

# CARAVAN

FALL 2021  
—  
TRAVEL & STYLE



THE PORTLAND ISSUE

|                        | MAGAZINE      | WORDS  | PHOTOS   | DESIGN  |
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I believe I speak for Caravan at large when I say we couldn’t be happier to bring you our first travel issue in over a year. When we went to Los Angeles in Spring 2020, we believed that our next destination was going to be Portland, but we had no idea that it would take three semesters of remote learning and Zoom meetings to get there. Now that we’ve finally produced our first print issue since 2019, I can definitively say that this edition of our magazine was truly worth the wait.

I had many ideas of Portland before visiting — their slogan “Keep Portland Weird” brings to mind some eclectic mix of diversity, self-expression, and individuality. The ability to unify the residents of an entire city under one catchphrase felt like an oversimplification, an unrealistic goal of sorts. It took thirteen of us three days roaming around the place to realize the authenticity of that motto, and what we saw over the long weekend showed us why people fall in love with the city and all its quirks.

Along with our articles from Portland, you’ll find that our magazine has interspersed pieces about locations around Berkeley and San Francisco that we believe are harmonious with their corresponding Portland articles. Such pieces are titled “The Berkeley Connection” and are designed to allow local readers the chance to experience

similar adventures without making the 600-odd mile trek to Portland. We have always produced our work with the intention of sharing it with the greater Berkeley community, and we’re excited to have you partake in our experiences this way.

As a final note, The Portland Issue marks the last edition for which I serve as Editor-in-Chief. Through the six issues that I’ve overseen, Caravan has evolved from a fledgling band of naïve creatives into a functional team that will continue to produce high-quality work even after I leave. Witnessing our endlessly talented family come together week after week and year after year gives me every confidence that this is just the beginning. With that, I bid you a teary-eyed farewell and bon voyage as you get lost within these pages. Close your eyes and make a wish at the Wishing Tree; enjoy fresh panzerotti fritti from the hands of Walter Ferrante at Bari Food Cart; explore your identity while thrifting at vintage spots around the city. I will not be bashful in saying that some of our best work is between these covers and that the city of Portland is waiting for you to discover it for yourself.

Safe Travels,  
**David Chen**  
*Editor-in-Chief*



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# UNEARTHING HOPE

## A VISIT TO PORTLAND'S WISHING TREE

words: Sasha Shahinfar  
photos: Niko Frost



As the Caravan caboose joyfully lurches north along the highway through the dim California fog, the landscape begins to move. Maybe it's our heavy eyelids that blur the view out the car window. Flat grassy fields swell into rolling hills, handsomely charred by the fires earlier in the season. A few hours later, mountains bubble out of the hills, transforming into the signature Oregon wilderness — jagged and green.

Portland feels magically isolated, gated by its topography. Unlike its neighbor Vanport, which had been swallowed by the sea decades ago, Portland remains a living Atlantis.

Upon arriving, this sensation is affirmed by the thickness of the city, bursting with character and a signature homogeneity. Every other restaurant serves creatively decadent fusion foods and the same few alternative-indie-rock songs seem to float around every corner from the small shops. It is dreamy and warm in spirit.

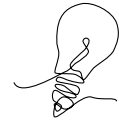
However, aside from the more metropolitan areas, the energy of the Portland community compounds itself in an unlikely place — the mellow, peaceful residential neighborhoods. They are blips in Portland space-time.

While peacefully empty, the neighborhoods exude the rich histories of living communities through physical traces. Honey bears, pride flags, Black Lives Matter posters, and children's drawings decorate homes along each street. One family has erected a public playground in their front yard, open to all tiny passersby. Many others have cultivated public gardens abundant in tomatoes and other foreign oblong vegetables. A dog lounges



## WISHES AND WISHERS

“Some, perhaps more careful or anxious about their sentiments, have sealed their words in plastic bags. Most are newer, but a few ancient wishes are so weathered by the sun that you can barely read them. All at once, it's overwhelming.”



on a lawn, gnawing on a stick as it waits for someone. Should you ever need a cup of sugar, there are probably at least a dozen neighbors willing to help you out.

I couldn't help but think of Berkeley, which suddenly appeared to me as Portland's distant cousin. But unlike Berkeley — which is often too busy to be gentle — Portland was unabashedly, thickly intimate, pulling you into a tight embrace.

On the intersection between Morris and 7th Street grows one of the city's hidden gems: its broad, gnarled trunk strung with hundreds of pieces of paper twists into the sky. Portland's famous Wishing Tree pushes out of the sidewalk, spreading its leafy arms to canopy the street. The wind gently rustles through the paper wishes which, with their soft fluttering, mimic the leaves. They almost sound like hundreds of whispering voices, beckoning you to lean in closer.

Resting against the roots of the gargantuan tree lies a set of instructions for visitors bold enough to leave a wish:

“Please find a blank tag. Write your wish (for you, a loved one, the neighborhood, etc). Tie it to a nail in the tree. Read someone else's wish and hope it comes true. Thank you!”

A roll of Scotch tape and a semi-mangled notepad accompany the cryptic inscription. Wishers have certainly taken their liberties.

A quick survey of the tree reveals a history of diverse visitors, as illustrated by their handwriting in various languages and the contents of their wishes — blocky, loopy, shy, or scrawled. I imagine others who have stumbled upon this unorthodox confession booth, looking over their shoulders before quickly tying a piece of themselves to the tree forever.

Some bolder visitors have written their wishes on masks, others on leaves. Some, perhaps more careful or anxious about their sentiments, have sealed their words in plastic bags. Most are newer, but a few ancient wishes are so weathered by the sun that you can barely read them. All at once, it's overwhelming.

I learn more about the Wishing Tree community space over a phone call with the founder of the Wishing Tree (and Cal alumna) Nicole Helprin. Helprin was inspired by two similar wishing trees in Berkeley when starting her own community project with her children. Her hope was that it would give people a chance to gather in the neighborhood.

“I feel a part of the community just by offering this tree,” Helprin confesses in a phone call. “It's a conversation starter. Even neighbors will interact sometimes.” After asking her whether she had ever read the wishes on the tree, it appears that Helprin has a different reaction to the various pieces of floating paper. “Oh I try not to read them,” she said. “Sometimes, they can make you grateful, and sad.”



After reading dozens, I can't help but agree. While some are more innocent, a child's messy scrawl asking for a chocolate, an "epic adventure," or a COVID-19 vaccine for all (accompanied by an unmistakably phallic syringe drawing), others are more sober, poignant, vulnerable. Standing there, I felt entranced reading the same words again and again: I wish, I wish, I wish. All at once, the wishes together transformed into a living poem:

"I wish that Vin and Strawberry can get along."

"I wish my mom learns and believes she is capable, loved and deserving"

"I wish to be a dinosaur."

"I have nothing to say"

"I wish for my grandma to get better"

"I wish for a kitty."

"To wife: Although you're not here with me, I'd like to come back with you. I wish we both find the love, wealth, and peace we deserve."

"I wish my sister could hear the voices that love her."

"I wish to find a trillion \$"

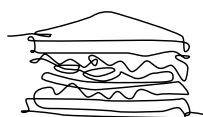
"I wish everyone in the world had enough food."

"I wish for a sandwich."

"I wish I finished my album. Wish I could have made it."

"For 5 more years. And five more. And more and more and more."

