Exhibit looks at information as art, more

With the election of Donald Trump as president, folks are thinking about how messages are conveyed in a way they haven’t in a while.

Just ask Michele Fiedler, who’s curated “A Composition of Intimate and Public Truths,” a group art show at Disjecta Contemporary Art Center, 8371 N. Interstate Ave. The show opens with a reception from 6-10 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 19, and runs through Jan. 7. The gallery is open noon to 5 p.m. Friday through Sundays. Admission is free, and you can learn more at www.disjecta.org.

“It is important to think about the ways in which information is created, how it reaches us and what reaches us, how we intimately and publicly react to it, and what we assume about the people who have a public image,” Fiedler says. “Some information blinds us, and it is so ubiquitous. I think that perhaps last week’s election is a good example of that ... and other turns to the right, which many people like me thought unthinkable. My naive optimism and following of media that supported my own positions led me to believe the results were going to be different.”

Fiedler adds that “Truths” is not explicitly political, but explores cultural themes, including “demographic research, ‘Sesame Street,’ comedy, the intense autobiography, clairvoyance, dreams, care-of-the-self, (the ballet dancer) Nijinsky, the internet, mimicry and Madonna.”

“Truths” features work by three artists: Trisha Baga, a performance and video artist from New York City; Nicole Miller, a Los Angeles filmmaker; and Matthew Rana, a writer and artist from Malmö, Sweden.

The show consists of two videos: Baga’s “Madonna y el Niño (2010)” and Miller’s “The Alphabet (2007),” as well as Rana’s installation of photography and lighting that will "facilitate the feeling of a theatric setting." His piece, “SUECLOGUE,” includes the installation as well as a reading of a pastoral poem, written with two voices in mind. The reading will take place at 7:30 p.m. on opening night, Nov. 19.

The show is the second in a series of Disjecta shows in 2016-17 devoted to investigating “formats by which information is transmitted,” Fiedler says.

“In all pieces, public and private processes are happening,” she says. “The three pieces play with the internet as a tool for research, fetish or distraction. The use of the word ‘truth’ in the (exhibition) title has to do with how performers, researchers and writers seek truth as a way of sincerity and of relating to others, of being relevant.”

Fiedler used Baga’s “Madonna” as one example of how the show’s theme works.
“There are parts of ‘Madonna y el Niño’ where we see the artist perform her own idea of such a public and iconic figure, Madonna, behind the privacy of her computer screen, which, of course, she makes public by exhibiting the work,” she says. “To me, it shows a private behavior that engages with the very public images and footage seen by millions, that Madonna has made exist.”

Cullivan, Rob. “Exhibition looks at information as art, more.” The Portland Tribune, 16 November 2016. [online]