

MICHAEL C. MCMILLEN - RED TRAILER MOTEL

April 10- June 13, 2004



Michael C. McMillen's *Red Trailer Motel* installation is a signature McMillen enterprise. Known both for his exquisite small-scale sculptures that often involve sound and visual effects as well as large-scale installation pieces, McMillen explores the complex realms of memory, history, and imagination. With a keen sense of atmospheric ambiance and perceptual play, McMillen creates environments that meld the illusionism of cinema with a personal, evocative vision.



As the son of a Hollywood set designer and builder, McMillen grew up surrounded by the craft and magic that defined his father's trade. Walking into a McMillen environment, you immediately appreciate the skills that he developed from early and continued exposure to the film industry. It is not his technical acumen that distinguishes McMillen's work, however, but rather the mysterious territory that his work explores. McMillen's enigmatic environments contain abundant visual cues — and are by no means minimal. Viewers are confronted with what often feels like a parallel universe — one that looks, feels, and perhaps even smells like ours, but is divergent in hidden and extraordinary ways.

Entering *Red Trailer Motel* the viewer is immediately aware of McMillen's subtle manipulations. The receding hallway feels strange; the distant doorway seemingly much farther away than it should be. Not unlike falling through Alice's looking glass, pushing through *Red Trailer Motel's* screen door one is transported. Crushed stone grinds underfoot, and the screech of the screen door jars your senses. The structure before you is gravitational drawing the viewer into an orbit both known and otherworldly. Things aren't what they appear in the *Red Trailer Motel*.

—Silas Cook

Opening Reception

8 p.m.
April 10th

Artist Talk

7 p.m.
April 10
Psychology Auditorium

ARTSRODEO

CALENDAR CONTINUED

troupe from Los Angeles who feature acts like the World's Angriest White Reggae Band, and "Dr. Stephen Hawking Stops the Robbery." Sounds most decidedly un-PC. Plus, they'll be followed by the fun jazz-funk act Critters Buggin'. **GOODFOOT**, 2845 SE Stark, Sat 10 pm, \$12

DANCE

ENTUSIASMO!

This show at the Newmark should give Do Jump! even more room to move than their old home at the Echo did. They perform thrilling aerial stunts and other circus acrobatics, with a thin thread of a narrative tying everything together. Tonight's show is billed as "a show about hope" and is based on Alan Weisman's book *Gaviotas*, about a struggling Columbian village that transformed itself into a full-fledged self-sufficient community. Weisman will be on hand after the Friday night show to sign copies of his book. **DO JUMP AT THE NEWMARK THEATRE**, 1111 SW Broadway, 231-1232, Fri-Sat 7:30 pm, Sun 3 pm, \$20-26

TEN TINY DANCES, PART 6

The prolific local dancer Mike Barber continues his popular performance series, this time in the cozy, incredibly hip confines of the Clark Lewis restaurant. Like always, every 15 minutes a new dance hits the stage, and this episode's lineup includes stars like Nat Newburger, Jesse Berdine, Christine Calfas, and Amber Martin. **CLARKLEWIS**, SE Water and Taylor, 331-0436, Sun 7:30 pm, \$12-15

READINGS

THURSDAY 4/15

A SPECTACLE OF CORRUPTION

David Liss' tackily titled novel is nonetheless a highbrow affair—a thriller set in 1722 that is at once rich in historical detail, and driven by strong characters and plot. **POWELL'S CITY OF BOOKS**, 1005 W Burnside St., 228-4651, 7:30 pm, free

FRIDAY 4/16

BEYOND CHOICE: REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

Alexander Sanger, grandson of reproductive rights pioneer Margaret Sanger, presents a pro-choice manifesto. Cosponsored by Planned Parenthood. **POWELL'S CITY OF BOOKS**, 1005 W Burnside St., 228-4651, 7:30 pm, free

SATURDAY 4/17

★ JOHN CONNOLLY

This quaint little mystery bookstore doesn't do a lot of events, so if you're a fan don't miss it. Tonight: Irishman John Connolly, who deviates from his Charlie Parker mysteries in his new book *Bad Men*, a supernatural thriller about a team of ruthless human killers who square off against an island full of ghouls. **MURDER BY THE BOOK**, 3210 SE Hawthorne, 232-9995, 6 pm

WEDNESDAY 4/21

★ CAROL MUSKE-DUKES

The wryly funny Muske-Dukes was recently nominated for the National Book Award in Poetry for her collection *Sparrow*. **POETRY DOWNTOWN AT WIEDEN & KENNEDY**, 224 NW 13th, 227-2583, 7:30 pm, \$18

VISUAL ARTS

PILGRIMS, STRANGERS, IMAGINARY FRIENDS

San Diego artist Samantha Magowen rocks Gallery 500 this month with Pilgrims, Strangers, Imaginary Friends, a mixed media exhibition that delves into the relationships between pattern and decoration, fiction, and memory. **GALLERY 500**, 420 SW Washington, Suite 500, 223-3951, Through April

REVERSE

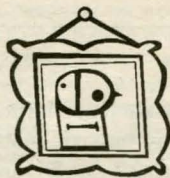
New Mexico photography today is usually associated with black and white metaphorical documentary that errs on the side of conservative. Reverse looks at five young NM photographers and their mentors, which seems pretty random, but what the hell? **PHILIP FELDMAN GALLERY & PROJECT ROOM**, AT PNCA, 1241 NW Johnson, 226-4391, Through May 1