"My wish is to live without fear and more love. As I live it, I hope it ripples out for all. Love, B"



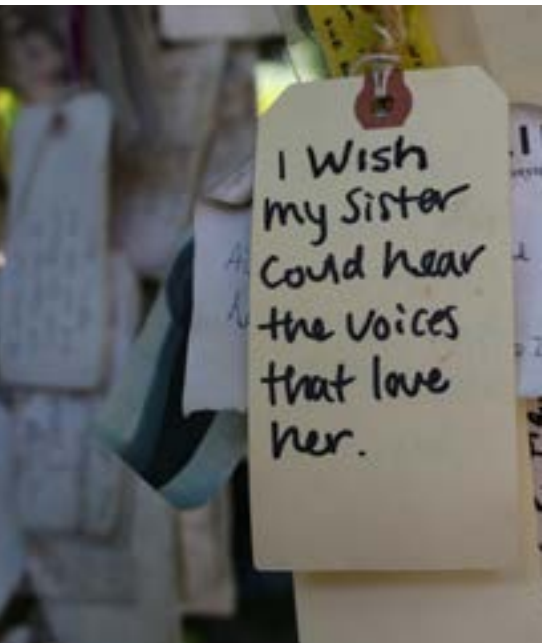
Admittedly, a part of me feels guilty for encroaching, for including fragments of such intimate sentiments. But perhaps sharing intimacy is necessary, and maybe that is what makes this experience of individual vulnerability so communal.

Was this Portland's secret, how the wishes were brought to life? This tree asked us to read others' wishes and hope they come true. To care for one another. To wish for good unto others, for people we would likely never meet whom we only knew by their naked desires and most desperate wishes.

They are shrouded in mystery, suggestive, leaving us pondering. I can't help but wonder if everyone's wishes came true. It's impossible to know for certain, but there is a security that comes from hoping for others. Perhaps that's all we can do.

Portland's open arms are unmistakable. The city is comfortable, simultaneously unfamiliar and like we had been here in a dream. Its isolation welcomes anyone and everyone, like a door closing behind you as you return home.

Driving back to Berkeley, Portland recedes into the earth — mountains simmer down, the lush green fades into dead-yellow, and suddenly we are in California again. Somehow, Berkeley feels less familiar to me. It buzzes, beckoning me to unearth it, too.







words: Anjika Pai  
photos: Lisi Ludwig

# THE WORLD IS THEIR OYSTER

## ILLUSORY INCLUSION AT ART IN THE PEARL

Tents flutter around me, teeming with artwork and animated visitors. I take ten pictures for every five feet I walk, sucking in my breath as I catch a glimpse of the price tag on each work of art. Nothing here seems to cost under \$100, yet elderly couples stroll gaily past me, discussing how they must make more room in their house for the new pieces they have bought today.

Over 100 artists pack two blocks of green space in the Art In The Pearl, selling works ranging from landscape paintings to clay jewelry. This year's 25th Anniversary festival is one of the first occasions for

artists to coalesce following the COVID-19 pandemic. Visitors wander through rows of tables, meeting esteemed artists from across the United States. Along with the others, I follow QR-codes to Instagram accounts with thousands of followers, and I engage creators in questions about their background and expertise.

In this laid-back, lustrous atmosphere, I meet Kristy Kún, a felt sculptor. Inspired by an apprenticeship in wood reclamation, Kún developed a unique technique to agitate wool and create felt. The felt fibers constitute a dense material that morphs into waves, its







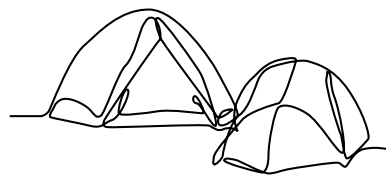
A. KRISTY KÚN'S FELT  
SCULPTURES A

B. FIGURES BY CHAS  
MARTIN B

final form reminiscent of marine fauna. I long to run my hand along her tent's centerpiece, a sculpture mounted on a vertical canvas no shorter than myself. Instead, I turn away from the \$2600 piece and settle for the felt swatches that Kún offers.

While Kún seems unfazed by my group's praise and amazement, another artist beams when we take interest in his sculptures. Chas Martin, a Portland native and first-time admittee to Art In The Pearl, shares work inspired by his studies of anthropology and watercolors. As he describes his artistic attempt to move past markers of gender, religion, and race, I wonder what combination of cultures informs this "transcendental" work.

I weave through the park until I come across an Art In The Pearl Board Member, Annie Meyer. Meyer offers insight into the behind-the-scenes of the event, explaining that Art In The Pearl is a juried event. A panel of judges invites artists to attend based on a "color-blind" application process, though Meyer mentions that artists' names are attached to their submissions.



"We have tough conversations about improving diversity," Meyer says. "But eventually, in the jury process, it comes down to if the art is original."

Meyer also reports an intentional search for "emerging artists," as well as a dearth of applications for non-white artists. She then switches subjects to discuss the immense efforts of the volunteers to prepare the event venue. Meyer alludes to the unhoused population of the park, repeating that the area was "very messy" before they came in.

After scouring the blocks, we come across Audrey Jung, a native San Franciscan with an East Asian background. Jung is another felt artist, though she uses the materials to construct durable, functional bags with clean, modern designs. The handbags are the product of her retirement hobby, allowing her to travel and showcase her art after decades in dentistry. She insists that her culture does not inform her aesthetic or taste, and she abruptly moves our conversation to the Art In The Pearl volunteers.



"They did a great job of cleaning up," Jung says, echoing Meyer. "When I began to set up, I saw a homeless person sleeping on the bench across from me. I was like..." She pauses here with an expression of distaste. "I guess they started living here during the pandemic, but I'm glad they're not here anymore." At this comment, I thank her hurriedly before leaving. I exit the festival premises immediately, almost ashamed at how I relished an event that evidently displaced unhoused residents.

Art In The Pearl proclaims itself as a bridge between artists and the community, yet the event fails to represent community members who do not fit a certain profile — namely, white and wealthy. Art is one of countless fields that hold barriers to participation, especially those that arise from systemic racism. Imagine if Kún could not purchase merino wool, if Martin could not afford the annual tuition at the Pratt Institute's School of Art, if Jung could not manage to travel across the United States. There is money and time and effort required to own raw materials, to refine a craft, and to pin hopes on talent that may be left unrecognized due to implicit biases.

To this day, these resources remain inaccessible to minorities and those without funding to fall back on. Until a concerted effort is made to include a diverse set of visions and perspectives, Art In The Pearl will remain a spectacular exhibition of ignorance and inequity, decorated by a narrow subset of American talent.





**The Berkeley Connection**

words: Sophie Yang  
photos: William Xu



# INDULGING IN INK

## AN AFTERNOON AT THE ROADWORKS FESTIVAL

On Rhode Island Street in the Do.Re.Mi arts district in San Francisco, a diamond “Road Closed” sign greets me and signals the beginning of the annual “Roadworks” art festival. I am handed an obnoxiously neon yellow brochure, and as I squint over the black words, I hear excited chatter. I look up to see puffs of smoke rise from inside a crowd of people. A lacquered, teal steamroller the size of a compact car slowly rolls seven tons of concentrated pressure over a meter-long carpet of protective fabrics, paper, linoleum block, and wood planks. This intense process concludes with a highly choreographed flurry of people crouching over to carefully peel the slightly warped paper off the block and present it to the applauding crowd. Meanwhile, others backstage pour more coal into the steam engine and aggressively ink a new linoleum block to shuttle back to the stage for the next performance. The final result is an intricate black and white relief print of two children flying over the ocean and Captain Hook’s ship to Neverland.



instead exudes a feeling of warmth and pride at the resilience of art in the Bay. Families push strollers with small children and weave through crowds to get a better look at the different crafts and activities their children can learn to make. Returning artists greet long-time attendees with big smiles and warm hugs. They share enthusiastically about their work and progress after enduring

Although this year is the anticipated 25th anniversary of the San Francisco Center for the Book (the organization that hosts “Roadworks”) this festival includes no pompous fanfare, and







long periods of separation. Volunteers bring stools for children to stand on and print their own tiny pieces, and young artists hug sketchbooks and draw the festival scenes. Wrapped up in this lively celebration of art is the long and nuanced history of printmaking.

