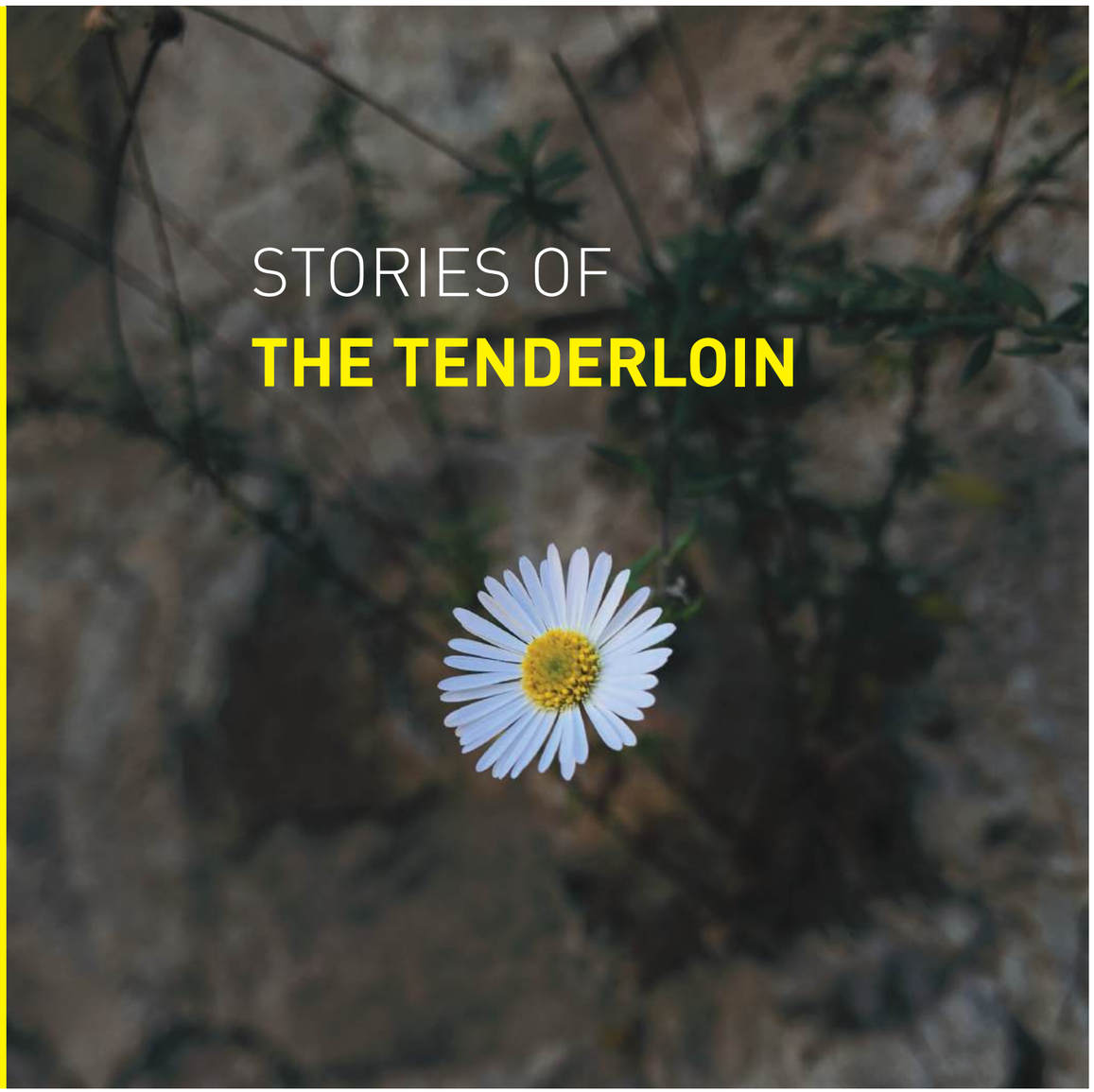
STORIES OF **THE TENDERLOIN**

wildflowers institute




For Marion, who freed us
to explore and discover our
true purpose in life



STORIES OF **THE TENDERLOIN**:

Created by Hidden Gems II Awardees and Curated by Hanmin Liu and Jennifer Mei, Wildflowers Institute



Artists and creative individuals are illuminating a community "touched by the better angels of human nature" (Abraham Lincoln, 1861).

Longtime resident artists of the Tenderloin—one of San Francisco's most dynamic neighborhoods—are offering a new narrative of their community and paving the way for healing, growth, and innovation in the face of gentrification and displacement.

The dark and gritty side of the Tenderloin has received extensive public attention. The neighborhood is viewed as being beyond repair and a lost cause. But local artists who have lived and/or worked there for decades shine a different light on the neighborhood. Many of them have escaped from death in war and from countries in political turmoil. Others have been treated as outcasts and misfits by their family and friends.

They come to the Tenderloin vulnerable and seriously wounded to seek refuge and begin anew. Immigrants, refugees, and people of color begin to get organized the only way they know how—by applying the teachings of their parents and elders and what they learned from the myths and stories they were once told in their place of origin. Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, and queers build a safe haven to protect themselves from the kind of violence and abuse inflicted on them in the past for being who they are. In a cloistered new space, they renew their journey to explore and discover their meaning and purpose in life.



Yet other resident artists born and raised in the neighborhood bear witness to the social and racial injustices inflicted on the most vulnerable and injured souls. These artists see how the conventional approach to treating such individuals—"draining the swamps" and "locking them up"—is wrong and ill-informed.

In 2018, Wildflowers Institute made a call to local artists to submit artwork that tells a story of the Tenderloin. Entitled the Hidden Gems II Program, the institute offered $1,000 grant awards to individual artists chosen by an independent selection committee based on the merits of their story. When we invited the artists to share their story, we had no idea what kind of stories would be submitted. They could have been any story. But what emerged from the stack of artworks was a common perspective of what works in the community.

Artists and creative people from all walks of life have created a window to seeing new pathways toward resiliency. What they offer us is a collection of stories making explicit a culture that has formed a nurturing social environment conducive to healing and growth. The stories bring attention to the human experience of adapting and growing in a crucible of colliding internal and external forces that result in social change. The original artworks and stories made visible a creative force that turns struggle and suffering into healing, innovation, and repair of the community's social fabric.

Stories of the Tenderloin highlights the universality of being free to express and be oneself. The stories illustrate the diversity of life and the importance of having a deeper understanding of and respect for others in the neighborhood.

Guided by these values, Hidden Gems II Awardees depict the importance of caring with an open and tender heart, protecting others and being protected, and practicing the healing arts.

They affirm their continuing pursuit of exploring what is sacred within, between, and among people in the Tenderloin. Indeed, they underscore the power of self-reflection in adapting and growing in a new environment.

This culture has enabled local residents to establish seven self-generated communities within the neighborhood. Moreover, it has produced a code of conduct that brings Blacks, Chinese, Latinos, Filipinos, Middle Easterners, Southeast Asians, and the LGBTQ together to interact and develop the commons.

The Hidden Gems II Ceremony was supported by the San Francisco Arts Commission, L37 Partners, Marion Weber, Kalliopeia Foundation, and Wildflowers contributors. The project began in 2014 with a grant from ArtPlace America to map the artists in the Tenderloin. ArtPlace is a collaboration of foundations, banks, and federal agencies that works to position art and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development in order to help strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities.





CARING

Yuki Togawa's Story about a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich

Yuki was homeless and hungry and waiting in line for a sheltered bed.