LIVING ROUTES AND ROOTS

With a subtitle like *An Exhibition About Living on the Peninsula*, one conjures up images of remote artists living wildly outside the usual cosmopolitan trappings. When you discover that the peninsula is actually North Portland, you might be surprised for a second, but at least you don't have to change your pre-conceived notion. **INTERSTATE FIREHOUSE CULTURAL CENTER**, 5340 N. Interstate, 823-4322, Through April 29

★ MARIANA TRES AND BONNIE PAISLEY

Tres and Paisley bid adieu to graduate advisors and thesis committees with their MFA exhibitions *Society for Nebulous Knowledge* and *You Can Do It, Too*, respectively. Paisley, who has a BFA from RISD, has turned cake decorating into the culmination of her terminal degree, and Tres is best known locally for her masterful exhibition of photographs, historical documents, and deceit at the Portland Building last year. **LITTMAN GALLERY AT PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY**, Smith Center, 1825 SW Broadway, 725-5656, Through April 29



VISUAL ARTS

There are plenty of art-making strategies that artists can use to elicit a surefire "oooh-aaah" response and to draw viewers in for a closer look. Two basic, can't-miss approaches include Nostalgia Fetish

and an earnest simulation of the real. Photo-realist painting will garner a second look every time, and in installations, a detailed mimesis of reality is usually a good start. The problem is that many artists are content to leave it at that, and their artwork produces no secondary or lingering effect. Veteran Los Angeles installation artist Michael McMillen is fully aware of all these principles, and employs them to jaw-dropping effect. With his soaring installation *Red Trailer Motel* at Reed's Cooley Gallery, McMillen uses both aforementioned approaches to grab his audience, and then subverts both traditions to throw viewers for a joyous loop.

Upon entering the darkened Cooley Gallery, viewers must pass through a creaky screen door, and once inside, the sound of slate gravel underfoot mixes with the songs of chirping crickets to create a late night, country ambience. In a corner of the gallery, McMillen has built an amazingly detailed reconstruction of an abandoned Wyoming motel. Employing ghost-town archetypes and mythologies, the sheet metal shanty is littered with rusted gas cans, oil drums, tumbleweeds, hubcaps, hand



Red Trailer Motel

Cooley Gallery at Reed College, 3203 SE Woodstock, through June 13

Painted signs, and sun bleached cow skulls. It's an impressive construction—with the added audio, it would make a dazzling set for a Sam Shepherd play.

Simulacrum is only the launching pad at *Red Trailer Motel*, though. The motel doors are outfitted with peepholes, and glimpses inside the motel provide wondrous and even startling views. In addition to being a renowned installation artist, McMillen is also a miniaturist, and has created tiny models of forgotten interiors that look expansive through the convex lens of the peephole. In a deserted pool hall, one spirited ball rolls circles around a disproportionate dead fly. Peering into a trashed out warehouse space, the last thing one expects to see is a goldfish swimming by. Staring into these miniature worlds, I became aware of my own existence in McMillen's larger-scale miniature world. I experienced one of those beautiful Calvino/Borges moments of surreality and wondered where the peephole was that was looking in on me. *Red Trailer Motel* is the best installation to hit Portland since *Beamsplitters* in 2002. CHAS BOWIE

PORTLAND ROCK COLLECTIVE PRESENTS Ash St. Saloon 225 SW Ash

THURSDAY APRIL 15TH, 9:30

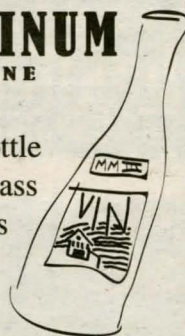
LOW FLYING OWLS
BURNING IN WATER
DRATS • WELSH RABBIT

NEXT THE FORTH • BINARY DOLLS
THURS: POLITE FICTION AT THE WHITE EAGLE

CARPE VINUM

SEIZE THE WINE

Wine By the Bottle
Wine By the Glass
Friday Flights



4831 SE Division
www.carpevinumpdx.com



Ever wonder why your grandfather always got home for dinner by six o'clock?

Lived-in Lover

11-7, Wed.-Sat.
11-6, Sundays

3619 SE
Division St.
503.230.8533

Furniture
Housewares
Clothing
Kitchenware

2138 E. BURNSIDE, PDX

ODDBALL Custom Tattooing STUDIOS!

www.oddballstudios.com



LANCE CORPRAL JEFF

HOLLYWOOD VINTAGE

(formerly Gilgamesh)

20TH CENTURY
FURNITURE & COLLECTABLES

BETTER SERVICE
LOWER PRICES

OPEN TUESDAY - SUNDAY NOON - 6PM 2800 NE SANDY BLVD.
503 • 233 • 1890 HOLLYWOODVINTAGE.COM
MENTION THIS AD FOR 10% OFF!

★ MEANS WE RECOMMEND IT. PRESS RELEASES NEED TO BE IN BY WEDNESDAY, TWO WEEKS BEFORE PUBLICATION. FAX TO: 294-0844; MAIL TO: ARTS CALENDAR, PORTLAND MERCURY, 605 NE 21st, STE 200, Portland, OR 97232 OR E-MAIL TO: events@portlandmercury.com.

michael c. mcmillen

RED TRAILER MOTEL

april 10–june 13, 2004

opening party: saturday, april 10, 8 p.m.
in the library lobby outside the Cooley
Gallery entrance

a walk-through with the artist begins
at 7 p.m. in the gallery

vanessa renwick

FREE SPEECH

april 10–june 13, 2004
Hauser Memorial Library

opening party: saturday, april 10, 8 p.m.
in the library lobby outside the Cooley Gallery
entrance

Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery
Always free and open to the public
Noon–5 p.m. Tuesday–Sunday, in Reed's library
3203 SE Woodstock Blvd.
www.reed.edu/gallery/

reedcollege