While this festival uses an unconventional printing press that treats the street as its platform, traditional printing is transferred with hand-powered machines. Originally used to reproduce religious texts, printing presses have taken on a new role in the fine arts. Printmaking not only requires an eye for monochromatics, but also requires skills in sketching, carving, inking, and transferring. The heavy wait (weight) that comes from the multi-step printing process produces a stamp that an artist uses time and time again, whether producing fine art, pop art for tote bags and simple t-shirts, or printing as a means of disseminating instruments of social change.

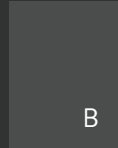
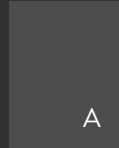
Artist Katherine Wilson uses her art as a way to shed light on the conservation of the critically endangered northern white rhinoceros through a colorful collaborative art piece “The Rhinoceros Project.” Wilson describes her “responsibility to make a better world” through her art, as well as through the art classes she teaches at Stanford and San Jose State. She tells aspiring artists to “go with the weird,” to lean into your quirks and passions for the most impactful work.

Coming after a long period of hardship for many, this festival is a sign of new beginnings. It marks an emergence from isolation and a place to reignite passion for community participation in art. Roadworks is a symbol of the resilience of people and the drive of artists to share their craft and message with others. Celebrating printmaking’s rich history, Roadworks serves as a (literal) down-to-earth experience of creating and enjoying relief prints.





words: Anna Fang  
photos: Apollonia Cuneo



A. TRAIN TRACKS BY ST. JOHNS  
B. CHAIRS AT CATHEDRAL PARK



# KEEP BRIDGETOWN QUIRKY

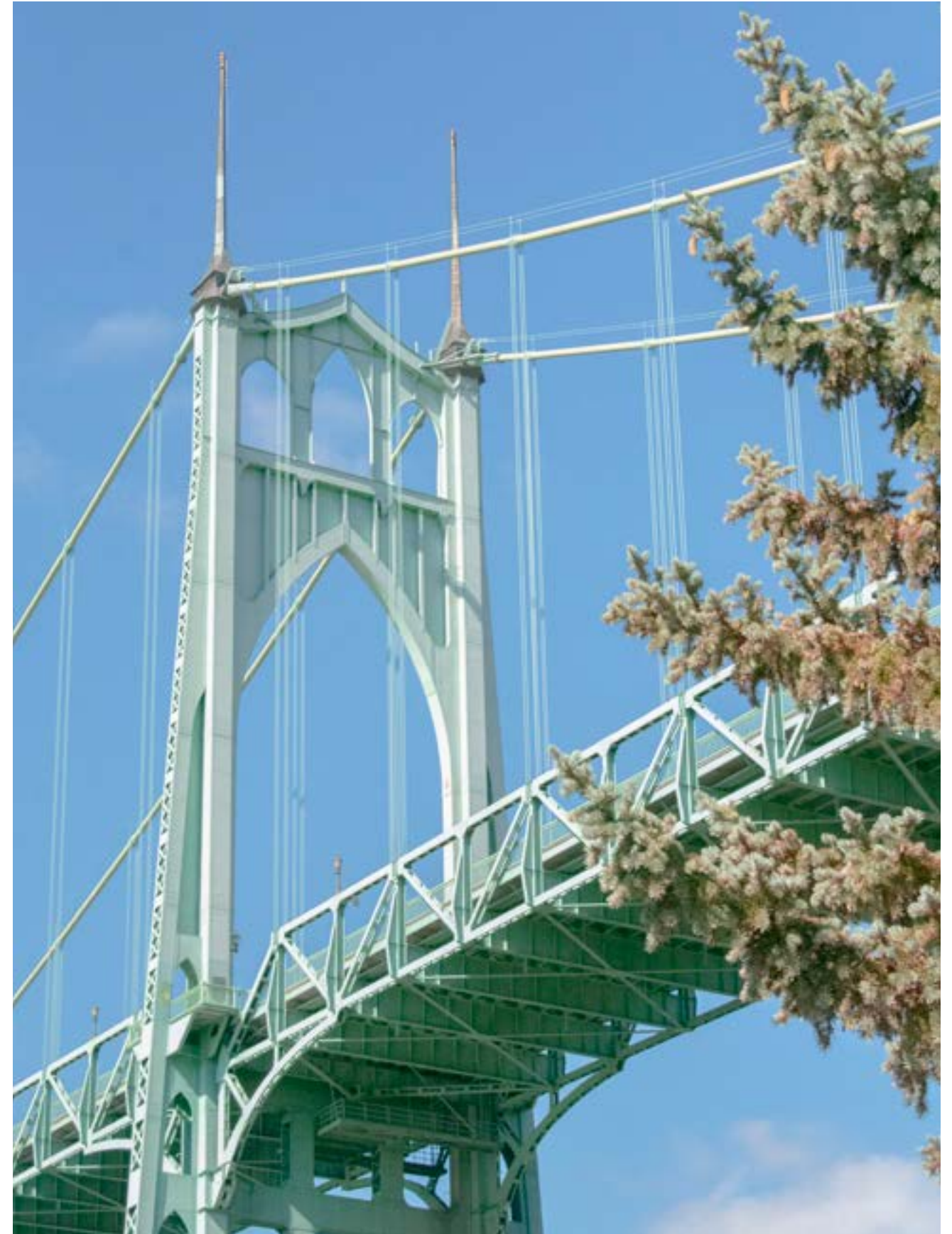
## SPENDING TIME AT ST. JOHNS BRIDGE

Turning and twisting amidst the giant foliage (and unexpected traffic) must have distracted us from our knowledge of the city's infrastructure, because the sudden appearance of the Willamette River comes as a welcome surprise. One look off the perched traffic light, and all that meets the eye is stretches of metal across an empty river. Rather than one united city, it seems as though we have walked in on two friends holding hands.

The drive, although beautiful, is oddly long and complicated as we curve around the dense verdure of Forest Park and move farther and farther away from the dense population of downtown. On the left, a constant stream of greens whizzes by, while on the right, a graveyard of freight trains interrupts our view of the central

river. After crossing a couple of other bridges, passing through an entirely industrial neighborhood, and tiptoeing around the natural reserve, we finally climb up the road that brings us to the mouth of *the* bridge, St. Johns.

Sticking my head out of the window as we cruise across, a fresh dewy breeze tousling my already unruly hair, I look off the side of the bridge to see what world we are crossing into. Compared to the reflection of the lush forest in the side mirror warning me that objects are closer than they appear, the area we are driving toward looks more spacious, almost too tranquil. Though we are still in the city of Portland, this particular bridge connects a forest to a large-but-quiet residential neighborhood.





PEOPLE WATCHING

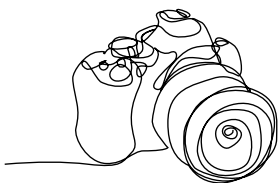
“Walking around the arches of Cathedral Park, I occasionally catch sight of an owner playing fetch with a dog companion, or a couple out for what looks like a morning stroll.”



As we park and disembark underneath the bridge with too much ease, adjacent to very few cars, I notice that most people ventured to the space on foot. The parking lot still has a long way to go until it hits full capacity, but the paved roads littered around the park itself are sparsely occupied by foot traffic.

