of antiquities know all too well how tough it can be to compile a complete set of anything. Then just imagine the effort it must have taken to pull together the St. John Altarpiece, a group of nine 14th-century Italian paintings that were made to fit together like a puzzle, but had long since been sawed apart and sold off separately. Though eight were remarkably retrieved, alas, the ninth could never be found. For display purposes, that panel's been replaced by a reproduction. The tableau, a so-called narrative series, depicts key events in the life and death of Christ. Iconic Byzantine figures -- pale, stoic and haloed in gold leaf -- play out the sacred scenes.

March 25-July 9, Portland Art Museum, 1219 S.W. Park Ave.; portlandartmuseum.org or 503-226-2811

Charles A. Hartman Fine Art, "Aleutian Dreams"

The photographs of Corey Arnold chronicle the Portland-based artist's other vocation as an Alaska fisherman in stunning detail, from the tools of his trade to the rugged eagles that sometimes approach his boat. Far from generic, his images appreciate the singular poetic moments fishermen enjoy amid a grueling trade.

April 5-May 27, Charles A. Hartman Fine Art, 134 N.W. Eighth Ave.; hartmanfineart.net or 503-287-3886

Upfor Gallery, "Escape from LA"

Christopher Russell leaves a ghostly impression on his photographic prints. His methods include dipping pictures in a compost bin until they acquire a soiled patina, running over photos with a car to create a craquelure pattern, and scratching elaborate white-lined patterns and illustrations into the surface of blurry photos with a razor. For this exhibition, Russell will also show images from "Landscape," a 1997 collection of images collected by hidden camera of people meeting in a San Francisco park for illicit rendezvous.

April 6-May 13, Upfor Gallery, 929 N.W. Flanders St.; upforgallery.com or 503-227-5111

Augen Gallery, "George Johanson: Recent Paintings"

Few Northwest artists have as much seniority in Portland as George Johanson. Graduating from Pacific Northwest College of Art and then working there as a professor from 1955 to 1980, Johanson has contributed work to many of our state's public collections, including those of Portland Art Museum, Portland Community College and Oregon Department of Transportation. He is represented by Augen Gallery, which will display his newest work. It's easy to see how Johanson's distinctive paintings interplay with his other specialty, printmaking, often simplifying forms into layers of shapes. He imbues his beach and crowd scenes with a cool blue melancholy and accentuates figures with high-contrast highlights to create his recognizable signature style.

May 4-27, Augen Gallery, 716 N.W. Davis St.; augengallery.com or 503-546-5056

Elizabeth Leach Gallery, "Still_Life" and "Cutouts and Collage"

Gregg Renfrow's and Amanda Wojick's new works stand in stark contrast to each other. Renfrow, a California-based painter, specializes in smoothly blended spectrums of color that give the impression of gently diffused light in "Still_Life." Wojick's abstractions in "Cutouts and Collage" are, on the other hand, playful, bright, geometric and spiky, utilizing (as her show's name suggests) layers of mixed materials and negative space.

May 4-27, Elizabeth Leach Gallery, 417 N.W. Ninth Ave.; elizabethleach.com or 503-224-0521

University of Oregon's Art Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition

Want to get a first look at the future of fine arts, or would you rather visit one of Portland's premier contemporary galleries? These two objectives can be met in one stop as Disjecta Contemporary Arts Center hosts an exhibition featuring works by graduating master of fine arts students at the University of Oregon. Since the college's Department of Art encourages students to work in many media, from paint to fibers to metal and more, there should be a wide variety of pieces on view, representing a survey of Northwest artists' emerging schools of thought.

May 12-June 4, Disjecta Contemporary Arts Center, 8371 N. Interstate Ave.; art.uoregon.edu or 541-346-3610

Adams + Ollman, "I Was a Wall, and My Breasts Were Like Fortress Towers + Her Eyes Are Like Doves Beside Streams of Water, An Exhibition in Two Parts"

As far back as biblical times, writers have compared the female form to scenic imagery. It's a poetic practice called "blason anatomique," French for "anatomical shield," and some scholars consider it the earliest form of what we now call objectification of women. A two-part exhibition featuring various artists will explore forms, both human and non-, that share enough similitude to invite such comparison, while challenging that very notion.

June 9-Aug. 12, Adams + Ollman, 209 S.W. Ninth Ave.; adamsandollman.com or 503-724-0684