

# *Obituary*

Michael Paul Simons

## **Sparrow, Starving Artist, Lost at 38**

**A** memorial for local artist Sparrow will take place later this week at the Nikwasi Community Center. Sparrow, an outspoken opponent of Wal-Mart, Columbus Day, Bob Ross, and churches, frequently drew ire from locals. She is probably best known for a controversial mural she painted in 2006 that depicted several astrological signs as “half naked women floating in radioactive swirls.” Unavoidable from the Bi-Rite parking lot, the mural compelled young mothers to think up creative ways of shielding their children from seeing it. Five months after its unveiling, the mural, titled “Gaia’s Harlotry #69,” fell victim to vandalism. Letters to the editor declared the whitewash and large block lettered “John 3:16” a “vast improvement” and “long overdue.”

Sparrow, a fervent supporter of animal liberation, libraries, and arts in the classroom described her work as “sensual,” “stark,” “stippled,” and “ahead of its time.” Her paintings have hung in

coffee shops in both Oregon and Washington. When denied a spot in the 2007 Starving Artist Fire Sale, Sparrow protested by driving a sculpture of pantyhose, horse manure, and fire through the downtown district and Wal-Mart parking lot. A self-described “portraitist of the cosmos,” Sparrow sold only one painting in her lifetime.

Sparrow went missing around Thanksgiving 2008, and her last known whereabouts remain unknown. Authorities claim there is no cause to consider Sparrow’s disappearance “foul play” though search parties have “abandoned all hope, frankly” of finding her body. According to her best friend and agent, Mordor, her last completed work was “a small triptych of rolling hillsides and butterfly-like creatures she called ‘Angels.’”

Check for date and time of memorial on the Community Center’s website.