The weather is brilliant; even at ten in the morning, the skies are electric blue, the sun is beaming, and the air is crisp — only one of which is characteristic of this region. A certain bridge back home would love to receive this amount of sunshine. The grand cement supports underneath are dull when compared to the surrounding aquamarine palette, but their guise of seriousness provides reassurance and security to the little communities socializing beneath them.

Despite the ideal weather conditions, and despite it being a Sunday, the bridge and its surrounding area feel a bit vacant. Walking around the arches of Cathedral Park, I occasionally catch sight of an owner playing fetch with a dog companion, or a couple out for what looks like a morning stroll. What I see more of is vibrant greenery, starting from the faded emerald of the bridge and bleeding into the well-kept patches of grass (like the one the dog companion is fetching a ball on) and the cascading rope-like leaves of a weeping willow.



Instead of a bustling crowd of tourists scrambling for the best family photo with the city’s landmark, we found ourselves alone in our photo-taking and awe. Passersby stroll right by the spots where we stall to get one or more shots at a slightly new angle, and we are definitely making the most commotion by far. Now it is reaching noon, but the volume of noise and energy makes no move to rise above the low vibrations of a weekday morning.



Maybe this city is too quirky for me to understand, or maybe there was never anything to try and understand in the first place. Its proximity to and infiltration of nature injects a sort of peace and groundedness into the air, with no urgency to impress newcomers or explain itself.







words: David Chen  
photos: Apollonia Cuneo

# PEOPLE AND FOOD, FOOD AND PEOPLE

EXPERIENCING PANZEROTTI FRITTI AT WALTER FERRANTE’S  
BARI FOOD CART

“From the small barrel, there is good wine.”

Behind the fence of a sweltering blacktop parking lot, inside a white sardine can with room for one and a half, there’s a shaved head in a red and white t-shirt squinting out his sliding window. When we get to the truck, he jumps up to receive us, and his assistant Delphina tells me that he’s been “extremely nervous” waiting for us, a handful of students who arrived 15 minutes late because we took too long eating our compulsory Portland vegan donuts.

Walter Ferrante landed in our collective consciousness after his June 2021 feature in foodie trendsetter Munchies’ YouTube video,

where he was crowned “The Street Food Prince of Portland” to a moderately viral viewership of over 400k. Delphina walks us to the tables where I’ll be scribbling notes from our conversation while thinking about the words I’ll use that won’t be able to capture Walter in the slightest — a beaming man who uses his hands to sculpt the air in front of him while yelling at me about the circumstances that brought him from small-town Bari in Southern Italy to his current home in Portland.

The ways Walter tells his life story — the dynamic inflections in his voice, the choppy vocabulary he uses, how his eyes color

the words he speaks — represent an identity deeply rooted in his Italian culture. But everything he says hints toward a wandering soul whose concept of home isn’t tied to any one geographic locale.

His boyhood was spent waiting tables, having started at 11 years old and subsequently leaving his hometown at 16 to work at a restaurant off of the central Adriatic coast. The way he remembers it, he liked it so much that he never wanted to go back home. And even though the few-hour move wasn’t earth-shattering in scope or distance, it was made in the same adventurous spirit that Walter eventually followed to land in Davis, California where a connection begged him to work as a waiter in his Italian restaurant. When I ask him if he had ever dreamed of coming to the States before he moved, he says, “It’s the dream of every Italian: America... you see the movies, the beach, and well, it’s America my friend. It’s big and beautiful.”

“You know what’s funny?” he asks me. “Italians always dream of seeing their kids married with a big wedding. When I was a kid, I told my mom, ‘Someday, I will get married far, far away with no one who knows me!’” And three months after Walter got to Davis, he found the love of his life amidst the city’s downtown nightlife, initially communicating with no more than body language and single words. Eventually, the couple got married in Lake Tahoe and moved to Portland, the city that Walter thinks he was destined to represent as a place centered around people and food.

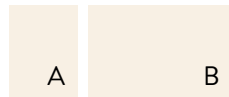


## WALTER

When I ask about Portland, he says: “The city probably chose me to come here because my life is food and people, people and food, food and people, that’s it! I cannot do anything else besides people and food. And there cannot be a greater place than that.”







A. DELPHINA PREPARING CANNOLI  
B. THREE PANZEROTTI, READY TO SERVE

On the morning of June 3rd, 2021, Walter popped his cart window open to a single file line continuing onto the street in front of the lot — a sight he'd never seen in his five years of selling fresh *panzerotti fritti* on the streets of Portland.

“I started thinking to myself, ‘I cannot make all of these orders — it will take me two hours to take the orders before I start to COOK the first order!’ You know what I mean? And I started panicking and asking, ‘What are you doing here? You are all for me? Oh my GOD!’”

And just like that! In an instant, Walter’s life was changed by a video that garnered more attention than many of us will receive in our lifetimes. He hired an assistant to lighten his load, nearly sells out every day, and has room to think about what the next big adventure is. But unlike many who stumble into good fortune, Walter isn’t giving into lucrative visions of grandeur. He tells me he never thinks about franchising or starting a restaurant, because bureaucratic business decisions quash the real-life connections he can make with people by selling directly to them on the street. In

response to being asked if he’s considered food delivery services, he says, “See, I took off my online orders... because every time I get an order, I get pissed because I cannot see the FACE of the customer!! I cannot say ‘HI’ and ‘thank YOU!’” As for his dream after all of this fame and recognition? A bigger food cart.

I’ve enjoyed my fair share of calzones, but the panzerotti coming out of Walter’s truck are unlike anything I’ve experienced. My first bite through the delicate, crispy skin gives way to hot, cheesy filling that’s as savory as it is rich. The sensation is almost magical — my own eyes saw this pastry submerged in the deep fat fryer, and yet it’s so light and airy that I must go back for bite after bite. Walter insists the secret’s in the dough, a recipe he’s been making and perfecting for the past five years.

*After five years, do you think you’re a chef?*

“No. I am just a nice person — well, not just a nice person, I am someone who makes the *panzerotti fritti* and people like it and I like to make it. Let the people say what they think I am.”

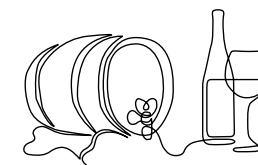
## TASTE OF FAME

“In an instant, Walter’s life was changed by a video that garnered more attention than many of us will receive in our lifetimes. He hired an assistant to lighten his load, nearly sells out every day, and has room to think about what the next big adventure is.”



Nice person, waiter, chef, dreamer, entrepreneur, newly viral internet personality. My two hours with Walter are enough to realize that all the descriptive words in the dictionary could not adequately summarize the man behind the cart. In my mind, Bari Food Cart tops the list of must-visit places in Portland, even if just for that electric smile and warm Southern Italian hospitality. The fact that Walter’s *panzerotti* are almost good enough to cure diseases is simply the cherry on top.

Before we finish, he leaves me with one last thought. In a world where success and self-worth are informed by the vastness of our legacy, it’s easy to forget that the most noble endeavors in life are sometimes ones that only affect a small subset of people. Walter communicates this idea to me with an Italian proverb: “From the small barrel, there is good wine.” And outside of Bari Food Cart’s small barrel, I’m not sure I’ve tasted better wine.





# PITTOCK MANSION

photos: Christina Kan  
words: Pittock Mansion

Pittock Mansion’s architect, Edward Foulker, grew up in Portland then trained at Stanford, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the French Ecole de Beaux-Arts. Foulkes, and his local partner, Chester J. Hogue, had a challenging client in Henry Pittock. Henry wanted an architecturally impressive house with the latest technology.



