



Stephen O'Donnell

Born 1958, Everett, WA

Artist Statement

I was always known as the “artistic child”; from earliest youth I was always drawing, making pictures. My father was in the Air Force, so we moved all the time, and in all the many schools I attended being an artist was my entire identity. When it came time to choose to go to college or not, I rebelled against that artist label and moved to San Francisco and did everything *but* make art; I sang semi-professionally, designed costumes for theater, taught performance workshops, etc. But eventually, after having returned home to Portland, at the advanced age of thirty-seven I began my art career: I walked into a gallery, showed the owner my work, and two months later I had my first show.

As a painter, I’m entirely self-taught; my “art education” has come from pictures in history and art books. In many fairly obvious ways, I’m not really a “modern artist”; I paint the world of old paintings. And I’m not at all an artist who paints the world around me; the goal isn’t to paint a tree that looks like a tree, but one that looks like a *painting* of a tree.

I frequently employ the self-portrait as the basis for my work. I’ve always felt that, by beginning with myself as the model, I am able to avoid the biggest limitation of the portrait as a form: that it is “about” someone specific. In my paintings, because the portrait is only of the artist, the viewer, while including whatever they might perceive of the artist, still has more opportunity to find their own narrative in whatever visual scenario I might present.

A play of gender is probably the most recognizable aspect of my work; I've often been referred to as the "man in a dress" artist. I'm always asked why - politically or psychologically - I choose to portray myself this way. The simplest way to explain it is that I identify as non-binary. So, painting myself the way I do, as a man in women's clothes - I never really try to make the illusion that I'm female - is a way of expressing this important part of my identity, the closest representation of a whole self. And then, women's clothes are just a whole lot more interesting visually, and a lot more fun to paint!

Since 2006, I've been married to writer and graphic designer Gigi Little. We live in Portland with our dog, Nicholas.
- Stephen O'Donnell

Solo Exhibitions

- 2019 *Objectified*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2018 *Working Backwards*, PUB Gallery of Art, Peninsula College, Port Angeles, WA
- 2017 *Beastly*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2015 *95 / 15*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2014 *Told and Untold Stories*, Winston Wächter Fine Art, Seattle, WA
- 2012 *La Vue à travers*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
Des jeux sérieux de beauté, Winston Wächter Fine Art, Seattle, WA
- 2009 *Dix-Huit*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2005 *Galerie des modes and Still*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2003 *Mythos*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2002 *La Lumière Cachée*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2000 *New Paintings*, Quartersaw Gallery, Portland, OR
- 1998 Joseph Chowning Gallery, San Francisco, CA
New Paintings and Drawings, Quartersaw Gallery, Portland, OR
- 1997 *Recent Paintings*, Quartersaw Gallery, Portland, OR
- 1996 Quartersaw Gallery, Portland, OR
- 1995 *New Drawings*, Quartersaw Gallery, Portland, OR

Select Group Exhibitions

- 2019 *Peace on Earth*, Lancaster Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, CA
- 2018 *Winter Group Exhibition*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2015 *Art In True Fashion*, Winston Wächter Fine Art and Abmeyer+Wood, Seattle, WA
- 2014 *2014 Palm Springs Art Fair*, (with Winston Wächter Fine Art), Palm Springs, CA
Fire Department, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2013 *Best Dressed / Undressed*, Winston Wächter Fine Art, Seattle, WA
Summer Group Exhibition of Work by Gallery Artists, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2012 *Aqua Art Miami* (with Froelick Gallery), Miami, FL
Art Platform - Los Angeles, (with Winston Wächter Fine Art), Santa Monica, CA
Undressing Room, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2011 *Aqua Art Miami* (with Froelick Gallery), Miami, FL
Exquisite Allegory, Winston Wächter Fine Art, Seattle, WA
- 2010 *The Science of Gender and Sex, 29th Annual Gender Studies Symposium*, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, OR
Referencing the Past, SAM Gallery, Seattle, WA