The woman standing next to her had a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for her dinner. When the woman realized that Yuki was hungry, she split the sandwich and gave Yuki half. They both had something to put in their stomachs. Yuki smiled as she said to the woman, "Wow, this is delicious!"

Then Yuki thought, "But I have nothing to give to her . . . I didn't have anything on me." So Yuki took out a piece of paper and with a pencil she wrote "love" in a large hanzi character.

She drew the character big and fat to fill the whole page. She then gave the woman the paper and described to her that the Japanese character means love. Many years later, Yuki had completely forgotten about that encounter and what the woman looked like. But one day in the Tenderloin, the same lady who gave Yuki half of her sandwich came up to her and said, "I remember you." She took out this old raggedy and broken-up wallet folded in half. There were no bills in the wallet, but from the bill section, the lady took out a piece of paper and opened it up. It was Yuki's piece of paper with the word love on it. With an intense look and happy smile Yuki said, "Yeah . . . that's the Tenderloin."

"In my video, *And We Got Down*, I have the chance as a filmmaker to help bring a smile and joy to others as well as myself . . . [and] I found once again how giving my neighbors are—with their time, their talent, and their honesty."[1]

Dorian Brockington

[1]Excerpt from the narrative *And We Got Down* by Dorian Brockington (2019).



Dorian Brockington (left) and three neighbors

"*Come Visit the Tenderloin* is my video about the Tenderloin, [I sing about] my village [that cares about the community]. . . . An international area with thousands of people under our heaven-created paradise skies—Laotians, Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodians."[2]

Peter Sophabmixay and Jirawat Phookongchana

[2]Excerpt from *Come Visit the Tenderloin* by Peter Sophabmixay and Jirawat Phookongchana (2019).



Peter Sophabmixay and Jirawat Phookongchana performing "Come Visit the Tenderloin"

"My work, *Present Beauty*, embodies the essence of those I encounter in the Tenderloin. The regal nature and compassion of their familiar spirit animals are visible in their bearing and carriage. The homeless and those in hospice are our most tender and vulnerable citizens and their service animals create a source of spontaneous love and beauty in the present moment."[3]

Axel Craig Osterberg



Portraits from *Present Beauty*

[3]Excerpt from the narrative *Present Beauty* by Axel Craig Osterberg (2019).

"*RIP Gangway* is a public sculpture which I installed close to 841 Larkin Street, the former home to the oldest gay bar in San Francisco. It's my gift to the neighborhood. . . . [also my] strong commitment [to care for and] to honor [its] past . . . [the] places and the people who inhabited them."[4]

Rik Lee Leipold

[4]Excerpt from the narrative *RIP Gangway* by Rik Lee Leipold (2019).



RIP Gangway

"As narrated in my video, *My Heart Belongs to the Tenderloin*, I serve the [Tenderloin] Cambodian community and lift the spirit of my community in the Tenderloin. . . . It always make[s] me feel so happy to see my clients smile. . . . I love the Tenderloin."[5]

Chansothearun Lopez

[5]Excerpt from *My Heart Belongs to the Tenderloin* by Chansothearun Lopez (2019).

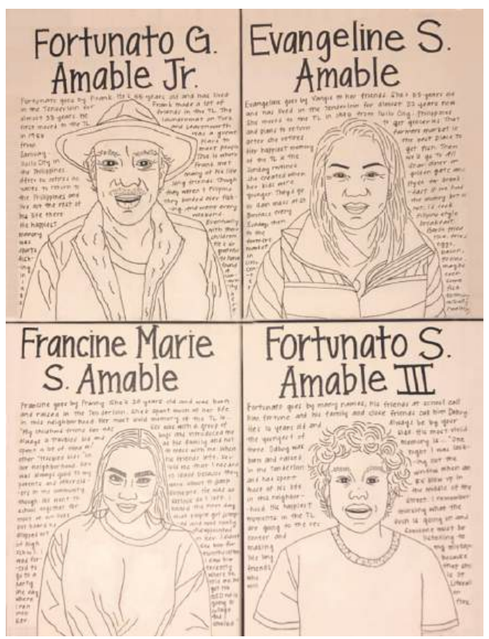


Chansothearun Lopez

"*Anecdotal Tales* . . . is centered around capturing the voices and stories of my family living in the Tenderloin. . . . [Their] stories have made them who they are today and significantly define their relationships with the people in the neighborhood."[6]

Mary Claire Salmingo Amable

[6]Excerpt from the narrative ***Anecdotal Tales*** by Mary Claire Salmingo Amable (2019).



Anecdotal Tales

All the Heart Can Hold

So Emilio was really jamming out, Sunday night. I hear they were drinking and got into another fight. You called the cops. Or at least the cops say you did. I haven't been of the right mind to knock on your door to ask. If you did, I wish you had waited and called me when I got home . . .

Calling the cops was a stupid mistake. It's a bad habit a lot of people share. I understand why people call them. There is some mega-scary drama out there. But calling cops in this neighborhood is like putting King Kong into a fight between Mothra and Godzilla. Inevitably the biggest loser is Tokyo.

I'm pissed. Yeah, I'm pissed that one phone call can ruin so many lives. Emilio has a wife and a twelve-year-old daughter in Reno. His boyfriend was sending money to his grandparents and a kid brother somewhere in Veracruz. You need to own that.

Give it some hard thought next time you find yourself awake at three in the morning. I'm tripled pissed that a middle-class white woman makes a call and the cops actually show up! BTW—Don't even think about telling any of your friends that there might be a vacancy here. I mean it. . . .

There are good things happening here. It's not just crazy shit. People care. We argue a lot, but we got each other's back. Somebody gets sick. Someone else finds out about it and lets everybody else know. If we know what hospital, people visit. Even the homeless. Especially the homeless. They are more used to going out to different parts of the City. So even if you are way out like in Visitacion Valley, somebody will check in on you. . . .

. . . People who care about each other this way can't be said to belong to the Dark.[7]

Jesse James Johnson

[7]Excerpt from "All the Heart Can Hold" by Jesse James Johnson (2019).

Misty and Rainy Before Sunrise in the Tenderloin

Just before sunrise in the Tenderloin, it feels cold and foggy, with a light drizzle. The water drops resting on the tree leaves feel frosty. Yet I don't feel cold. Instead, I find the people's hearts are warm and full. During such early mornings, I like to sit down in a cozy place between the sky above and the earth below, gazing at the beauty of our mists, blossoms, and meadows of our Tenderloin community.

In the sky above, the views of the misty, cloudy formations and their beautiful shapes are nature's gifts from the heavens. The mists, clouds, and heavens above traverse the tips of the Tenderloin skyscrapers and fill our senses with spirits, beauty, and poetic mystique; down by the earth, at a close view, our meadows are covered by the misty fog.

In that moment, one can breathe in a richer spring mist scent from the Little Green Grass than from the flower blossoms on the foggy meadows.

In my heart of hearts, the soul of the Tenderloin is the most elegant and graceful, because it frees my soul, makes me feel joyous, and allows me to discover my true self. Just before the sun rises, the fog surrounds all of the Tenderloin's houses, high-rises, parks, . . . and the homeless and I on the streets have all become part of this invisible landscape of the Tenderloin fog.[8]

Qiu Yun Wei

Translated by Winston Tseng, Siu Han Cheung, and Anni Chung

[8]Excerpt from "Misty and Rainy Before Sunrise in the Tenderloin" by Qiu Yun Wei (2019).

