

Portland Pop in Three Centuries

Anne Richardson: Director of Oregon Cartoon Institute

Carl Abbott: Historian and Urbanist

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

6:00pm 7:00pm

Portland is a pop machine. The first American political cartoonist to achieve superstar status, **Homer Davenport**, made his professional debut in Portland. **Mel Blanc**, the most revered voice artist in the world, made his debut in Portland. Is this a simple coincidence?

Anne Richardson, director of Oregon Cartoon Institute, doesn't think so. Instead, she argues, proficient use of mass media is a regional strength. Portland's first film studio opened in 1910. By 1987, three independent Portland filmmakers, **Matt Groening**, **Jim Blashfield** and **Will Vinton**, had national careers - on Fox, MTV, and primetime network television respectively. Their work was everywhere. Comics mogul **Mike Richardson** was quietly building a Hollywood career from Milwaukie, while **Phil Knight** and **Dan Wieden** played celebrity conscious pop culture like a violin, once again on television. What do these pop savvy careers tell us about Portland? Using Carl Abbott's book **Portland In Three Centuries** as a guide, Anne Richardson and Carl Abbott will weave the chain of pop magnificence back into the historical narrative of the Rose City, making it possible to see **Carrie Brownstein's** leap to television in Portlandia is a continuation of a long, august history.

Anne Richardson explores the intersection of Oregon history and Oregon film history as the director of Oregon Cartoon Institute and Oregon Movies, A to Z. Her paper "Who Makes Pop Culture? : How Robert Johnston's theory of Progressive Era Portland's radical middle class explains and predicts Portlandia" was presented at the Western Lands, Western Voices Conference at the American West Center in Salt Lake City, Sept. 21, 2014. Her next project is a one day symposium about the group of writers and artists who came out of Portland's underground press, 1968-1978. UNDERGROUND USA is a partnership with the University of Oregon's Comics Studies and PSU's Cartoon Studies. It will take place October 2016 in the White Stag Building.

*Carl Abbott has written about the history of cities from Washington to Chicago to Los Angeles, but he's published the most about Portland (four books, plus lots of commentary and op-eds). His most recent history of Portland, **Portland In Three Centuries**, came out in 2011. For the past decade, in addition to being a historian and urban studies specialist, he has been exploring science fiction scholarship. After finishing one book on frontier narratives in U. S. science fiction, he's now engaged in a mirror image project about the different types of city that keep appearing in speculative fiction -- deserted cities, feral suburbs, city as machine, city as bazaar. His next book, **Imagining Urban Futures: Cities in Science Fiction and What We Might Learn From Them**, comes out this fall.*