- 2009 *34th Annual NW Natural Street of Dreams*, Portland, OR
- 2007 *First Exhibit*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2006 *Beastuary*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2005 *drawing(s) 40+ artists/200 works: A 25th anniversary exhibition*, Terry Hopkins, curator, Marylhurst University, Marylhurst, OR
Winter Group Show, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2004 *The Clown Show*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2003 *Winter Group Show*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
Realligories / Core Sample, Belmont Factory, curator, Andrea Borsuk, Portland, OR
Introductions, SAM Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2002 *32nd Willamette Valley Juried Exhibition*, Corvallis Art Center, Corvallis, OR, Juror: Roger Hull
Showcase 2002, Beaverton Arts Commission, Beaverton, OR, Juror: Mark Wooley (award)
- 2001 *East Meets West*, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
Winter Group Exhibit, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2000 *PDXs to Quartersaw: Celebrating Sixteen Years*, Quartersaw Gallery, Portland, OR
Open Walls, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Portland, OR
- 1999 *Oregon Biennial*, Portland Art Museum, OR, Curator: Katheryn Kanjo (catalogue)
Pacific Rim: Oregon, Terrain, San Francisco, CA
Fin de Siècle, Terrain, San Francisco, CA
Hydrangea House, Newport, RI
- 1998 Joseph Chowning Gallery, San Francisco
When Voices Become Pictures: Images from Western USA, Terrain, San Francisco, CA
Fairies and Furies, LaLuna, Portland OR
Basil Hallward Gallery – Powell’s City of Books, Portland, OR
- 1997 *The Boy Mechanic*, Quartersaw Gallery, Portland OR, Curator: Paul Arensmeyer
The Garden Show, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Portland, OR, Curator: Victoria Beal
Joseph Chowning Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Quartersaw Gallery, Portland, OR
- 1996 Community Arts Foundation, Vallejo, CA
Basil Hallward Gallery – Powell’s City of Books, Portland OR (Fall)
Saks Fifth Avenue, Portland, OR
Basil Hallward Gallery – Powell’s City of Books, Portland OR (May)

Publication

- 2018 *The Untold Gaze*, a large-format collection of paintings paired with short fiction inspired by O’Donnell’s work.

Speaking Engagements

- 2018 *Working Backwards: finding my way as a figurative/narrative artist in the world of contemporary art*, PUB Gallery of Art, Peninsula College, Port Angeles, WA
- 2011 *The Figure in Contemporary Art Symposium*, Tacoma Art Museum, 3 April, 2011

Awards

- 2011 Grand Prize Winner – “The Power of Self” Competition, Artists Wanted, New York, NY

- 2002 Best of Show – Showcase 2002, Beaverton Arts Commission, Beaverton, OR, Juror: Terri Hopkins
 1997 Winning Pacific Coast Competitor – New American Paintings, Open Studios Press, Wellesley, MA, Juror: Clare Bell, Guggenheim Museum – Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art, New York, NY

Collections

Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR - two works
 Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York, NY
 Portland Community College, Portable Works Collection, Portland, OR
 Rufus Wainwright, New York, NY
 Tom Spanbauer, Portland, OR
 Cheryl Strayed, Portland, OR
 Lidia Yuknavitch, Portland, OR

Select Periodicals and Articles

- 2015 “First Thursday Art Walk Preview: April 2015”, T. s. Flock, Vanguard Seattle, Seattle, WA, 2 April, 2015
 2014 Featured artist and interview, Menacing Hedge, a literary journal, Fall 2014
 “Last Chances: Three Gallery Shows Worth Running To, August 2014”, T. s. Flock, Vanguard Seattle, Seattle, WA, 27 August, 2014
 “Portland painter Stephen O’Donnell tries on new drag”, Michael Upchurch, Seattle Times, Seattle, WA, 27 July, 2014
 2013 “Twisted takes on summer wear at Winston Wächter”, Michael Upchurch, Seattle Times, Seattle, WA, 26 July, 2013
 2012 “Painter Stephen O’Donnell: in women’s dress, but not a drag”, Michael Upchurch, Seattle Times, Seattle, WA, 8 June, 2012
 2011 “Seven Questions” series interview, Laura Stanfill, Laura Stanfill, 22 August, 2011
 “A Q&A With the ‘Power of Self’ Prize Winner Stephen O’Donnell, the ‘Perverted Norman Rockwell’ of Portland”, Artinfo.com, 10 June, 2011
 “Stephen O’Donnell” (featured artist), Artisaday.com, 30 May, 2011
 “In ‘Exquisite Allegory’ at Winston Wächter, every picture tells at least one story,” Michael Upchurch, Seattle Times, Seattle, WA, 3 February, 2011
 2008 Portrait of Portland Magazine, Portland, OR, Spring (image)
 2007 Just Out, Portland, OR, 19 January, p26 (image)
 2006 “Stephen O’Donnell,” Judy Campanaro, Outlands, pp 19, March 2006
 2005 “A Quarter Century of Quality,” Victoria Blake, The Oregonian, 2 December, 2005, A&E
 “2 artists’ works on paper make good pairing,” Brian Libby, The Oregonian, 1 June, 2006, A&E
 2004 “Pocket-size catalog captures grand ideas,” Joseph Gallivan, Portland Tribune, Portland, OR 6 August 2004
 2003 “Reallegories at Belmont Factory,” Pat Boas, Art Week, December 2003 – January 2004, Vol 34 Issue 10, Palo Alto, CA
 “Self Portrait in Red Lipstick,” The Oregonian, Portland OR, 12 December 2003, pp 26, A&E
 “Stephen O’Donnell at Froelick,” Grant Menzies, Willamette Week, Portland, OR, 11 December 2003, pp59
 “ArtsWeek’s Radar,” Rob Kelley, The Oregonian, Portland, OR 30 November 2003, pp D9, A&E
 “Show of Note,” D.K. Row, The Oregonian, Portland, OR, 19 December 2003, pp 26, A&E
 “Arts Rodeo,” Portland Mercury, Portland, OR, 4 December 2003, pp 31
 2002 “32nd Willamette Valley Juried Exhibition,” Hester Coucke, Artspirit, Corvallis Arts Center—Linn-Benton Arts Council, Corvallis, OR, October, p 1

