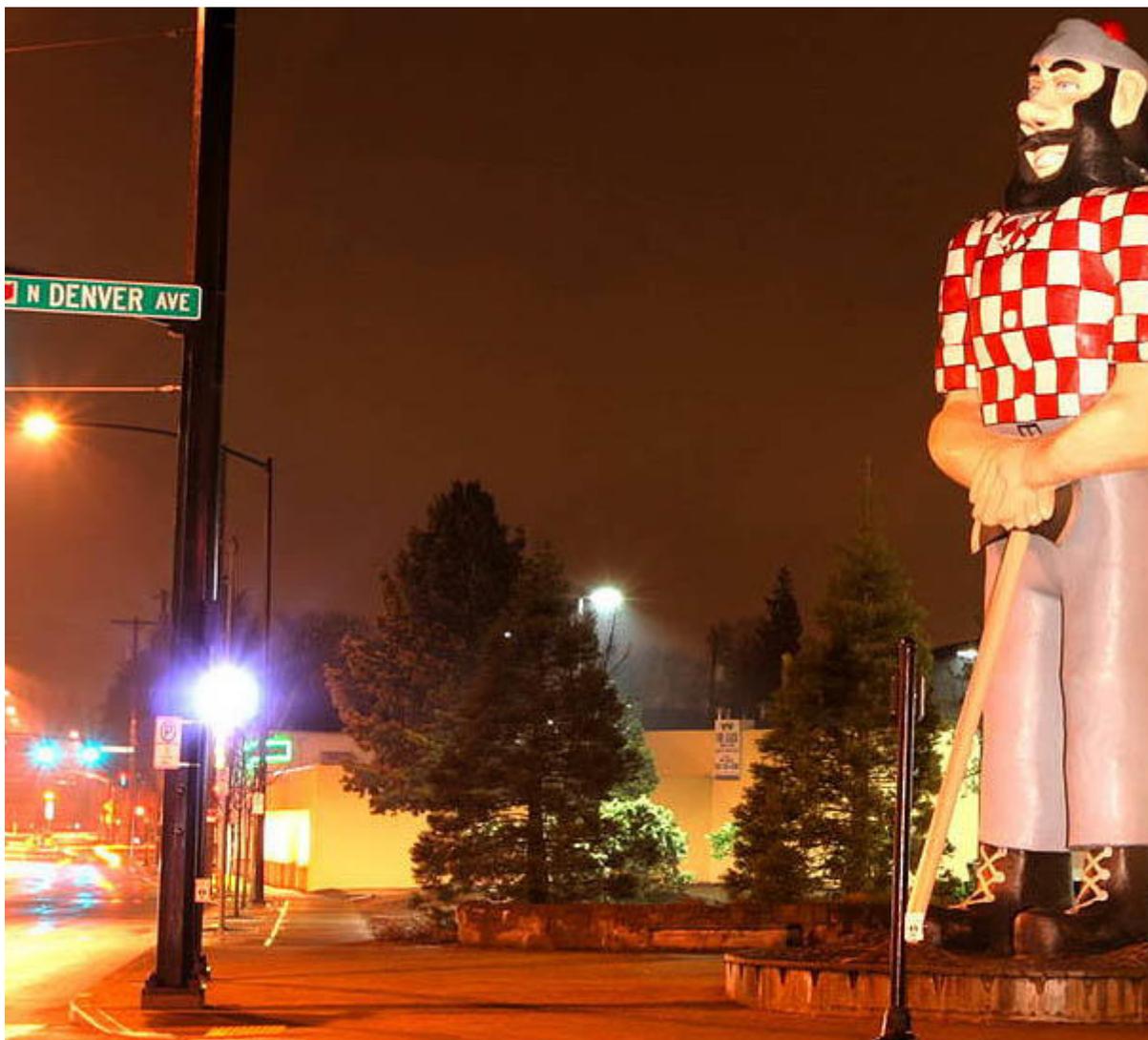


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By **Jeff Jahn**, www.portlandart.net

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Disjecta (behind Bunyan) reboots

The interesting news in Portland today is that Blake Shell is to be the new Director of Disjecta. It is a bit of a surprise as she hasn't been at the Art Gym for that long (though her programming felt less like her previously excellent work at the Archer Gallery,

perhaps over the shoulder oversight?). Regardless, congratulations are in order to Blake Shell... this could be a great fit.

Clearly the institution needed a shift and we covered Disjecta with a critical eye since its inception.

The choice of a locally based director is interesting since they seemed to be casting their nets afar and many connected locals (myself included) would not touch it with a 10 ft pole. Still, the choice makes sense. Portland is notoriously difficult and knowing the lay of the land is essential (that takes a decade). It also calls the state of college curators in Portland further into question since Cris Moss is leaving the U of O as well.

I do think Blake has many of the right skills to stabilize and at the same time improve the organization, while rehabilitating its name. I'm a little disappointed she's leaving the Art Gym as she just seemed to be getting her voice back there... but the real question will be how active their board is? One of the biggest problems Portland has had is weak institutional visioning, support and execution... despite having a great art scene with national and international artists. Frankly, I don't have much patience left for institutions that execute things at a c+ level all of the time and there is a lot of that here with occasionally amazing things like the Japanese Garden... which re-opens very soon.