"After fleeing the atrocities of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia [and] regardless of my language barriers, community members were supportive and welcoming, as expressed in my video, *Communication and Community in the Tenderloin*. I keep the Tenderloin close to my heart and say thank you, God."[9]

Sibo Keo

[9]Excerpt from *Communication and Community in the Tenderloin* by Sibo Keo (2019).



Sibo Keo

Little Grass Likes

We are like grass growing in the Tenderloin, young shoots with no names;
We come from all walks of life, living together in the Tenderloin;
Each with different strokes, converging into a community in the Tenderloin;
Each with different lived experiences, but having common aspirations;
Within our rich Tenderloin community, we are bathed with natural sunshine and rain droplets;
Like the coming of spring after the winter rain, we continue to flourish, grow, and mature!

Hu Wei

Translated by Winston Tseng, Siu Han Cheung, and Anni Chung

Forever Young Little Grass

The Tenderloin Little Grass Elderly Choir was formed by a group of seniors with silver hair! We come from the four seas and the five lakes. We are from the grassroots community, where our voices are often suppressed. But the fury within us never burns out, and the spring winds fuel our fires once more! We use our voices to express our feelings of gratitude for sharing and pursuing common aspirations! We sing about our fulfilling, happy lives! We sing about our shared purpose in life. To unite us, we take concerted actions . . . for the sake of showing our hearts are united, our voices sing in unison. We learn from one another and learn to correct inaccurate tones and syllables. We also gain an understanding of musical theory and knowledge and how to better support one another. We are like blades of grass in a meadow that no one notices.

Yet we are never lonely because we always have one another. We never worry. You can see my companions in all corners of the world. We kneel together, sharing and confessing heart-to-heart. Whether at a New Year's party, a birthday party, July 4th celebration, an anniversary party, or other celebrations, you may find our Little Grass Elderly Choir members there performing and hear our voices singing. At these celebrations, the choir members are dressed up with style and elegance, and members look younger than their years. Our voices and songs bring joy to everyone and applause from the crowds.

The Little Grass that is cultivated by natural sunlight, bathing from the river waters and nurturing from the earth, will flourish and grow brighter and more magnificent than the brilliance and colors of a hundred flowers and more. Just amazing!

These willing members of the Little Grass Elderly Choir help bring joy to every home and neighbor they visit, and they help all of us in the Tenderloin to get in a good mood through their songs. At the same time, they highlight the value of the elderly and their contributions to the community.

We want to especially commend Mrs. Siu Han Cheung Kwan, the director of the Little Grass Elderly Choir and the founder of the Tenderloin Chinese Rights Association, for her tremendous dedication and commitment to the choir. Our achievements today would not be possible without her leadership.

May the Little Grass Elderly Choir continue to grow and prosper! We will never grow old because we are young at heart.

Xiao Mei Li

Translated by Winston Tseng and Anni Chung

The Tenderloin

The place I admire yet neglect to live by a code of the streets that everyone is so used to living by. That's just how things are done here in the Tenderloin.

People know to silence their mouths when they see something violent happen. Like Jack told Helen ain't no telling. The less you see the better. It's just how we get by living in the Tenderloin.

With over 10 years of being a resident of the Tenderloin I have noticed the culture is so diverse. I see the change that has taken place in the Tenderloin. . . .

You gotta be down here in the Tenderloin if you wanna know what I'm talking about. I see many different faces comprised of different races witnessing folks gathering from different places all to be raised right here in the Tenderloin. . . .

When I step outside my door onto these dangerous yet beautiful streets of the Tenderloin my heart goes out to the man I see sitting against a wall with a tourniquet tied around his arm. He doesn't even notice me as I walk by. He is so focused on shooting a brownish substance into his veins and getting his fix. It saddens me when a random woman walks up to me and begs me for change so she could go and get something to eat. It angers me when I see a couple arguing in the middle of the street making a huge scene. And lastly it disgusts me when we the people of the Tenderloin let the police get away with what they do wrong. It's our responsibility to make sure that the police are held accountable for their wrongdoings . . . [10]

Kimberly Jefferson

[10]Excerpt from "The Tenderloin" by Kimberly Jefferson (2019).

Friends Forever

We will always be friends, reflecting on the many, shared memories throughout our life's journey.

Those special moments when we meet again smell as sweet as flowers and are so heartwarming.

When you feel joy, I also feel joy. Those joyful emotions when we are together foster fond memories and strengthen our bonds.

Our bonds will never be broken. The strength of our bonds is mountain high, as strong as the earth and as pure as water.

We love one another, care for one another, and are the best of the friends no matter where we are.

All friends, new or old, our souls bond together like a beautiful, natural landscape.

We will forever be young at heart. The best of times together remains always in our hearts.

Tomorrow's Tenderloin will continue to change and be a new world inclusive of people from all walks of life.

Time pushes ahead, and we follow. Following each new generation's heartbeat, each generation keeps moving forward and never stops.[11]

Siu Kwan Man Mui

Translated by Winston Tseng and Siu Han Cheung

[11] Lyrics from the song "Friends Forever" composed by Siu Kwan Man Mui (2019).



PROTECTING

Winnie Phan's Story about Standing Up

Winnie Phan was born and raised in the Tenderloin and is setting the moral code in her family and in the neighborhood. She recalls the many times she and her cousins were fat shamed or were subject to other similar kinds of hurtful name-calling in school and at family gatherings.

Being her family's third oldest among those siblings and cousins in their thirties, she did what others chose not to do. She recounts memories of the pain and vulnerability of the younger generation in her family. Wiping her eyes with a tissue, she says, "Having me to do better for them and having to stand up for them—recognizing them for who they are and what they believed in." She looks up at the ceiling and says thoughtfully, "It's not many of them that have to go through a lot and many of them went through high school very easily. But, the tradition and expectations of the family on the younger generations are very hard on them."

Her extended family expects their children to become doctors and lawyers and to marry before having a kid. Through her own experiences and working with youth at the Boys and Girls Clubs in the neighborhood, Winnie knows that a generative life in America doesn't start with sons and daughters striving to be what their parents want them to be. It starts with the parents and the older generation understanding and accepting their children first as they are. When her family had considerable difficulty accepting that one of their children had a preference for the same sex and they couldn't understand why, she stood up for him and helped the family see "it's not the way he thinks, it's the way he was born."

Amazing Lady Fighter, Connie Moy!

Connie Moy retired after working for 30 years. Tenderloin is a community where she can afford to rent. She lives in Maria Manor and enjoys her retirement; the owner of Maria Manor sold the building to a company from Los Angeles in 1999. She got a letter from the new owner that said: "All tenants must move out in one year." Most households are low-income retired or disabled people. It's really hard to find another affordable home. All households are very worried and sad every day. Days slip away, in the last three months, Connie and four other tenants went to the San Francisco City Hall to ask for help. They wait outside the Mayor's office, they hope Mayor Brown can meet them, but he is too busy.

