



At Addo Nova in Portland, Chad Chamberlain models a costume for Blue Hammer's upcoming production at Whitney Art Works.

multimedia mélange

This spring, Leon Johnson will test recipes in front of a live audience. On the menu:

- Five-minute egg with umeboshi plum vinegar and chives
- Lamb and Marfax bean stew
- Simmered potatoes
- Rye crisps with blue cheese and honey

That's not all. The "ingredients" also include a script about guests on a late-night TV show referencing the Mau Mau rebel uprising in Kenya and the Belgian occupation of the Congo; a Portland performance artist (Johnson); a letter-press artist (Megan O'Connell); a Freeport baker (Barak Olins); an architect (Michael Chestnutt) crafting a portable kitchen prototype; and a set of custom-made bowls by Chris Archer and Scott Fuller.

The group has been collaborating to create Blue Hammer's "Trans-Historical-Burlesque Dinner Theater," a food-related performance at Whitney Art Works in Portland. "The idea was that this would be a seed for setting up a permanent dinner theater in Portland, working with local chefs, practitioners, farmers, and bakers," Johnson says.

So far, the participants say the process has been collaborative and interdisciplinary in the truest sense of the words. "When I'm working with Michael [Chestnutt] sometimes we start talking about the food and that feeds back into the design," Olins says. "It all just keeps folding in on it itself. I hope it's as exciting for the audience as it has been for us." -P.A.S.

Blue Hammer's show premieres on April 30 with separate nightly shows on May 1 & 2. 492 Congress St., Portland. 774.7011; whitneyartworks.com. • PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK MARCHESI