

SCENE

WRITTEN BY LAUREN GALLOW



ONE TO WATCH

MICHELLE MELE

For Seattle-based interior designer Michelle Mele, design is a co-creative endeavor. Her multidisciplinary approach integrates old and new, custom-fabricated and off-the-shelf pieces, as well as modern and traditional elements to create layered, dimensional interiors that are refined but never precious. Having worked across the West Coast, including stints with designers Nicole Hollis and Charles de Lisle, Mele has launched her own studio to bring her playful-yet-deliberate sensibility to the Northwest.

michellemele.com

Why did you decide to launch your own studio? I've always loved collaboration—with clients, architects, contractors, fabricators and artists. After honing my design vision and gaining the expertise to do everything, floor to ceiling, it made sense to start my own practice.

Tell us about your design approach.

It begins with the client and their vision. Then I look at things from an architectural point of view: what makes sense with the building and the history of the place. Next, it's about programming and space planning. Finally, we add in layers of texture, color and form.

What is your design philosophy?

I aim to make spaces that aren't just pretty, but also interesting. My goal is to find an element of the unexpected or the uncommon, so the space draws you in. I help my clients find solutions they didn't know they wanted.

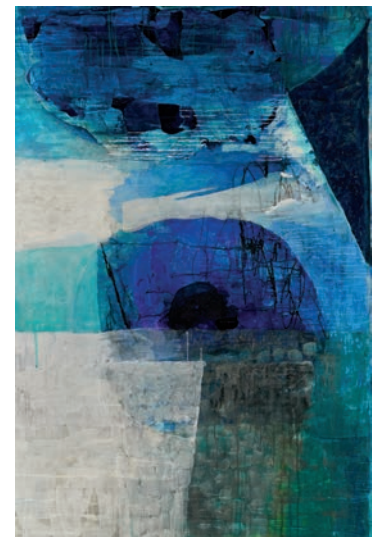
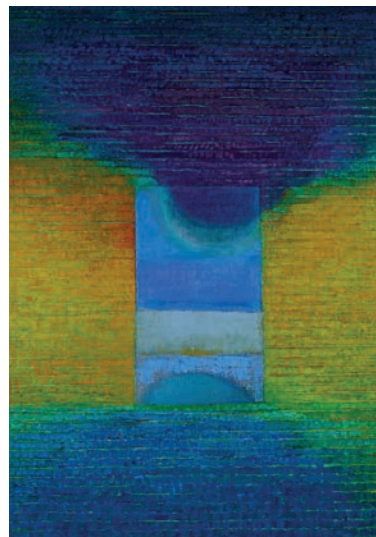
What's coming up for your studio?

We have residential and workplace projects across the Northwest and on the East Coast, including a condo in New York that is eccentric and funky. We're trying to break the mold.

ON VIEW

"KEIKO HARA: THE POETICS OF SPACE, FOUR DECADES OF PAINTINGS AND PRINTS"

Opening May 24 at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art WSU, "Keiko Hara: The Poetics of Space" presents a survey of work from the artist, whose long history of living, working and teaching in the state is expressed in her abstract paintings and prints. Many of her pieces conjure the landscapes and climate patterns of Eastern Washington. Born in North Korea and raised in Japan, Hara moved to the U.S. over four decades ago. She uses the unique form of Mokuhanga, a Japanese woodblock print technique, to craft evocative compositions grounded in place. "Hara believes we all hold places of personal meaning close to our hearts," says Ryan Hardesty, the museum's executive director and exhibition curator. "These bonds to place may center us in the present or tug achingly at us from the past. At the core of her work is an exploration of environment and human consciousness." museum.wsu.edu



ONE TO WATCH PHOTO: MALORIE KEROUAC. ON VIEW PHOTOS: LEFT, SPACE - SKY AND FIELD 76 x 54 INCHES, OIL ON LINEN, 2020; RIGHT: VERSE - SPACE IN BLUE 60 x 41 INCHES, WORKS ON PAPER; WASHI PAPER MOUNTED ON PANEL; WATER-BASED PAINTING MEDIA AND COLLAGE, 2017. BOTH BY KEIKO HARA, COURTESY JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART AT WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY.