They wait for five, six or seven hours a day, leisurely. In the last month, they thought there was no hope, crying with a headache only. But they encourage each other, never give up! God, never burden the people of bitter heart! Mayor Brown had just returned to the office and saw that they were crying, he stopped to ask what happened and invited them to the office, he heard the reason and immediately met with the new owner to discuss, he learned that they are from Los Angeles and are the key members of the speculators, Mayor Brown was very angry and told them to roll back to Los Angeles, also tell them not to rob the houses in San Francisco, because San Francisco is a great place to live and work, a city that everyone can afford. About a month later TNDC bought and took over Maria Manor. Ms. Connie and all the residents living in the Maria Manor enjoy the leap year from that time![12]

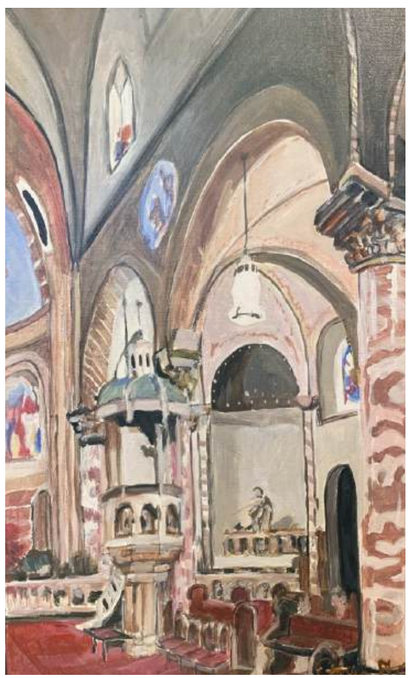
Connie Moy

[12]Excerpt from "Amazing Lady Fighter, Connie Moy!" (2019).

"This piece, *Father Dedacus's View*, *2019*, is set inside of Saint Boniface Catholic Church on Golden Gate Avenue with a view of the space where Father Dedacus would play the organ. The perspective is of [his] view of the altar. It was a space that I always went to because I felt safe there."[13]

Ethel Hays

[13]Excerpt from the narrative ***Father Dedacus's View, 2019*** by Ethel Hays (2019).



Father Dedacus's View, 2019

From the Fire the Phoenix Rises

From the Fire the Phoenix Rises,
Flying up, as from its tomb,
And as a star, ascends to Heaven,
the Butterfly, breaks,
from its cocoon,
Like a candle's Flame, In darkness,
Burning bright, in blackest night,
And waking up, from a nightmare,
And catching, morning in your sight,
At the end of a Long journey,
To enter through, the opened door,
and in your heart,
there holds a secret,
And Love Lives on,
Forever more,[14]

Lynn Tribble

[14]Excerpt from "From the Fire the Phoenix Rises" by Lynn Tribble (2019).



Lynn Tribble

"The man in the piece, *The Tenderloin Worker*, portrays the American worker. He is pushing a shopping cart filled with his personal items, and anything else the streets of the Tenderloin provide. He represents the plight of the homeless in a country with profound inequality."

Charles Blackwell



The Tenderloin Worker

Tenderloin Streets
Hoping to find what they lost,
To bring back the days
When life was not so hard.
Strangers stop to stare,
Shake their heads in disdain,
Never knowing the truth of their pain.
Their shame.
And still they soldier on
Perhaps, down a street
Or in some alley
They will find their answers.
But for now, another drink,

Another shot, another hit
Makes the cold, dank night bearable
As they go along,
In perpetual motion
Pushing their precious cargo
Of fading memories
And rain-soaked, broken dreams.
Through the tender streets
They roam
Going somewhere
Going nowhere.[15]

Zoriya

[15]Excerpt from "Tender Streets" by Zoriya (2019).

"Walking to the Mailbox, Guitaring in Tenderloin, Rise and Shine! These images are provocative as they document the plight of the homeless who are integrally part of Tenderloin. My purpose is to acknowledge their humanity and tell a visual story about three nameless denizens of Tenderloin."[16]

Jon Lee

[16]Excerpt from the narrative ***Walking to the Mailbox, Guitaring in Tenderloin, Rise and Shine!*** by Jon Lee (2019).



Walking to the Mailbox



Guitaring in Tenderloin



Rise and Shine!

"The Social Practice Art of Rick Darnell and Jeff Marshall. The body of [this] work is best represented by a series of arts interventions, ongoing, multigenerational projects taking place in the Tenderloin."[17]

Rick Darnell and Jeff Marshall

[17]Excerpt from the narrative *The Social Practice Art of Rick Darnell and Jeff Marshall* (2019).



The Social Practice Art of Rick Darnell and Jeff Marshall

Hamilton is a super show but at 400 bucks a pop for a ticket it's not for everyone to see

Thomas Albietz

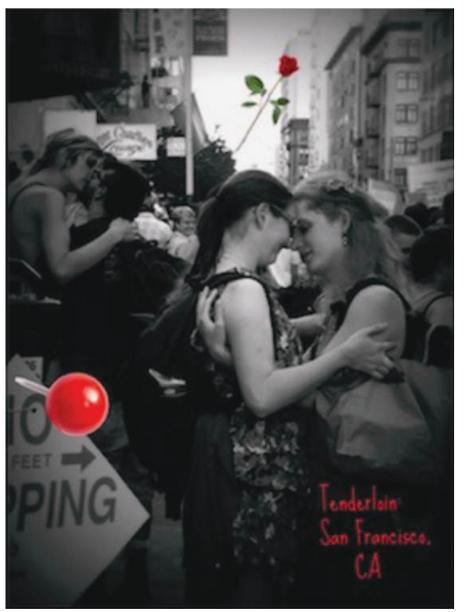


Hamilton is a super show but at 400 bucks a pop for a ticket it's not for everyone to see

"*Transitions* reveals that one of the really powerful things about the story of the Tenderloin for queer people is that even in the 1960s it was one of the last places—almost on Earth—that transgender and other marginal queers could seek out a livable life, find community and find ways to feel safe. What happens to those people when they get pushed out."[18]

Lizette Alvarez

[18]Excerpt from the narrative *Transitions* by Lizette Alvarez (2019).



Trans Couples Embrace©2014 Transmarch

"My Experience Living in Tenderloin is a portrait of me and my dog. My experience living in Tenderloin showed me what America is all about. Their plan for people like me, who refuse to conform to the new world order mold, is to land them in the Tenderloin."[19]

Khalid Rasool

[19]Excerpt from the narrative ***My Experience Living in Tenderloin*** by Khalid Rasool (2019).



My Experience Living in Tenderloin

"My subject for this work titled ***Ataturk of Turk Street*** is a man from the local Tenderloin area [who] appeared to be a strong survivor of his environment."[20]

Anthony Horn

[20]Excerpt from the narrative ***Ataturk of Turk Street*** by Anthony Horn (2019).



Ataturk of Turk Street

"In my artwork 'The Unseen' [I note that] I come from a long line of strong women!! We are the Tenderlonians, we never give up! . . . As we learn to communicate, we begin to organize And lead our community forward To Our visions. . . . We begin to hold hands. Then we begin to Hold One Another—to make a difference in our community."[21]

Kim Mosteiro



[21]Excerpt from the narrative "The Unseen" by Kim Mosteiro (2019).

"*The Modest Abode*. Many people in the Tenderloin live in modest homes. My painting illustrates the warmth that can be invited into a simple room. They do the best to make the most out of their modest homes."[22]

Lisa Maria Barbas

[22]Excerpt from the narrative *The Modest Abode* by Lisa Maria Barbas (2019).



The Modest Abode

"*Working in the TL so I Can Buy a Kitten* is my perception of the Tenderloin. I push a trash cart and pick up trash and needles. I walk through the TL five days a week amid the chaos so I will be able to buy a kitten and maybe help clean up a little bit. I try to recruit a few people to help the TL look better."[23]

Eric Lewis Basher



Working in the TL so I Can Buy a Kitten

[23]Excerpt from the narrative ***Working in the TL so I Can Buy a Kitten*** by Eric Lewis Basher (2019).

