

Interview

46/AGENDA



Go DEEP

STINGRAY ACCESSORIES, FROM YSL KICKS TO BALENCIAGA BAGS, WILL GET UNDER YOUR SKIN



PORTLANDIA is a place on earth

When it comes to size lookbooks, artists are a special breed of the St. Vincent scene: Brewnstien, W&W Flag, and the name of the singer. They are together up with it.

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BROWNSTEIN. Critic of Conformity does not have a booking agent! (3-4-11)
BROWNSTEIN. Scary! I'll write to the HQ. box on the back of your firsties.



United Nations

Amidst a global art world obsessed with young, white talent, New York-based curator Eungie Joo has in her triennial at the New Museum put together a show of some 34 artists and collectives, from a group so diverse that the number of national origins is still unknown. "The Ungovernables," a survey of artists who grew up in the '70s and '80s in the aftermath of the European empire, takes its title from a strategy of civil disobedience practiced by the African National Congress in South Africa in the '80s. "Ultimately, the younger generation isn't interested in correcting the truth, because no one accepts a single idea about truth," says Joo. That sentiment is embodied in the work (shown above) of Minam Apang, who who uses elegant, aggressive ink washes to depict characters invented from myths, creating rootless beings that speak in newfangled ways. —ALEX GARTENFELD

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PORTLANDIA is a place on earth

When it comes to lampooning the sacred tenets of left-coast hipster culture—recycling zealots, feminist booksellers, sensitive anarchists—musician Carrie Brownstein and Saturday Night Live's Fred Armisen are a one-stop shop. The pair's sketch-comedy show, *Portlandia*, just returned to IFC for a second season of earnest if off-kilter humor, and features a lineup of guests including Eddie Vedder, St. Vincent, and Johnny Marr. That Brownstein and Armisen are so musically fixated makes sense: Brownstein, formerly of Sleater-Kinney, is the guitarist and singer for the alt-rock supergroup Wild Flag, while Armisen, who began his career as a drummer, just released a 7-inch single under the name Crisis of Conformity, a hardcore band he developed as a joke for SNL. Jonathan Durbin caught up with them to discuss the new season and why honesty can be funny.



JONATHAN DURBIN: Does the second season of *Portlandia* feel more focused?

CARRIE BROWNSTEIN: In every way. I don't care if anyone even uses the word *funny*. We knew what the show was this season. There are more narratives and character arcs. So yeah, we just want it to be described as "focused." And nothing else.

FRED ARMISEN: My favorite Beatles albums are the more focused ones.

DURBIN: In the first two episodes alone, you skewer trends like pickling, mixology, and ultra-sensitivity to allergies. Where do you get your ideas?

ARMISEN: We don't think of it as *skewering*. It's things that are in front of us. We'll say, "Hey, every restaurant we go to, it seems like there's this movement where everything is pickled."

BROWNSTEIN: It's a world we really inhabit. So if we're poking fun at anything, we're poking fun at ourselves. Fred and I went out to dinner recently, and there was a salad we wanted to share, but we couldn't because we were each allergic to a different ingredient. We're very aware of how special an allergy makes you.

DURBIN: A number of musicians are guest stars this season. Are musicians funny?

ARMISEN: I think they're performers, or, for lack of better words, show-offs. They do things outwardly, which lends itself to being funny. Also, it might be hard to believe, but we don't try to be funny on *Portlandia*. It's not the kind of show where they have to clown around too much.

BROWNSTEIN: In some ways, the more earnest we are, the funnier it is. Music was the thing that defined our adolescence. It was the lens through which we viewed the world for so long, and it still informs a lot of our ideology. We like putting musicians in roles that are unexpected because that contrast creates humor in itself—to have them doing something besides playing guitar or singing.

DURBIN: Who was the funniest?

ARMISEN: Johnny Marr. Aside from The Smiths and all his music work, he could have had a career as a humorist.

BROWNSTEIN: He could easily be a character actor. He's very quick and very witty. He was the most adept improviser—very confident and combative.

DURBIN: Speaking of combative, will we ever see a Crisis of Conformity–Wild Flag show?

BROWNSTEIN: We should do a whole tour. We should both set up onstage and play songs back and forth so that there's never a break, just an unrelenting musical onslaught. Then at the end, we should play together.

ARMISEN: Yeah, and definitely have a mosh pit—like four mosh pits going at the same time.

BROWNSTEIN: We'll call our booking agents now.

ARMISEN: Crisis of Conformity does not have a booking agent! D-I-Y!

BROWNSTEIN: Sorry! I'll write to the P.O. box on the back of your fanzine.



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JON DENNIS; DANIELLE MATHIAS/IFC; SCOTT GREEN/IFC; SCOTT GREEN/IFC; MINAM APANG'S HE WORE THEM LIKE TAIL ISSUANS ALL OVER HIS BODY (DETAIL), 2008. INK, ACRYLIC, AND TEA ON ARCHIVAL PAPER, 64.5" x 72.5"; MINAM APANG, CHATTERJEE AND LAL, MUMBAI.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SEBASTIAN NEEB AND ELISA STROZYK; SILVIA VENTURINI FENDI; NEEB AND STROZYK IN FENDI CRAFT ALCHEMY EXHIBITION SPACE; STROZYK AND NEEB ON SITE AT DESIGN MIAMI. PHOTOS: FENDI.