## MAKING THE CITY BLOOM

Georgiana Pittock loved roses and helped start the Portland Rose Society. She hosted their first rose show in her downtown backyard in 1889. The estate had a large cutting garden with a variety of flowers that Georgiana placed in the house. Plants included dogwoods, hydrangeas, rhododendrons, lilacs, and magnolias.











Cautious optimism bloomed in late summer, accompanied by a sense of yearning and urgency to leave our homes and escape. However, our frantic northward migration did not end up taking us to a city that never sleeps, nor a grandiose landscape made for romantic getaways. Portland seems to laugh in the face of expectations and amuse itself by encapsulating contradictions. Here is a city that is as ordinary as it is eclectic; as humble as it is self-important; as flighty as it is grounded. Both overwhelmed by its opulence and numbed by its normalcy, Caravan presents our take on Portland’s vibe:

- 01 Wannabe // Spice Girls // *Spice*
- 02 Ain’t It Fun // Paramore // *Paramore*
- 03 Imagination // Foster The People // *Imagination*
- 04 Summer // Circadian Clock // *Summer*
- 05 Strawberries & Cigarettes // Troye Sivan // *Strawberries & Cigarettes*
- 06 Passion // RAC, Louis The Child // *BOY*
- 07 Blackbird // James Smith // *Blackbird*
- 08 Stay // Mac Miller // *The Divine Feminine*
- 09 dancing in the kitchen // LANY // *dancing in the kitchen*
- 10 Kiss Me More (feat. SZA) // Doja Cat, SZA // *Kiss Me More (feat. SZA)*



words: Kat Shok  
photos: Lisi Ludwig

# CULTURE CULTIVATING UNIQUENESS

## HOW PORTLAND’S THRIFTING SCENE ENCOURAGES SUSTAINABILITY BY STAYING WEIRD

Dotting the Hawthorne District are racks and racks of clothes. Clothes right out of your most eclectic, queer, wild dreams spill out of the vintage resale shops that keep Portland fashionably weird and sustainable.

House of Vintage, sitting prettily with its turquoise storefront on Hawthorne Boulevard, is a maximalist’s fever dream. Novice and seasoned thrifters alike get an authentic taste of Portland’s vintage culture amongst the slickly dressed employees sprinkled throughout the massive store. Rooms upon winding rooms have clothes hanging from racks, doors, the walls, the ceiling, lavishing shoppers’ eyes with every fabric, texture, color, and style imaginable.



According to employee Blair, House of Vintage — one of Portland’s 50-plus vintage resale shops — is frequented about equally by tourists and Portland locals. Stocked by an array of individual vintage vendors, Blair became a regular customer at the store after moving to Portland earlier this year.

“Shopping here means being authentic,” they said excitedly while mapping out a few of their favorite outfits. “In Portland, I guess weirdness is being 100% yourself, without judgements, for inclusion. A lot of people channel it through their style — if you walk around the city, everyone’s bringing it, that weirdness.”

When Blair thrifts, their eyes scan for textures — silky, satiny, lacey, mostly. In terms of a color palette, they’ve been feeling “all-black moments” as well as lighter, pastel ensembles. Thrifting for Blair is about gut instinct and what they’re drawn to on the rack. Simply allowing an enticing color, texture, aesthetic, gender presentation, or shape to inspire experimentation is where the fun in thrifting lies — or as Blair says, “manifesting your own uniqueness.”

Arthi — sporting thrifted items and a frog backpack — agrees. After moving to Portland a couple years ago, Arthi’s found a new affinity for sustainable fashion. In addition to the unique styling they can achieve, Arthi is drawn to thrifting because it brings a sustainable lifestyle to their closet.

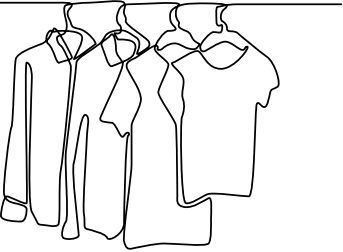
“I’d feel icky whenever I walked through Forever 21, H&M,” Arthi says. “Even if it ends up at a thrift store a few months later, at least then I’m consuming fast fashion more sustainably.”

Although nothing hurts a thrifter more than picking up a nice top and seeing that the label is from a fast fashion outlet, framing consumption in the most ethical, sustainable way possible is a hallmark of Portland’s approach to style. But Arthi notes that most



BLAIR’S TAKE ON THE CITY

“In Portland, I guess weirdness is being 100% yourself, without judgements, for inclusion. A lot of people channel it through their style — if you walk around the city, everyone’s bringing it, that weirdness.”



A, B. RYAN AND JUAN  
C, D. SCENES FROM HOUSE OF VINTAGE



of the thrifting spots in Portland are vintage resellers, as opposed to traditionally thrifty big box stores like Goodwill.

At the racks outside of House of Vintage wander Juan and Ryan. The pair are simply, sleekly dressed, with vintage-curated touches of personal aesthetic. Ryan, visiting from LA, is having an all-black moment, from his shades to his vest to his wide-legged linen trousers. While providing commentary on composition of proportion and juxtaposition of textures, Juan brings colorful excitement with his cheetah print top; the cherry on top of his outfit is his new favorite staple, cowboy boots.

Having lived in Portland for six years, Juan has observed a shift in the sustainable shopping sphere. Although he has always shopped with intention — “why make more clothes when you can reuse,” Juan posits — rising costs have become a partial barrier to infusing the style he wants into his closet.

“When I first started thrifting, I was thrifting out of necessity, you know? I’d pop into Goodwill because that’s where I could shop, that place became my style oyster,” Juan said. “But, damn, now at these vintage places, costs are high. That’s the price of originality.”

Originality should come cheap in Portland, the city that markets itself off of “keeping itself weird.” Portland’s vintage scene has cultivated a culture of normalized weirdness. No one’s afraid of sticking out because everyone is; “be yourself” isn’t a kitschy catchphrase but a true lifestyle.

And that is truly reflected by the fashionable folks at House of Vintage, who all, by chance, were queer. Not all fashionable people are queer, but all the queer people I met were in fact dressed to the nines. Society is not structured for queerness. Portland’s ecosystem of oddity, however, draws out pride for both identity and self-acceptance, which are inevitably reflected in how Portlanders dress.





‘Weird’ has a negative connotation — like unique, but in a bad way. Portland has taken back the term, and thrifters wear their weird hearts on their sleeves. “Keep Portland Weird” is the city’s reclamation of radiant, personal uniqueness in its style culture. So yeah, House of Vintage, Portland style, and the city itself are weird if weird means caring about where your clothes come from; trendy if trendiness means merging ethicality with originality; fashionable if being fashionable means living up to your own individuality.



## The Berkeley Connection

words: Lila Bock

photos: Anny Wu

# SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING BLUE

## THRIFTING IN BERKELEY

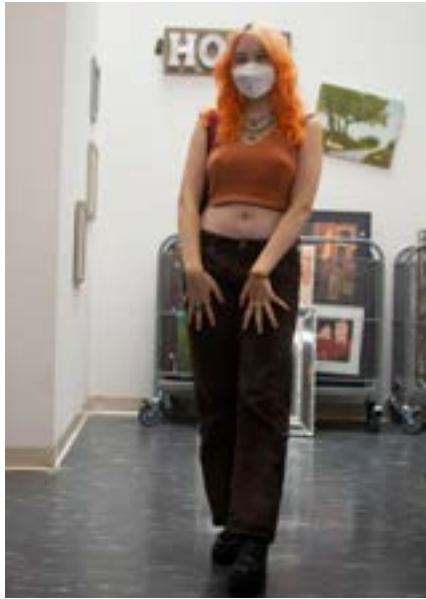
Indigo Vintage is airy, bright, breezy. Windows line the store and usher light in; they’re so large that it almost feels like the wall between the street and the store dissolves. Bass reverberates through the store, gentle hip-hop beats bleed through the speakers, and I find myself tapping my foot to the rhythm before I even realize what I’m doing. It smells like laundry day and feels like fresh-pressed sheets. The clothing, organized neatly on sturdy metal racks, pops against the bright whitewash on the walls. Two women smile at me from behind the cash register, waving me over to come join them.