"The video of *Hefty Baggett* is the drag alter ego of James Pounders Jr. . . . Hefty always wants to help give a voice to groups feeling marginalized and helps James speak his truth . . . about AIDS, safe-sex, equality, and other LGBTQ issues. . . . Although illness and surgeries have slowed Hefty and James quite a bit, they are both always ready to lend their talent and voices to support the people in the Tenderloin."[24]

James Pounders Jr.

[24]Excerpt from the narrative *Hefty Baggett* by James Pounders Jr. (2019).



Hefty Baggett *Courtesy of Skywatchers|ABD Productions*



HEALING

Kimberly Jefferson's Profound Story of Her Healing

Kimberly is a mother who was addicted to crack and sought attention by cutting. Years ago she was walking with a man in the neighborhood near Boeddeker Park and she asked him for some crack. He ignores her. She stops and looks at him and insists that he give her a piece of crack. He walks on as if he didn't see or hear her. She makes a scene, screaming at him, "If you think I am playing, I swear to God, if you don't give me a piece of crack, I'm going to kill myself." He continues to walk up the hill as if she's not there. She opens a razor-sharp package knife and cuts her forearms . . . ssh, ssh, ssh. The man gets so scared at what she does to herself that he runs up the hill and disappears. The next thing Kimberly knows she's in the hospital.

She says, "That was a really, really bad time in my life. I was [feeling] really low and on drugs. And what I got from that situation was that I needed to . . . do something different. I need to get off drugs [and] to find a place to stay. Everything was all bad. As I look back on it now, I am glad I didn't die. I could have easily died . . . all that blood loss . . . that's what I was trying for . . . I was really going for it. I was really tired."

But what made Kimberly decide to change her life was her daughter's reaction when Kimberly reached down to pick her up. The cuts and bruises on Kimberly's arms frightened her daughter so much that she began to scream and cry. It was as if her daughter saw a monster. All of Kimberly's efforts to reassure her daughter that she was her mother were futile. This was not Kimberly's first suicide attempt, but her daughter's reaction to this attempt was the tipping point. And Kimberly decided not to cut herself thereafter. This incident with her daughter was the beginning of Kimberly's healing.

Moments after Kimberly shared this story with us, she begins to say, “I have . . . I am going to start crying. I have overcome a lot. It’s powerful!” Moving her head from side to side, she says, “I didn’t think I could do it. Now I have my own place, I have two dogs and a cat, a husband. I mean, I am not as happy as I want to be. But I could be out there [on the streets] and still be on drugs. I mean, I don’t have my mom, but she is with me.” Kimberly raises her right hand and points to the sky. “I have my family. You know what I am saying. That was the most important thing that I wanted in my life. And I don’t think I could have all of this love and everything if I didn’t meet my family. That’s the main thing that made me make it through, it’s my family!”



Kimberly Jefferson

"*Sanctuary City of San Francisco* represents the 'beacon' or backdrop and the Tenderloin represents the District where everything transpires. It is in this neighborhood that we come for support to manifest our dreams. Most of the major healing that I have done in my life occurred on the streets, SROs, hotels, and nonprofits serving the community."[25]

Brian Bourassa

[25]Excerpt from the narrative *Sanctuary City of San Francisco* by Brian Bourassa (2019).



Sanctuary City of San Francisco

"The Laotian Flower Tray Ceremony. I volunteer my time [in the Tenderloin] . . . to arrange flower trays for the Su Khwan ceremony . . . central to Laotian culture . . . the guardian angels are called [during Su Khwan] . . . everyone takes white thread and ties the wrists of other people to 'take out the bad and put in the good' . . . so all good wishes come true."[26]

Kham Vongratsamy

[26]Excerpt from the narrative *The Laotian Flower Tray Ceremony* by Kham Vongratsamy (2019).



Kham Vongratsamy

Christmas Came in January

I was so sad and isolated through the holiday, I didn't open my Christmas presents till today. The love Tenderloin gave me was opened today.

Oh my goodness! I have received so many presents!! I have received an entire kitchen set! I haven't owned a knife since 2011 because I was afraid what I would end up doing with it. Tenderloin gave me transgender support, case management, a peaceful place to talk and create art, photography and poetry.

I didn't feel like a whole human being since 2007 . . . Tenderloin is healing me. My favorite person to talk to was a middle-aged lady living on the streets for 7 years. She told me where to get help. She told me how to walk the streets.

After knowing her, I wasn't so scared to walk outside so much. . . .

The very first person I trusted in USA . . . was very brutal to me. After ending up in an ER, I was confined in a room for two months. . . . So, I lost my ability to give freedom a try. . . . Tenderloin gave me a chance to open up, share my art and poetry and be vulnerable again. Free creative space is more important than therapy and politics. It's a place where I am myself.

Christmas came to me today. My heart opened again. I one day hope to make subsidised housing for Hidden Gem Award participants, so that we have creative free space and equipment needed. I envision a village of people.[27]

Yuki Togawa

[27]Excerpt from "Christmas Came in January" by Yuki Togawa (2019).

"I created the video *TallKing Mime*. My epilepsy affect[s] my whole life. . . . One of my neighbors, James, was kind enough to gift me a pair of juggling sticks. These sticks have given me a release [of] my negative energy. [These feelings] are expelled and extinguished. The juggling sticks also taught me the importance of starting small."[28]

Travis James Fisher,
a member of the Northern Arapaho tribe

[28]Excerpt from the narrative *TallKing Mime* by Travis James Fisher (2019).



Travis James Fisher

"*The Helping Hand Canes* . . . help you walk, sit down, and get up and make you feel like you have a helping hand along the way. Each cane is individually made for the person with symbols that represent what is important to the person's life."[29]

Mama Bling Blang

[29]Excerpt from the narrative *The Helping Hand Canes* by Mama Bling Blang (2019).

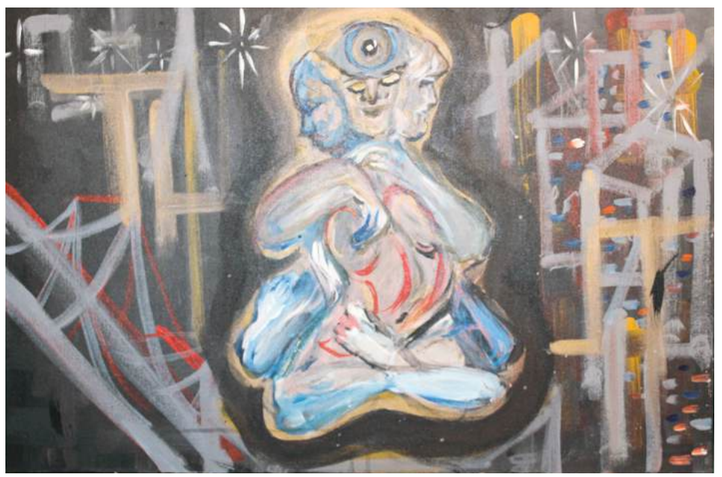


The Helping Hand Canes

"This painting, *Tenderloin Trinity*, refers to how everyone in the Tenderloin comes together; to help support one another, [to] foster healing in the neighborhood."[30]

Caroline Poyaoan

[30]Excerpt from the narrative *Tenderloin Trinity* by Caroline Poyaoan (2019).