- 2001 "World Report: Portland—Crossing Boundaries: East West Symposium in Print Art," Hidekki Kimura, Hanga Geijutsu, Tokyo, Japan, #114, Winter, pp 132-133
 "Art Saves Lives! (Sort Of): On PICA's Visual Arts Flank," Steffen Silvas, Willamette Week, Portland, OR, 26 December, p 26
 "The Buzz That Was: October 13," The Oregonian, Portland, OR, 28 December, A&E, pp 6-10
 "The Frame Game: "East Meets West" at Froelick Gallery," Stan Hall, The Oregonian, Portland, OR, 14 October, p F10
 "Print City: Froelick Gallery," Bob Hicks, The Oregonian, Portland, OR, USA, 9 October, p E1
- 2000 "New Master," Oriana Green, Just Out, Portland, Oregon, 7 April, p 43
 "PICA: Open Walls," Michaela Lowthian, Willamette Week, Portland, OR, 17 May, p 79
 "The End of Victoria's Era," D.K. Row, The Oregonian, Portland, 4 June, pp F1-F8
 "Decision Marks the End of an Era," D.K. Row, The Oregonian, Portland, 15 May, pp B1-B3
- 1999 "A Good Look Around," Daniel DuFord, Willamette Week, Portland, OR, 11 August, p 75
 "Fin de Siècle' at Terrain," Mark Van Proyen, Artweek, San Jose, CA, March, p 15
 "Art on the Edge," Ron Cowan, Statesman Journal, Salem, OR, 1 August, pp 1D, 5D
 "Oregon Biennial Showcases New Art," Statesman Journal, Salem, OR, 29 July
 "The Spirit of '99," Karen Steen & Caryn Brooks, Willamette Week, Portland, OR, 28 June, pp 41-4
 "1999 Oregon Biennial Artists Chosen," Kate Bonansinga, Willamette Week, Portland, p 66
 "Gallery Watch," David Bonetti, San Francisco Examiner, San Francisco, CA, 5 February, p C16
 "Hooray for Biennial! Let's Change it for 2001," Randy Gragg, The Oregonian, Portland, 8 August
 "In the Spotlight," Randy Gragg, The Oregonian, Portland, OR, 4 August
 "Oregon Biennial: Two Views," Sue Taylor & Randy Gragg, The Oregonian, Portland, OR, 1 August, pp 1-4
 "Kathryn Kanjo: On Oregon Art and Collecting," Randy Gragg, The Oregonian, Portland, OR, 30 July, p 6
 "Art Old and New," Tricia Jones, The Columbian, Vancouver, WA, 29 July, pp F14, F21
 "Another View of the New," D.K. Row, The Oregonian, Portland, OR, 30 July, p 70
 "Curator Nips Biennial List: Only 25 of 700 Artists Chosen," Randy Gragg, The Oregonian, Portland, OR, 20 June, E3
 "In Second Year, Biennial Curator Urges New Forms," Randy Gragg, The Oregonian, Portland, OR, 14 February, p F12
- 1998 San Francisco Monthly, San Francisco, CA, July (image)
- 1997 "New Adventures in Camp," D.K. Row, Willamette Week, Portland, OR, 2 July, pp 59-60
 "Manly Endeavors," Anne Martens, The Oregonian, Portland, OR, 11 July, A&E, p 68
- 1996 "Form Follows Function," Kevin Francis, Willamette Week, Portland, OR, 29 May, p 45
 "Fools for Tools," Randy Gragg, The Oregonian, Portland, OR, 10 May, pp 17-18

Catalogues

- 2008 *Cascade AIDS Project 18th Annual Benefit*, Portland, OR
- 2004 *Art on the Vine*, Oregon College of Art and Craft, Portland, OR
- 2003 *Art on the Vine*, Vintage 2003, Oregon College of Art and Craft, Portland, OR
Cascade AIDS Project 13th Annual Benefit, Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, OR
- 2002 *Art on the Vine*, Oregon College of Art and Craft, Portland, OR
- 1999 *Oregon Biennial*, Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR, Essay: Kathryn Kanjo, p 28
- 1997 *New American Paintings*, Publisher: Open Studios Press, Wellesley, MA, number 13, December, pp 76-77, 123, Essay: Clare Bell

Performances

- 2009 *Les Prévert in Concert*, 15 June, North Star Ballroom, Portland, OR

- 2007 *Les Prévert in Concert*, 12 March, North Star Ballroom, Portland, OR
- 2003 *Un Petit Concert*, benefit for Basic Rights Oregon, 3 December, Froelick Gallery, Portland, OR