



Artists Liz Tran and Elizabeth Gahan in front of their CHROMATOPIA installation. Photo by Tiffany Bri.

On The Town: CHROMATOPIA Art and Cocktails at Punch Gallery

Sarah Cardoza February 26, 2016 On the Town, Society 0 Comments

Photos by Tiffany Bri

Magic Portal: A *Chromatopia Project* has been on exhibit at **Punch Gallery** for most of this month, featuring the collaborative work of Seattle artists **Liz Tran** and **Elizabeth Gahan**. On February 24, they held a private reception to say a final farewell to the installation.

The rainy Wednesday evening meant not too many people were at the party, especially compared to the massive crowd that arrived on the opening and made the inside of the Magic Portal look borderline chaotic. But Wednesday's small crowds allowed VS photographer **Tiffany Bri** and I to get an intimate look into the minds of the two artists themselves.

The Punch Gallery space worked perfectly for the central piece of their exhibit, entitled *Magic Portal*. The experience of being inside the Portal is practically magical—as you walk inside, you are greeted with draped painted fabrics, illuminated by constantly changing LED lights that are installed within the walls. The piece is an explosion of colors, patterns, material and fabric, the hues constantly changing against the transparent paint-stained fabrics. Every photo you take inside changes with the lighting, but there wasn't really any "bad" light. The smooth color transitions created an ultimately soothing yet visually stimulating experience.

Jody Bento, the Gallery Manager at the **Seattle Art Museum**, joined Tiffany and I inside the Magic Portal, and we all shared reactions to the piece. Right away, I saw the piece as safe, escapist, and very womblike. Jody Bento commented on how seamless the work is in terms of the two artists' respective styles. Artist Elizabeth Gahan was thrilled to hear guests share reactions she and Liz Tran hoped to inspire as they were constructing the piece.

In working on *Magic Portal*, Liz and Elizabeth collaborated on essentially every aspect of the piece—both artists are known for their use of bright colors, so both of their styles are inherently present. In terms of constructive style, they talked to us about how Liz is more of an impulsive and abstract worker, while Elizabeth is more strategic and incorporates more patterns into her work, which was evident on some of the fabric and walls. Liz and Elizabeth's working dynamic—fluid and natural, as they both described it—reminded Tiffany and I of our conversation with **Stallman**, and their collaborative relationship in spite of their two very different minds.

The artists also talked about commercial uses for *Magic Portal*, such as repurposing it into a relaxation pod for professionals. I suggested that it could work miracles for babies, which prompted Elizabeth to share how she would often bring in her baby during the construction of the piece. He would wave goodbye to the changing colors, in anticipation of the new ones. In a monotone and dreary city that often glorifies artwork to match its color scheme, CHROMATOPIA was exactly what one needs on a rainy Wednesday evening.

Seattle will eagerly await the duo's artistic return—their next new piece is coming in October.



ALEXANDER WANG

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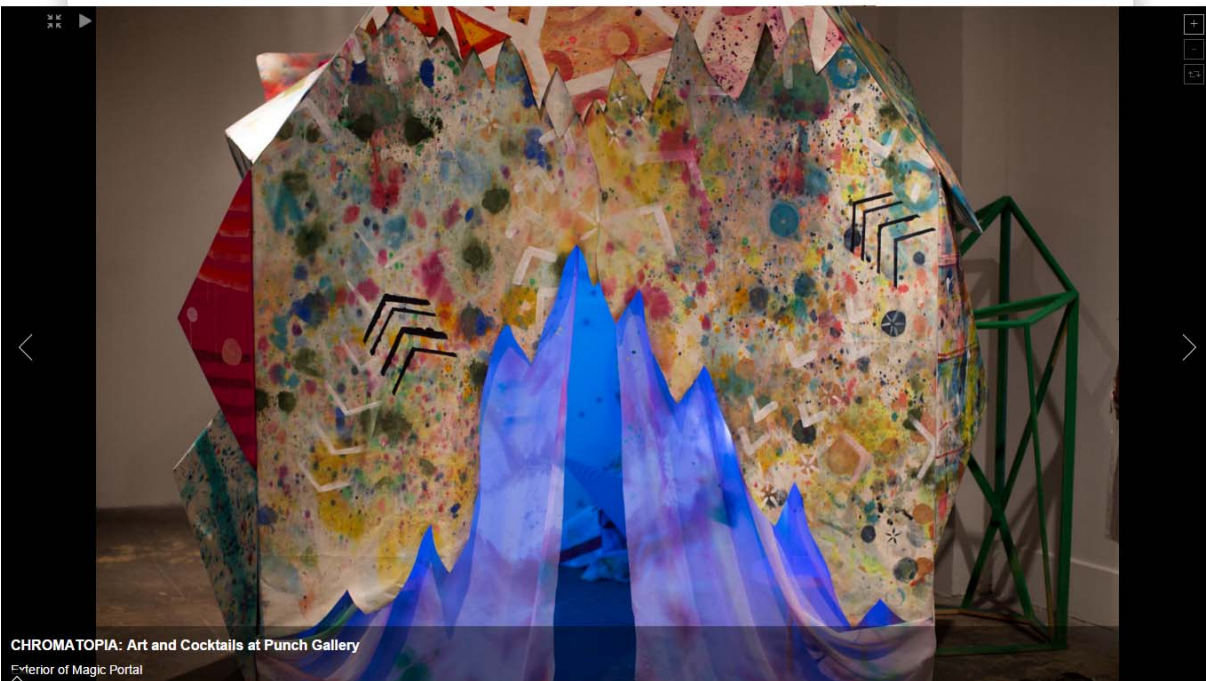


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Exterior of Magic Portal