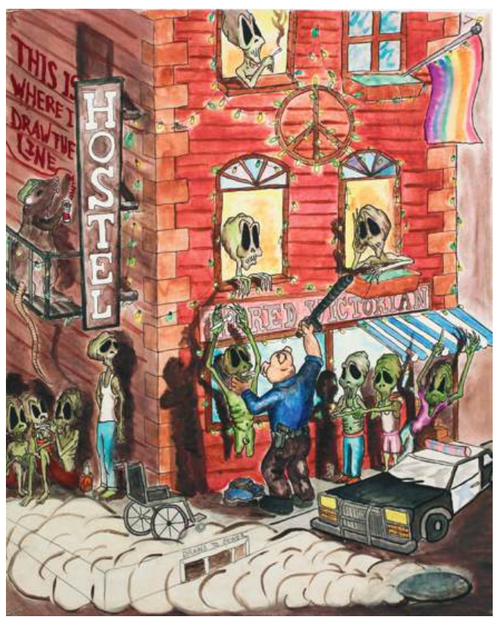


Tenderloin Trinity

"*This Is Where I Draw the Line*. [My art] is especially important to me because not only does it show common perceptions of the Tenderloin, but also it shows my personal experiences as I struggled with addiction and the criminal justice system. Coming out the other side I have found the freedom of creativity in the Tenderloin instead."[31]

Devin Saunders

[31]Excerpt from the narrative *This Is Where I Draw the Line* by Devin Saunders (2019).



This Is Where I Draw the Line

"*The Lady Eckhart and Her Childish Heart* is a whimsical representation of transforming painful memories into beautiful, new experiences. . . . I transmuted many of the [painful] themes into symbols of strength, beauty, and power."[32]

Ling Sherri Lu

[32]Excerpt from the narrative *The Lady Eckhart and Her Childish Heart* by Ling Sherri Lu (2019).



The Lady Eckhart and Her Childish Heart

"*Metamorphosis*. When I finally found my permanent housing (which I still have) I started to heal from my painful past. I did this through painting and dancing which helped me go through a metamorphosis and arise from my self-protecting cocoon as a strong artistic butterfly."[33]

Angela Summers

[33]Excerpt from the narrative ***Metamorphosis*** by Angela Summers (2019).



Metamorphosis

My Tenderloin Tale: Story of Thomas G. Senicka

You took me in with your open arms and my open sores!!! As I festered and bleeded! Yet I still needed your embrace.

No longer deemed viable, or reliable
A castaway from the East Bay.

Many times I'd visit you and think at last a place where I didn't stand-out among the pillars of society, too tall to even cast my own shadow.

Seeing my peers with all their geers my heart skips more than a beat. Those streets paved with hidden gems or should I say needles and shit. Never could I imagine such a fit!

Fallen from grace to this magical place I'd call home ten years now, I fought to stay clean, one step ahead of her and that clerics cowl sister Tenderloin. . . .

You feed me daily with only the best spices, people, poverty, poetry, purpose of prose within a day one could be swept away with your allure.

As I moved away I cried so many, oh so many died. But we knew your price this Paradise called the T.L.

Thomas G. Senicka

"*Miracle on the Tenderloin* is a four-dimensional view of the Tenderloin in the year 2120 where there are no color lines, barriers, race, sexual orientation or walls of any kind."[34]

Derwin "DuVaul" Parker

[34]Excerpt from the narrative *Miracle on the Tenderloin* by Derwin "DuVaul" Parker (2019).



Miracle on the Tenderloin

"*The Floor of San Francisco*. I created still lives from my own street in the heart of the Tenderloin. I wanted to take something 'disgusting' and turn it into art. This is a metaphor for my own experience here in the Tenderloin growing up, seeing the neighborhood in new lenses as I grow and continue to change as a human with a connection to the Tenderloin."[35]

Adam Saavedra

[35]Excerpt from the narrative *The Floor of San Francisco* by Adam Saavedra (2019).



The Floor of San Francisco

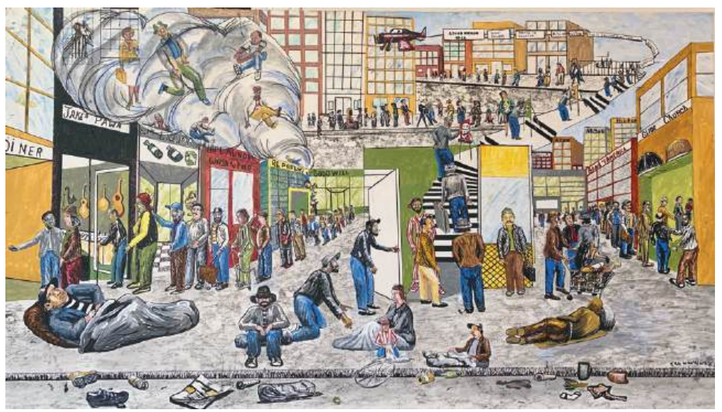


REFLECTIONS

"*Ira Ascending* . . . is about me (going through the door), the people waiting in line [on the left side] in front of a pawn shop are in a cyclone and confused; and due to this they fall into another level of life. [The line on the right side is of people waiting for a meal at Glide Memorial Church.] Each of the images on the stairs [in the middle of the painting] is me ascending over 40 years."[36]

Ira Watkins

[36]Excerpt from the narrative *Ira Ascending* by Ira Watkins (2019).



Ira Ascending

Dream Community—Tenderloin

After I started work in the Tenderloin, I learned to understand that people must convince each of themselves of the direction in the uncertainty of future. For me, the best guides in life are the ones that come across unexpectedly. The clues that can guide me forward all begin with certain struggles, fragility, fear, jealousy, and unrest. . . . I always believed that everything had happened and there was a real purpose behind it. Excavation was my responsibility.

◆Lonely homeless:
Twenty-one years ago I came to a new city, no identification documents (undocumented), no friends, no family, no familiar things, and no work! I lived in a small room less than sixty square feet with my husband. When my husband goes out, I faced nothing other than the ceiling, in fact, there is only oneself. Lonely! . . . . After six months' stay, the money was spent out and we became homeless. Live in the Golden Gate Park, feeling cold, lonely, and panic on the first night!

◆Disappearing anxiety:
After my daughter was born, during the first two years, there was always lingering anxieties. . . . Perhaps many people who have a dream but do not know how to achieve it will have this feeling. What do you think we want to accomplish? I do not know how to do it. Also I try very hard, but do not know where the future is. In the passage of time every day, I actively became a volunteer. It seems to prove that I am getting closer to my dreams.

◆Life and survival:
There is a choice, called life. Without choice, it is called survival. . . . Full of thankfulness, because I was given a life of choice. To be worthy of our own fortunes, it is a life to work hard without wasting my life!

◆Unrequited love:
I saw a girl, without gloves, resisting her heart's disgust for stench, with the most realistic smile, hug the homeless as a relative, she gave him a book written by the children. With a little action, it may be possible to change his life before the homeless give up on his life.

◆Practically alive:
From young to growing up, the frameworks and values that have been given are slowly understood, but they are no longer bound. Since you don't know what may happen tomorrow, don't allow to leave any regret today![37]

Siu Han Cheung

[37]Excerpt from the narrative "Dream Community—Tenderloin" by Siu Han Cheung (2019).

