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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

PORTLAND INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART OPENS NEW SPACE APRIL 13, 2012

When: April 13, 6–10pm
Where: PICA, 415 SW 10th Ave, Suite 300, Portland, OR 97205

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Press Photos: **Office** - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/pica/sets/72157628932161773/>
Glen Fogel - http://www.pica.org/himages/PRESS/2012/01_GlenFogel/

On April 13, the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA) will officially welcome the public into its new facility, launching a full spring of artist residencies and projects with an exhibition by Glen Fogel. Located on the third floor of an iconic midcentury building at 415 SW 10th, PICA's new home features 5,500 square feet of flexible space for staff offices, events, artist projects, and the Resource Room collection. An additional 4,500 square foot outdoor deck will open to the public this summer. The space opening marks the culmination of a long strategic plan and ushers in new opportunities to directly engage with the city and to support contemporary artists and their ideas.

PICA

VISION FOR THE SPACE

PICA has historically operated from a central office with a small archive library and ventured out into neighborhoods to present exhibitions, performances, and projects in temporary venues, most notably during the TBA Festival. Though the organization remains committed to this practice of itinerant programming, a strategic plan was put in place to find an identifiable and accessible home for the PICA. "I do think we have needed a consistent place where audiences and artists can connect with the ideas and artists, even when work is situated offsite," says Artistic Director Angela Mattox. "Our new space will provide an opportunity to invite audiences into a physical space, but also a conversation space."

Through discussions amongst the staff, board, and civic partners, PICA identified two main ambitions for a new office: expand upon the audience interactions of the annual Time-Based Art Festival, and provide a location for small-scale public programs throughout the year. These goals steered the selection of the new location and the physical plan of the space, which was designed by Steve Rainey and Eric Philips of SERA Architects. Philips, who also serves as Vice Chair of PICA's Board of Trustees and lead PICA's Space Search Committee, explains that, "Our goal in designing the space was to stay out of PICA's way, to not impose such a strong character that it would impact artistic decisions. Our solution was to enclose only a minimum number of offices and spaces and arrange those to shape the larger flexible spaces. Minimizing our interventions also allowed us to retain the raw industrial character of the existing building, which recalls the temporary warehouse spaces of our history."

This new office marks a reinvestment in the central “hub” office of PICA’s “hub-and-spoke” practice, but in no way represents a shift away from presenting projects in diverse locations around the city. This two-part model of home office paired with satellite programming distinguishes PICA as a flexible and responsive organization in contrast to a field of fixed-facility institutions tied to traditional galleries and theaters. Because of this unique approach to presenting, PICA attracted the attention and support of ArtPlace, a new initiative of 11 of America’s top foundations with the National Endowment for the Arts and seven federal agencies. “The building of this new “hub” will not only provide more access and opportunities for artists and our community, but will also help the national field understand the potential of this model to be an alternative to traditional art spaces,” explains Executive Victoria Frey. PICA’s offices will serve as a working laboratory for developing a new kind of art space that can adapt to ever-changing uses.

THE PROCESS

While PICA often refers to its projects as “barn-raising” that rely on the support of volunteers and donors, the construction of the new office has truly rallied a community behind the work. Over \$200,000 in labor and materials was donated through an unprecedented partnership between some of the region’s largest contractors. Howard S. Wright, Andersen Construction, Lease Crutcher Lewis, and Walsh Construction provided lead work and oversight as contractors and each brought on a team of subcontractors including Electrical Construction Co., Solus Lighting, PAE Consulting Engineers, American Heating, Cherry City Electric, Cochran Telecommunications, Dynalectric, Culver Glass, Harlen’s Drywall, Interior Tech, and KPFF Consulting Engineers.

“PICA’s long history with quick and inexpensive build-outs has been invaluable during this process,” says Philips. “We were able to assemble a team of general contractors, whose vast experience allowed us to leverage a very small investment and create a very large and flexible space that will serve the organization into the future.” True to PICA’s practice, the final weeks of the build-out have seen staff, volunteers, and artists coming to the space to help paint walls, frame doors, and pack and move the offices. Frey reflects that, “The process of building PICA’s new home has been inspiring. Only here in Portland would the entire construction and design community come together in the spirit of generosity and collaboration to make a space like this take shape.”

PROGRAMMATIC IMPACT

Concurrent with this move, PICA has made a renewed commitment to year-round artistic programs. This decision is informed by the possibilities inherent in the flexible new space, but it is driven by an institutional mandate to support contemporary artists and connect them with local audiences. “PICA is at a profound moment of transition, but one that is also full of potential and optimism,” says Mattox. “My priority for the organization is to revitalize our commitment to presenting artists and supporting the development of new work throughout the year. I hope to illuminate these projects as they are happening and create meaningful opportunities for audiences to interact with the artists, the creative process, and pertinent issues and ideas.”

The logo for PICA, consisting of the letters 'PICA' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are positioned above a thick, horizontal yellow bar that extends to the left of the text.

PICA will open its new home with the launch of several artistic projects and programs, starting with an exhibition of work by Brooklyn-based artist Glen Fogel entitled *My Apocalyptic Moment*. (Please see accompanying release for more details.) Fogel's videos, paintings, and installations will take advantage of the unoccupied second floor space as a temporary gallery. Following this, the organization will initiate a series of Resource Room Residencies with artist Alex Felton, who has been invited to work in and with PICA's library and the idea of collections and archives generally.

Continuing an emphasis on new work, PICA will host two major artist residencies for projects that will debut at the TBA Festival this September. Caden Manson/Big Art Group will visit Portland in May to conduct video interviews for *The People*, their large-scale, multimedia, live performance about democracy and community. The next month, Bay Area choreographer Keith Hennessy will work with his company on the final stages of his newest piece, *Turbulence (a dance about the economy)*. Inspired by the ideas and values behind the piece, Hennessy and PICA will host a weekend hybrid symposium of art, lectures, screenings, and workshops, featuring a live performance of Hennessy's solo dance *Crotch*.

Mattox notes that, "Keith's residency is emblematic of how PICA supports the development of a new work. It's important to me to give an artist time and space to develop ideas, while simultaneously contextualizing the artist's work in a larger context. Ultimately, I want to explore why these artists are visionary, to focus on the ways that they are pushing aesthetic boundaries, revealing social truths, and asking crucial questions resonant to today."

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About Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA)

Portland Institute for Contemporary Art acknowledges and advances new developments in contemporary art, fostering the explorations of artists and audiences. Since 1995, PICA has championed the practice of contemporary artists from around the world, driving vital conversations about the art and issues of today. PICA presents artists from visual and performance backgrounds and embraces those individuals who exist at the borders of genres and ideas. Through artist residencies and exhibitions, lectures and workshops, and the annual Time-Based Art Festival, PICA constructs a broad platform for contemporary art.