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Rural artists take on the economy in a new production about money, true wealth, and resilience

THE (w)HOLE: Beyond Boom & Bust in Rural America

October 4, 5, 6, Cave Junction & Ashland, Oregon

beyondboomandbust.com/



“The financial stuff, in my mind, eventually will get better. It’s not. It’s getting worse, but that’s just what I keep trying for. That one day this will get better and the kids will get older and things will just get easier, you know?” (Illinois Valley resident)

The *Kalmiopsis Leachiana*, a rare endemic flower found in the Illinois Valley, thrives in a difficult environment--as do the people of the Illinois Valley. Economic circumstances have made life in this rural southwestern Oregon valley a struggle, but a group of artists are using performance as a means for illuminating a path forward through this most recent economic collapse.

Beyond Boom & Bust is a multi-year initiative exploring the topic of rural economies through an artistic lens, focused on the Illinois Valley in southwestern Oregon. The economy, what wealth means, and resilience are the focus of interviews with Illinois Valley residents that have inspired the upcoming show, “*The (w)HOLE: Beyond Boom & Bust in Rural America*”, which will be performed in Ashland on October 4-5 and in Cave Junction on October 6. Tickets will be available online at beyondboomandbust.com or by calling Lindsey Jones, (541)-649-2333.

As with many other rural communities, the history of the Illinois Valley, a rural community of about 10,000 situated around the town of Cave Junction, has been shaped by economic booms and their inevitable busts--from gold mining to timber to cannabis. The recent regulation of cannabis and resulting statewide oversupply has signaled the newest bust, forcing the community to again search for ways to make a living.

So what is the role of arts & culture here? “The economy, the management of public resources for public good, is a central policy and voting issue--which means it is also a cultural issue,” explains artist and ensemble member Eliot Feenstra. The aim of the upcoming show, “*The (w)HOLE*,” is to work culturally to develop an alternative narrative for rural communities which is collaborative, just, resilient,

and forward-looking. “We believe the arts have a key role to play in expressing and speaking to the heart, igniting our imaginations, and connecting us in revitalizing and building resilient economies which care for people, land, and the future of our rural communities,” added choreographer and ensemble member Gina Angelique.

Though the tension between state and federal policy on cannabis is at the forefront of national headlines, the local communities most impacted by these policies are rarely heard from on the national level, nor in the cultural sector. The Illinois Valley has long been a producer and supplier of cannabis, and “The (w)HOLE” will hold a mic up to the community who has lived through and witnessed the changing industry and its impacts on their lives.

During August and September, artists will be interviewing local residents, hosting story circles and town halls in Southern Oregon about the economy, and gathering material for the original show. The ensemble of local and visiting artists brings back together RiverStars co-founders, including: choreographer, farmer, and dancefarm Artistic Director Gina Angelique (Cave Junction); Cave Junction City Council President, arts educator and Dell Arte graduate Lindsey Jones (Cave Junction); dancer and arts educator Kari Kvittem (Selma); and community-based artist and performance scholar Eliot Feenstra (Takilma). They will be joined by environmental activist and dancer Bianca Ballara (Murphy), performer and theatre/film creator Sophie Traub (Toronto/New York), videographer Earthen Watson (Port Townsend), lighting designer Chris Hall (Cave Junction), costume designer and farmer Alisa Ocean (Cave Junction), dancer and choreographer Ericka Moore (San Diego), and youth performers Isadora Millay and Finn Franklin.

The production and process is made possible by generous funding from the [MAP Fund](#), which is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; and by [Oregon Humanities](#), a statewide nonprofit organization and an independent affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which funds OH’s grant program. It is being produced in collaboration with the [Illinois Valley Community Development Organization](#), [Southern Oregon Guild of Artists & Artisans](#), and the [Rural Organizing Project](#). The show will be performed at Ashland High on October 4 and 5; and at the Dome School in Takilma on October 6. Tickets are pay what you can; suggested donation \$20-30. For more information or to reserve tickets, visit beyondboomandbust.com or contact Lindsey Jones at (541) 649-2333. You can also follow the project on [Facebook](#) (@beyondboomandbust).

SHOW INFO:

Ashland:

Mountain Theatre at Ashland High School (201 South Mountain Ave., Ashland, OR 97520)
Friday October 4 & Saturday October 5, 8:00pm - [Facebook event](#) - [Reserve tickets](#)

Cave Junction:

Takilma Dome School (9367 Takilma Rd, Cave Junction, OR 97523)
Sunday, October 6, 6:00pm - [Facebook event](#) - [Reserve tickets](#)

Tickets: Sliding scale/PWYC \$10-20. Tickets can be reserved online ([Ashland](#) / [CJ](#)), by calling (541) 649-2333, or in person.

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