Jolie and Aesha are dressed head-to-toe in second-hand clothing — Jolie sticks to a muted crewneck that hangs loosely over her shorts, hair thrown back into a casual claw clip; Aesha adorns herself in a brilliantly shiny corset and equally shiny pants, which somehow seem to fit together perfectly on her. They tell me the story of Indigo Vintage, one that’s deeply connected to its founder,

Mel Willis. Willis is only 27 years old but she’s built something of a small vintage empire, Jolie tells me proudly. Under Willis, Indigo has grown to three locations (though Aesha reassures me that the Berkeley location is “the OG location,” and thus the best one). At Indigo, individual vendors can come to sell their wares and signature styles. Because of this, every rack of clothing contrasts with the others. The store is a wonderful collage of different styles, a temple to individuality.

Working at Indigo “makes me feel good on the daily,” says Aesha. She and Jolie hope that Indigo can help their customers feel their best, too. There’s a certain fearlessness that it takes to be able to walk into a store with a discerning eye and an acceptance that the clothes may not work. Shopping is a vulnerable experience, they acknowledge. They want people to leave feeling uplifted; empowered both in their style and in their ability to pull off the most daring ensembles.





A. KALEAUH, AT GOODWILL  
B. EVA, AT GOODWILL

I let myself get pulled into Indigo’s comfortable embrace for a few more moments until I will myself to venture back into the outside world. I walk a couple of blocks west to Goodwill, which is newly remodeled and freshly reopened. Goodwill, though a bit more nondescript than Indigo, feels more familiar. The security guard who stands out front welcomes me in with a joke, which I only half hear — regardless, we share a laugh.

The first thing that hits me about Goodwill Berkeley is just how young it is. Nobody looks more than a few years older than me, with the exception of one woman perusing through the mug section. The store, though crowded, is remarkably clean — the tiled floor has not yet started to lift at the corners, the large collection of men’s jeans somehow remains (mostly) organized by size, the walls are decorated colorfully. It feels more like a signature Berkeley thrifting experience than any other Goodwill I’ve ever been in.

I meet Kaleauh and Eva, two freshmen with outfits that blend color and size and shape in a way that shouldn’t make sense but somehow they do. Kaleauh tells me proudly that they only wear clothes that they’ve thrifted. Thrifting here is more sustainable, more creative, more affordable than shopping at the expensive boutiques that populate the city.

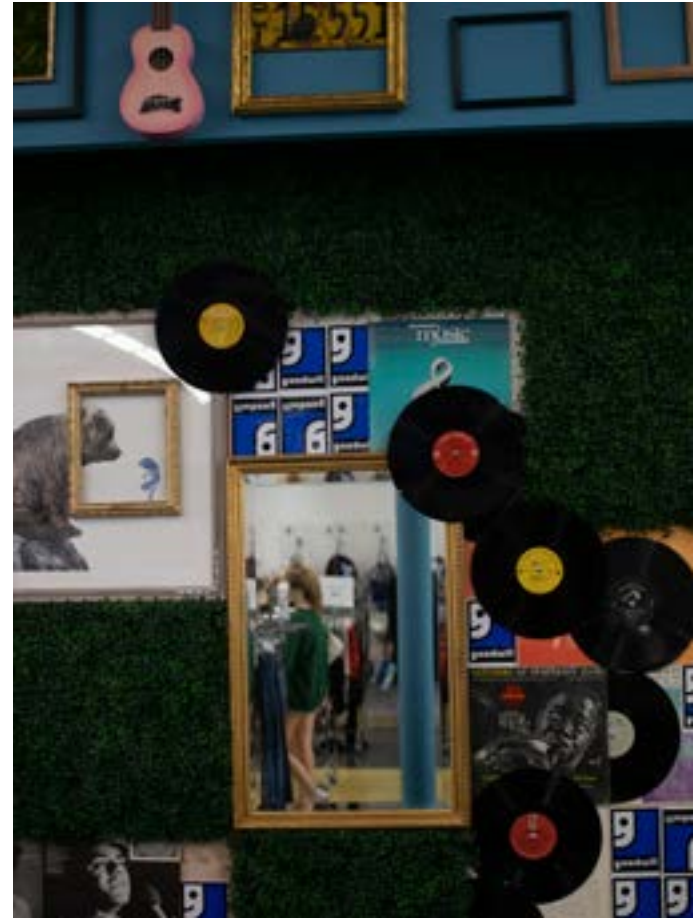
The similarities between the Indigo and Goodwill shops start and end at their mutual designation as thrift stores. Indigo Vintage is an experience, a place where the clothes are curated and the floors are clean — the prices reflect this reality. Goodwill is designed to be simple, efficient, accessible.

What’s most remarkable about both stores are the communities that lie within. The girls in low-waisted pants and brightly colored hair shower one another in compliments and fill shopping carts with imagination. So do the Cal students, the longtime Berkeley residents, the tourists from out of town, the high schoolers who look way too cool to be fifteen — we all flock to the thrift stores and shop in harmony, happy to be vulnerable with one another.

Thrifting is a lot of things to a lot of people. A source of pride, an art, something to do on a Friday afternoon. We go to these stores to find the clothes that we were destined to wear, the clothes that Aesha calls our “soulmates.” The stores are public spaces filled with people watching as every new piece is pulled off the rack. But if one can overcome the fear, they’re rewarded with the spunky, the sparkly, the patterned, the cut-out. They’re rewarded with community, with pride. As explained by another shopper: “Will I ever be the best-dressed person in a room? Maybe not. Most unique? That’d be cool.”

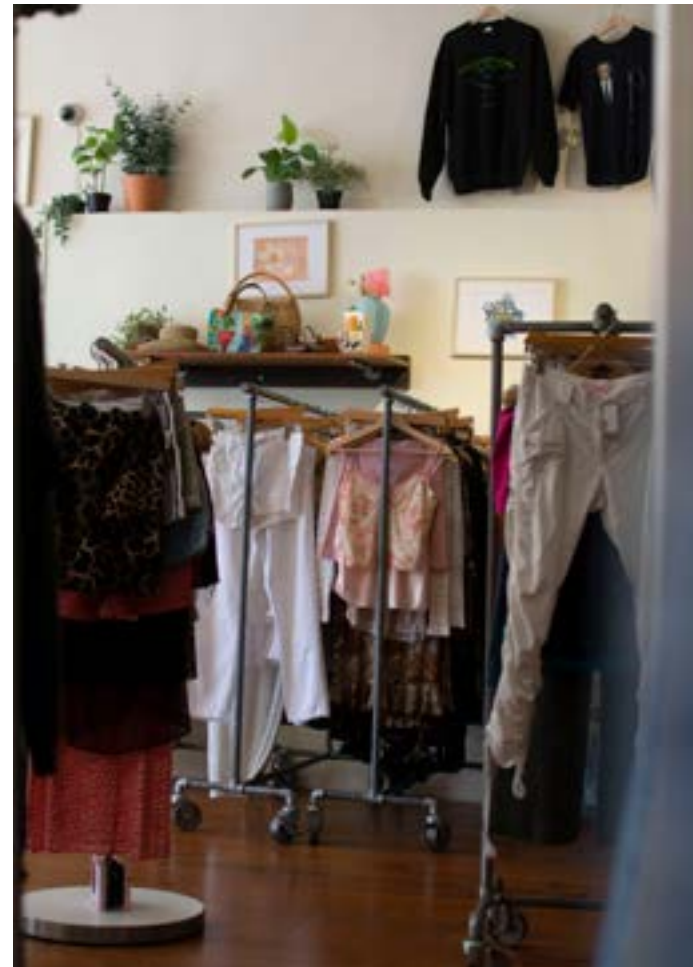
## BERKELEY GOODWILL

“Goodwill, though a bit more nondescript than Indigo, feels more familiar.”



