

Oregon Cartoon Institute pop up storefront in Old Town Chinatown

A. Category: Creative Entrepreneurship

Portland is an animation and cartooning capital. Portland produced Matt Groening, Will Vinton, Bill Plympton, Mel Blanc, Jim Blashfield, Rose Bond, Chel White, Joan Gratz, Joanna Priestly, John Callahan, and Joe Sacco. Oregon Cartoon Institute proposes a four week pop up storefront which would offer Oregon animation and cartooning themed merchandise in a retail environment enhanced with fun interactive displays and live events, such as screenings, book signings and guest appearances. Our goal is to make it easier for the public, including international tourists, to embrace, celebrate and explore this aspect of Oregon identity.

During the requested period of support, Sept. 2014 to Sept. 2015, Oregon Cartoon Institute would create and operate a four week pop up storefront in Old Town Chinatown business district, opening June 28, 2015 and closing July 24, 2015.

With Portland Business Alliance, we would locate a suitable storefront. With Dao Architecture, assess and execute the work needed to transform it into a retail space, featuring a floor to ceiling wall of books & DVDs by and/or about Oregon animation and cartooning artists. Curate a representative selection of books, DVDs, themed merchandise which includes works by and/or about Oregon's historic artists (Homer Davenport, Mel Blanc, Basil Wolverton, Carl Barks, etc) and our current artists (Matt Groening, Brad Bird, Bill Plympton, Will Vinton, Joe Sacco, etc). With Damon Eckhoff of Episode Creative, create a multi touch interactive table display featuring a map of Portland which matches specific city locations with historic events and figures. With Carye Bye of Red Bat Press, create a Portland animation and cartooning map & guidebook. Schedule a calendar of live events and guest speakers. Hire and train docents/salespeople. Design specialized tours of downtown Portland and of Northwest Portland. Map out social media campaign.

The proposed storefront will be located within the Old Town Chinatown Historical District, a district which has been underserved over the past several decades and one that is re-emerging as a creative hub, through a revitalization project spearheaded by the Portland Development Commission. PDC, in partnership with other organizations including Portland Business Alliance and Downtown Clean & Safe work to activate vacant storefronts and underutilized parcels through storefront art and pop up stores program.

B. Goals and impact

Our goal is to acquaint the public with Oregon's animation and cartooning legacy and to connect that legacy to our current regional strength. The Old Town Chinatown District is located in Northwest Portland, the quadrant of the city where Rose Bond teaches animation at PNCA, Marilyn Zornado teaches animation at Art Institute, Jason Leivian runs Floating World Comics, and Oregon Storyboard just opened their new office. This is the quadrant where Will Vinton created the California Raisins and The PJs, where Jim Blashfield made his award winning animated music videos, where John Callahan zipped around in his wheelchair collecting inspiration for his cartoons, and where Matt Groening grew up. Portlanders do not realize the depth of Portland's contribution to American popular culture! The pop up storefront will use current animation and cartooning artists, coming in to do book signings and introduce special screenings, as guides and interpreters of of this unique history.

2014 Creative Placemaking/Our Town. Oregon Cartoon Institute, fiscally sponsored by Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission.

C. Outcome(s) and Measurements

The Oregon Cartoon Institute storefront would assist the transformation of Old Town Chinatown into an arts/cultural district and creative industry hub/district/center. By drawing on a number of partners, public and private (government agencies, planning agencies, other nearby businesses, schools, arts nonprofits, media organizations, and foundations) it generates social, civic and cultural cohesion. In the free guest appearances open to the public, the storefront provides a way for animation and cartooning artists to share their professional lives with the public, raising the visibility of a growing job sector in Portland. We would invite artists to speak who do animation and cartooning as an independent DIY pursuit, as well as those who have a more corporate career in video game design, CGI work and digital media. We would keep records of customer visits, and sales of guidebooks, and attendance at live events. We would keep track of the collaborative relationships developed with our public and private partners. Both indices would serve as measurements of increased liveability.

D. Budget

Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission, acting as fiscal sponsor for Oregon Cartoon Institute, requests a Creative Placemaking/Our Town grant of \$25,000, matching it with \$40,000 to be raised before the project start date on Sept. 2015.