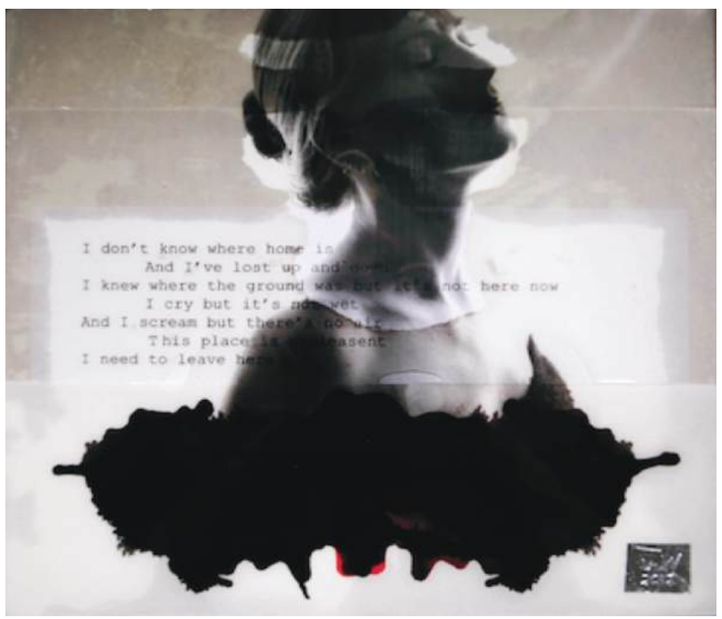


Siu Han Cheung (photographed by Stephen Texeira)

"*Mindscapes* deals with my passions, fears and vulnerabilities. This is a self-portrait reflecting the choices I made in times of conflict and suffering. It shows my contrasting thoughts and stamps the unknown entity that is as yet unexplainable. Tenderloin is radical self-expression."[38]

Janet Williams

[38]Excerpt from the narrative *Mindscapes* by Janet Williams (2019).



Mindscapes

"Tenderloin Poem is a book of paper cuts reflecting certain situations the artist, Kay Weber, is thinking about. His poem begins with the portal: 'Gate of Hope and Refuge.' Behind the gate is St. Boniface Church."



"'Sidewalk' shows a man's leg on the sidewalk, passed out or dead representing addiction, isolation, public despair and failure."



"The third image, a 'Lost Shoe' on the sidewalk, is revealed in the scattered light of pigeons swarming out and away. It is left behind and lost."



"The fourth image describes a mother in the rain 'Safe-guarding' her young son home from school. Street safety is an ongoing concern in the neighborhood."[39]



[39]Excerpt from *Tenderloin Poem* by Kay Weber (2019).

"Entitled *Transferred*, *2017* . . . I made this piece inspired by memories shared with and by my fellow Filipino/immigrant friends who lived in the Tenderloin neighborhood. The series explores the difficult, yet exciting and hopeful, journey of finding oneself entangled in a web of changes, cultural confusions, and obstacles while coming of age."[40]

Rea Lynn de Guzman

[40]Excerpt from the narrative *Transferred*, *2017* by Rea Lynn de Guzman (2019).



Transferred, 2017

"[My] 'Life in the Tenderloin' at that time [mid-seventies] was a new experience adapting to the environment. During that period of time I became actively involved in music. I was thrilled with all of the paid playing opportunities available to fellow local [Tenderloin] musicians."[41]

Stanley Perryman

[41]Excerpt from the narrative "Life in the Tenderloin" by Stanley Perryman (2019).



Stanley Perryman

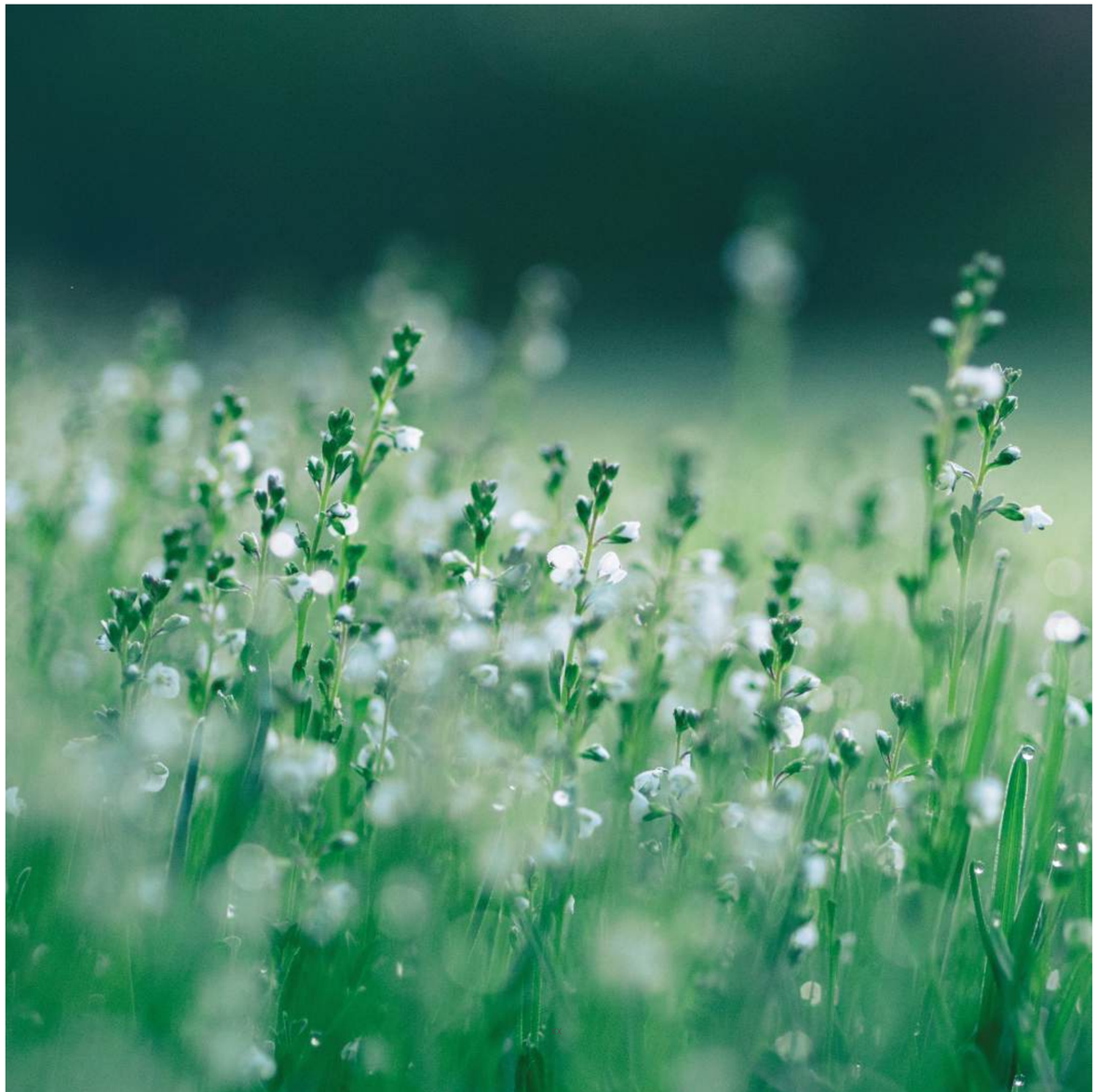
"*TrannyHookerSuperstar/TLVersion1984* [is a] tribute of my time as a [hooker]. It is a composite of me in my many different emotions while I was working on the streets of the Tenderloin. This is [my] Tenderloin tale. I would use my black magic formula and cosmetics, turn myself into a Goddess, [and] go out in the Tenderloin late at night when it's a ghost town. It was a blast."[42]

Shena Shevy

[42]Excerpt from the narrative ***TrannyHookerSuperstar/TLVersion1984*** by Shena Shevy (2019).