## INDIGO VINTAGE

“Indigo Vintage is an experience, a place where the clothes are curated and the floors are clean — the prices reflect this reality.”





words: Nicole Ru  
photos: Niko Frost



# COMMERCIALIZED TREASURE

## HIDDEN CHARM OF POWELL'S CITY OF BOOKS

Bookstores have always been a source of comfort and relaxation for me. Although not every store has a little reading corner with cozy seats to curl up in, something about the interiors makes me want to stay there for hours without needing to worry about feeling out of place.

Even though our group has a fully packed day in Portland, we are miraculously running ahead of schedule when we arrive at Powell's City of Books. I have every intention of making the most of our time here — explore every corner of the store while making myself comfortable, figure out what makes the place special, and perhaps acquire a book in the process. Somehow, all three goals are more difficult than expected.

Entering into Powell's City of Books, I am simultaneously awed by the store's expansive interior and disappointed by its underwhelming initial impression. Wandering through the endless shelves of books, I face a maze of nearly identical rooms interrupted only by monotonous white walls and nondescript doorways. Fluorescent lights harshly illuminate the store, further contributing to the image of a factory building. Hardly the warm embrace I had come to expect from bookstores, and it's almost overwhelming to just browse, let alone find any specific book.

My first instinct tells me that Powell's Books is nothing more than an impressively large bookstore. Walking around, I have to wonder: what is it about Powell's that places it on any list of must-visit



places for Portland visitors? Why is this store so unanimously beloved by tourists and locals alike?

I begin to notice little details that make the interior feel more personalized. On almost every shelf hangs at least one handwritten description of a book recommended by an employee. Various displays of books and other knickknacks have been deliberately arranged by someone to showcase their favorite items. Scattered around the store are colorful blackboard signs with whimsical drawings surrounding block letters and cursive script that indicate the genres located on each shelf.

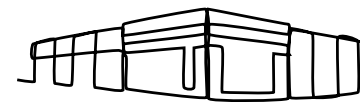
They offer a small glimpse into what makes Powell's unique — a bookstore that, despite its commercialized nature, still holds remnants of its humble beginnings

## SHIFTING VIEWS

“Walking around, I have to wonder: what is it about Powell's that places it on any list of must-visit places for Portland visitors? Why is this store so unanimously beloved by tourists and locals alike?”







as a small, independent bookstore in Chicago. Even though we don't get the chance to speak with any of the employees, we catch a glimpse into who they are through their recommendations, their handwriting, and their drawings.

Similarly, the store offers a hint of the people that have visited, both past and present. After what feels like my third time through the same room, I stumble upon a seemingly nondescript white pillar, its presence indicated only by a small golden sign reading "The Pillar of Signatude." Like the name promises, it is adorned with marks left by visiting authors through the decades, wrapping around all four sides. Looking closer, I can see the signatures of writers that I recognize, some of them accompanied by a small, hand-drawn doodle.

There is history here. Looking at the names, I could almost imagine the authors scrawling their names onto the pillar next to me. Were they there for an event? Simply browsing? How many of them were like me, coming in with one goal but then getting sidetracked by Powell's hidden treasures?



It's easy to forget that tourist attractions often have ordinary histories and stories associated with them. I often regard bookstores as magical entities that simply appear, even though they operate like any other business. Given how big of a phenomenon the store has become, it's no wonder that the reality fell short of my expectations going in.

To some extent, Powell's fame works against it; being one of Portland's top attractions is a large responsibility to shoulder. It creates an elusive reputation that one can never truly live up to.

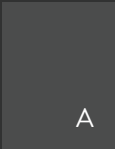
Although I am fairly certain I missed at least one room in the store, even with a map in hand, and failed to find a new book for my reading list (it's okay, at least I acquired some postcards), I have managed to discover something significant about this place.

On the surface, Powell's is simply a large bookstore, but its interior holds glimpses of the lives of people who work in and pass through the store. Even though Powell's is only one of many Portland attractions, without it, the city would undoubtedly be missing something: the stories of and around — not just within — the books.





words: Tushar Sondhi  
photos: Apollonia Cuneo



A. PORTLAND JAPANESE GARDEN  
B. LAN SU CHINESE GARDEN

# RESTLESS ROOTS

## NAVIGATING CONFLICT AT THE PORTLAND GARDENS

The Willamette River gently cuts through Portland, while Mt. Hood overlooks it from afar. Beside the city lies Forest Park, one of the largest urban parks in the United States. With such deep roots in the natural world, I am curious to see how Portland tackles one of the intersections between humans and nature.

Stepping through the Nezu Gates at the mouth of Portland Japanese Garden, I am greeted by a rock garden next to a large wooden pavilion. It's simple in its beauty — a sea of coarse white gravel surrounds two patches of grass shaped into the form of a sake cup and gourd. Evenly spaced lines follow the contours of each patch, emanating outward like waves in a still stone ocean.

Down a short hill is a small tea garden. At the entrance of the garden stands a hut-like structure, a

waiting room for guests preparing to enter. A stone path makes its way through the garden, leading over a small stream and meandering through the landscape of delicate brush and mosses. The garden sits under perfect shade — it's light enough to see the garden's features but dark enough to instill a sense of calm isolation despite the swaths of tourists crowding the area. The path ends right before it leads into a confined teahouse that's raised off the ground, but whose roof stands barely above eye level. The room is dark, yet inviting — a single dim light shines warmly over a hanging scroll of Chinese characters. Here, I could envision a tea master whisking matcha before handing me his tea bowl. I'm taken out of my trance by the swarm of people around me, reminding me that I am not a guest in a long forgotten mountain sanctuary, but rather someone who bought a 15 dollar ticket to a popular tourist attraction in one of America's famous cities.



### ROCK GARDEN

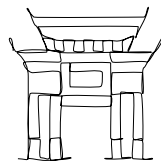
“It's simple in its beauty — a sea of coarse white gravel surrounds two patches of grass shaped into the form of a sake cup and gourd. Evenly spaced lines follow the contours of each patch, emanating outward like waves in a still stone ocean.”





## CHINATOWN REFLECTIONS

“Despite the careful attention paid to maintaining Chinese cultural authenticity, something was amiss. Where I expected a bustling community, I found a gate, a garden, and not much else.”



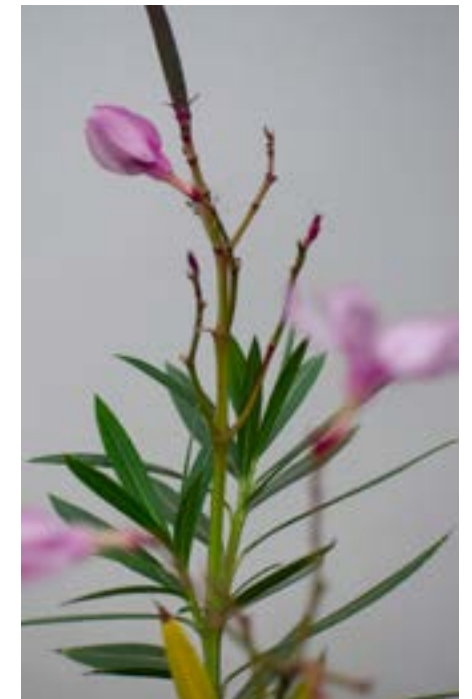
The Lan Su Garden in Old Town Chinatown is an entirely different experience. Whereas the Japanese garden is dark and subdued, Lan Su is bright and open. Here, water plays a central role; a small pond stands at the center of Lan Su, decorated with lotus and koi. The paved paths circle the pond, with small huts and willows providing shelter from the sun as one looks into the water or away at the trees and flowers which adorn the sides of the pathways. Once again, there’s a teahouse at one end of the garden, but it is large — and designed to be a commercial shop instead of ceremonial ground.