Portland Business Alliance will provide an available storefront for \$1 rent
Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission (fiscal sponsor) \$6,500
Oregon Cartoon Institute (admin) \$35,000
Dao Architecture (rehab storefront) \$6,500
Red Bat Press (guidebooks, maps) \$4,000
Episode Creative (interactive display) \$7,000
Inventory (books, DVDs, themed merchandise) \$6,000

Oregon Cartoon Institute would approach city government agencies and private foundations for the necessary matching funds, as well as solicit donations and in kind contributions from partner organizations and private individuals.

E. Schedule

Prior to the grant period: identify community supports, collect advisory board, create four week pop up business plan, raise matching funds.

Grant period begins:

Sept 2014 Locate storefront, begin rehab.
Oct 2014 Begin design of the interactive multi touch display, begin design of guidebooks, maps
Nov 2014 Begin compiling list of books and DVDs for inventory
Dec 2014 Contact local artists about participating
Jan 2015 Finish rehab. Begin social media campaign
Feb Create schedule of live events
Mar Order inventory
Apr Install interactive display and troubleshoot, print out guidebooks & maps
May 2015 Hire & train sales staff/docents
June Stock inventory, Open on June 28
July Close on July 24
August 2015 Perform project evaluations, write grant reports

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F. Partners, key organizations, individuals

City Of Portland, primary partner, governmental agency
Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission, primary partner, cultural non profit. Fiscal sponsor.
Oregon Cartoon Institute, Anne Richardson, committed. Administrator.
Portland Business Alliance, Lisa Frisch, committed. Provides available storefront.
Dao Architecture, committed. Storefront design.
Red Bat Press, committed. Guidebooks & maps design.
Episode Creative, committed. Interactive display design.

Oregon Historical Society, proposed (established relationship); Northwest Animation Festival, proposed (established relationship); Laika, proposed; Bent Image, proposed; SuperGenius, proposed; Dark Horse, proposed; Oregon Storyboard, proposed; Oregon Arts Commission, proposed; RACC, proposed; Governor's Office of Film & Television, proposed (established relationship); Oregon Media Producers Association, proposed (established relationship); Will Vinton, proposed (established relationship); Bill Plympton, proposed (established relationship); Joanna Priestley, proposed (established relationship); Carl Abbott, proposed (established relationship); Statewide: Silverton Historical Society, Gus Frederick, committed; Southern Oregon Historical Society, Ben Truwe, committed

G. The target community

The pop up storefront will serve an all ages population. A 2011 study by Longwoods International discovered Portland tourists rank shopping as their #1 recreational activity. They prize shopping above going to the beach, fine dining, nightclubs, state parks, and museums. Oregon Cartoon Institute can help meet that need. Our storefront would provide a fun, welcoming shopping experience in Portland's most historic neighborhood. The same study found Oregon tourists choose "visiting historic places" over wine tourism, culinary tourism and eco tourism. Oregon Cartoon Institute can help provide the information of historic places to visit. Bugs Bunny? Goofy? Eeyore? Sleeping Beauty? Donald Duck? Oregon artists contributed to all of the creation of all of these. The Simpsons? The California Raisins? The Incredibles? All Oregon artists. We can be helpful to fans pursuing pilgrimages to sites connected to these iconic pop culture experiences. Plus we can introduce them to the current crop of Oregon animators and cartoonists who are keeping up the legacy of excellence.

H. Plans for promoting and publicizing

We will use social media to update the public about the live events which will bring people into the storefront. We would work with partner organizations to cross promote.

I. Plans for documenting and evaluating the project

We will keep track of the number of visitors to the storefront, the amount of sales of themed merchandise, the number of people who attend live free events and the number of guidebooks and tour tickets we sell. It is our hope that the lessons learned creating this pop up can be applied to a second pop up the following year, with an eye to a future where Oregon Cartoon Institute's storefront become self sustaining, and can cease to be a pop up.

J. Accessibility

The project be accessible to individuals with disabilities in compliance with federal law and regulations.