TALKING SHOP

SPARTAN SHOP

Located in Portland's Central Eastside Industrial District, Spartan Shop is a sanctuary of art and design occupying a lofty, light-filled corner of a former 1920s-era auto shop. Showcasing art collections and one-off design pieces as well as furniture and lighting, founder Currie Person has situated Spartan Shop in the deliciously liminal space between gallery and showroom, where each visit yields a novel experience.

spartan-shop.com

When did Spartan Shop get its start?

I opened the shop in Austin in 2008. My background was in film. I knew nothing about retail—I was winging it. When we opened, our aim was to be a refined general store with an emphasis on the handmade. The founding principles were beauty, utility and longevity.

How has Spartan evolved? Since moving to Portland in 2011, I've found

natural light to be the greatest luxury, so we were fortunate to find our current space in 2015, which is flooded with daylight. We closed the physical space for 16 months during the pandemic. When we reopened last summer, we transitioned away from smaller goods and reemerged as a gallery and showroom, exhibiting furniture, lighting and art collections.

What can visitors expect?

We're reimagining the shape of the space all the time. The collections rotate frequently, so the showroom is modular, shifting throughout the year to accommodate new work.

What's coming up for Spartan?

We have a show slated for late spring with artists Paul S. Briggs and Giselle Hicks. We've represented both artists for a while, but after forming a friendship at a residency in Montana, they proposed a show together, which we're honored to host.

CHECK IN

MONTAGE BIG SKY

In Montana, the landscape is known for being larger than life. The new Montage Big Sky, nestled in the Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, is a modern alpine resort that capitalizes on the rich histories and expressions of its natural surroundings. With a material palette inspired by a strong sense of place, including regional wood, natural stone and blackened metals, BraytonHughes Design Studios crafted a modern luxury resort that still manages to capture the rugged nostalgia of this storied landscape. "We wanted to create a contemporary take on the classic North American National Park lodge," explains Joel Villalon, executive adviser and principal at BraytonHughes. The firm designed the 139 accommodations, along with the resort's seven eateries, event spaces and recreational areas. "The materials harken back to iconic elements from the state's mining, timber, agriculture and ranching histories," adds Villalon. "We wanted to create a place rooted in Montana's past." montagehotels.com/bigsky



OUTSIDE INTERESTS

AS THE NORTHWEST BLOOMS, THESE THREE GARDENS CELEBRATE ART, DESIGN AND FLORA.



VOLUNTEER PARK CONSERVATORY

Now celebrating its 110th year of operation, Volunteer Park Conservatory is an architectural treasure of Seattle. The Victorian-style glass greenhouse was modeled after London's Crystal Palace and hosts a collection of ferns, bromeliads and cacti alongside a rotating calendar of seasonal flowers. Both the conservatory and the surrounding park were designed by the Olmsted Brothers, sons of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted who designed New York City's Central Park. This spring, the conservatory launches a preservation campaign for the historical accoutrements adorning its entryway, including a peacock glass lunette window crafted from original wood dating to 1912. Visitors can also take in the conservatory's orchid collection, which turns 100 this year.

volunteerparkconservatory.org



PORTLAND JAPANESE GARDEN

Nestled in the hills above downtown Portland, the Portland Japanese Garden is a tranquil oasis beloved by travelers and locals alike. Considered the most authentic Japanese garden outside of Japan, the 12-acre park features eight different gardens and an architectural complex designed by noted Japanese architect Kengo Kuma. Through July 4, the garden is hosting "Gifts from Japan," a special exhibition of botanical illustrations of Japanese plants from the turn of the 20th century to today, including peonies, lilies, wisteria, camellias and irises. Each artwork offers a verdant window into the Japanese and Japanese American experience as it relates to these horticultural exports, many of which are now grown the world over. japanesegarden.org



PACIFIC BONSAI MUSEUM

One of only two museums in the U.S. dedicated solely to bonsai, the ancient Japanese and Chinese art of cultivating miniature trees, the Pacific Bonsai Museum is a hidden gem of the Northwest. Located just south of Seattle in Federal Way, the museum boasts an assemblage of over 150 bonsai that is among the most botanically diverse in the world, all presented outdoors in artful, gallery-like displays. This spring, the museum hosts "A Gallery of Trees," an exhibition showcasing 30 iconic bonsai, many from the founding collection. As Communications Director Katherine Wimble Fox reflects, "Our collection exists in the open air: living, breathing, changing." pacificbonsaimuseum.org