The Japanese Garden and Lan Su are obviously meticulously crafted and maintained. Both gardens were built by scholars, architects, and gardeners from Japan and China. The Japanese Garden’s tea house was built entirely in Japan and brought to the United States in several pieces, and the builders of Lan Su used stones from Lake Tai in Suzhou. However, my sense of emptiness was undeniable after visiting Old Town Chinatown. Despite the careful attention

paid to maintaining Chinese cultural authenticity, something was amiss. Where I expected a bustling community, I found a gate, a garden, and not much else.

Prior to World War II, Old Town Chinatown was in fact a Japantown. Following Japanese internment, it was laid to waste and later transformed into a Chinatown. However, by the time the district was finally developed, the increase in property prices led many of the Chinese residents to leave. Lan Su was built as part of a sister city partnership with Suzhou in the early 2000s to revitalize the district, but it seemed more like a small beacon in an empty sea.

The Japanese Garden was built throughout the 1960s to 1980s partially as an act of forgiveness for internment, and to heal Japanese-American relations. Today, it houses the Japan Institute which helps spread knowledge and awareness of Japanese art and culture.



Knowing the histories of both gardens sends me deep in thought — clearly, there is a sustained effort by the people involved to maintain the authenticity of the experience provided by each garden, but this cannot change the contexts surrounding them. When I consider both, I am simultaneously enamored by the aesthetic qualities of the locations and disillusioned by their lack of integration into the surrounding communities.

These emotions are irreconcilable, but are likely born from my own naivety. Admittedly, most things in the world are marred by a dark history. Every city in the U.S. has a past rife with racism and discrimination. The existence of this country as a whole lies on a foundation laid out by colonizers who massacred an entire people at first sight.

For the Japanese Garden, there is a clear motivation not only to maintain the garden, but also to spread knowledge and interest in Japanese culture through the cultural center. Despite the lack of a Japanese cultural presence around it, that community had long disappeared by the time the garden was built. I feel that I can accept the history as is, and simply be thankful for the change in Portland’s cultural landscape today.

The same cannot be said about Lan Su. It was built in the already established Old Town Chinatown, but has done little for the surrounding community. As recently as five years ago, Chinese residents in Portland had to fight aggressive rebranding and renaming of the district. From a visitor’s perspective, stepping into Old Town Chinatown was a far cry from Chinatowns in San Francisco or New York City. Navigating my way through a bustling street with 50 open doors to different restaurants enticing me with innumerable variations on Chinese cuisine, countless banners flying over my head advertising something completely unknown to me — experiences I had come to expect from a Chinatown were nowhere to be found. While admittedly, Lan Su is a marvel for what they have accomplished within their walls, it may just be a diamond placed on a blanket of coals — a distraction from a community that the city has purged.







words: Miranda Li  
photos: Niko Frost



# AERIAL EFFERVESCENCE

## SWIFTS SIGHTING AT CHAPMAN ELEMENTARY

What stands before me was once an entryway. Now, a thorny, overgrown thicket with gnarled branches reaches across the opening of a gated chain link fence. It seems a good representation of this year — closed off, canceled, or simply forgotten. But are centuries of natural phenomena bound to these fleeting human trends?

Past the tangle of foliage and up a grassy, golden hill, another world emerges. Laughter and chatter ring in my ears as groups of eager sightseers are enjoying the last moments of the day's light, lounging on picnic blankets and basking in the sun's golden glow. It's an eclectic mix of people: elderly couples, groups of young adults, children. The little ones dance around the schoolyard and seem to find unrivaled jubilation in the most simple pleasures, lugging sheets of cardboard larger than themselves up the hill, throwing their arms up, and sliding down.

The evening air is warm with a slight breeze, the prickly grass beneath my toes a constant reminder we are in nature's embrace. The stage is set up perfectly, if there is to be a show. Onlookers around us buzz with anticipation, and questions float through the air. Is it too early this year? Will the swifts even come? My thoughts echo their words. Uncertainty has been the theme of the last couple months (years, even), and it is difficult to know what you can count on.

But among the inconsistencies and irregularities, the uncertainties and unpredictabilities, the Vaux's swifts prove to be one of Portland's few unwavering constants. As the sun kisses the horizon, transforming the sky to hues of blush and lilac and burnt orange, the first birds begin to gather in the sky. Initially, the handful of floating specks evoke thoughts of a couple sailors, lost at sea. And maybe ten seconds pass or maybe it's ten minutes and then there



are thousands and they are the sea, each bird a droplet in an all-encompassing tidal wave.

The form of this gathering of thousands truly seems more liquid than solid, a free-flowing matter whose movements are dictated by forces I cannot see. At a moment's notice, a fleeting thought, the entire flock shifts directions, expanding to fill the sky then abruptly contracting, their movements fluid as if they are subject to their own laws of matter and motion. It is seeing a painting come to life before me and they are the brush and the medium, using airy strokes and swirls to paint the sky dark where it once shone periwinkle. Around me is a carefully constructed orchestra playing the score of pure elation — a symphony of thousands of chirps is joined with whoops and cheers from the audience, shrieks of delight from the children.

They swoop and dive toward the entrance as they pass, none entering — as if they are daring each other to be the first, as if they are playing a game of chicken.



## TIDAL WAVE

“Initially, the handful of floating specks evoke thoughts of sailors, lost at sea. And maybe ten seconds pass or maybe it's ten minutes and then there are thousands and they are the sea, each bird a droplet in an all-encompassing tidal wave.”





When the first does enter, though, the chain reaction it sets off is immediate. The flock begins to mobilize in a massive whorl, a spinning aerial display in the sky. At its base, the swifts condense into a tight spiral, a tornado, a natural disaster — no, phenomenon — one that is breathtaking to behold. The birds funnel into the chimney at rates of up to one hundred a second, yet the process does not stop, does not seem to slow as if there is an unlimited supply of tiny dancers in the sky.

I think if this were a different era, if I had not come to witness this very natural phenomenon, perhaps I would be met with an impending sense of doom, at this dark, churning cloud descending from the sky. Instead, I see vitality, continuity, and effervescent life in their form.

These Vaux's swifts have been migrating through Portland, finding temporary respite by infiltrating and roosting in this very chimney since the early 1980s. They have returned every year, without fail, but not without facing their fair share of obstacles. They returned in 2000, after Portland's residents raised \$60,000 to renovate the chimney and update the building's heating system. They returned in 2003, when a seismic stabilization system was installed to maintain the landmark. They returned in the smoky summer of 2020, when the air was too thick to see and too hazardous to breathe. For me, the show tonight is a once-in-a-lifetime event to behold, but for the birds in this flock this will be every day: one stop, one night along their flight from Canada to Central America.

Their presence comforts me — knowing that despite it all, the birds will continue to come, the local community will continue to safely gather, and nature and its processes carry on. While our lives may have faced a momentary pause, the natural world is filled with reprise and renewal, and the swifts inaugurate this through the latest chapter of their annual passage South.