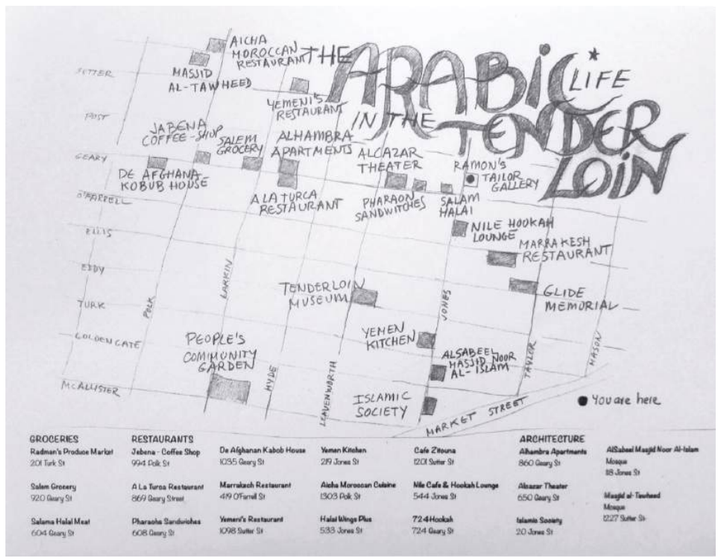
TrannyHookerSuperstar/TLVersion 1984



EXPLORING and DISCOVERING

Paz de la Calzada's Story of Discovering the Arabic Village

I've always been interested in Arabic culture and design. I grew up in Jerez de la Frontera in the south of Spain, a town that was Moorish territory for five hundred years. The Arabic influence is obvious in the architecture and the food but also in the music, philosophy, and math. . . . I discovered the "Arabic Tenderloin" two years ago. . . . I . . . walked around looking for stories until I found the Alhambra Apartments. As a southerner from Spain I completely related with the architectural ornaments and patterns that I saw on that building. Sacred geometry is the way Arabic culture and religion connect with the spiritual realm. I believe it is because the perfect forms and rhythms are like a mantra.



Arabic Village in the Tenderloin

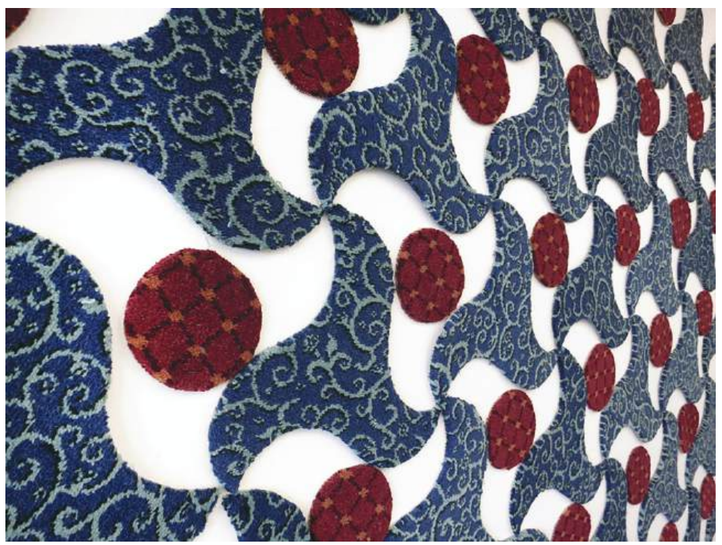
I discovered there were more buildings with this Moorish eclectic style in the Tenderloin. After some research I learned this architectural style happened right after the earthquake, when the single-unit houses were replaced by multistory buildings, many of them SRO hotels. I also learned that the Arabic/Muslim community is one of the largest in the neighborhood, so I decided to call attention to the irony of the cultural appropriation of Arabic architecture in the early twentieth century and the contemporary stigmatization of Islamic people in what is perhaps the most culturally diverse neighborhood in San Francisco.

After meeting people from the Alhambra Apartments and other locations, I decided to create artwork that would reflect one of the patterns of the Alhambra of Granada in the south of Spain but made with a carpet recycled from an SRO hotel. [See an image of the carpet pattern on the next page.] And here is where the map would make sense to reflect the Arabic side of the neighborhood. I create maps because they are a great tool to translate the geopolitical journey, both of the community and mine. I believe the map could help people to connect with the territory and space, after the long journey that as immigrants they have to face.[43]

[43]Excerpt from the narrative ***Arabic Village in the Tenderloin*** by Paz de la Calzada (2019).

"Entitled *Alhambra S.R.O.*, the piece reflects [my] playful dialogue with the urban space where I discovered the 'Alhambra Apartments' on Geary Street, [which] calls attention to . . . a Moorish Revival Style of architecture in the early 20th century."[44]

[44]Excerpt from the narrative ***Alhambra S.R.O.*** by Paz de la Calzada (2019).



Alhambra S.R.O.

"This piece, *From Turk to Market*, is a tribute to discovering the past where Arts and Culture flourished. The iconic Black Hawk jazz club, Gene's Compton cafeteria, and Market Street where triumphant parades and loud political rallies show the resilience of the people. As a background, I used images of the 'Ghost Signs,' old hand-painted signs that still survive on the outsides of some buildings."[45]

TxuTxo Perez

[45]Excerpt from the narrative *From Turk to Market* by TxuTxo Perez (2019).



From Turk to Market

"[My] piece, [*Home*], . . . reflects layers upon layers of history, diversity of this neighborhood. The themes that resonate throughout my work are those of personal struggle, urban decay, spiritual renewal and the beauty inherent in a complicated urban environment."[46]

Tan Eakapong Sirinumas

[46]Excerpt from the narrative *Home* by Tan Eakapong Sirinumas (2019).



Home

"*Lord Frederick the Artist* is one of the videos on 6th Street News. [6th Street News will be] a news source for those housed or unhoused . . . [and will] present to the outside world a glimpse into the lives some of San Francisco's unhoused and recently housed citizens."[47]

Matthew Paul Maes

[47]Excerpt from the narrative *Lord Frederick the Artist* by Matthew Paul Maes (2019).

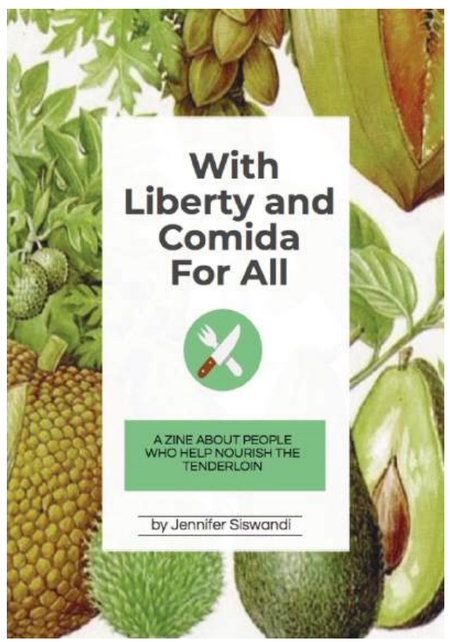


Lord Frederick the Artist

"*Liberty and Comida For All* is a zine about some of the restaurants in the Tenderloin that I find authentic and are valued as community spaces, where Tenderloin residents come together to nourish themselves through food and human warmth."[48]

Jennifer Siswandi

[48]Excerpt from the narrative ***Liberty and Comida For All*** by Jennifer Siswandi (2019).

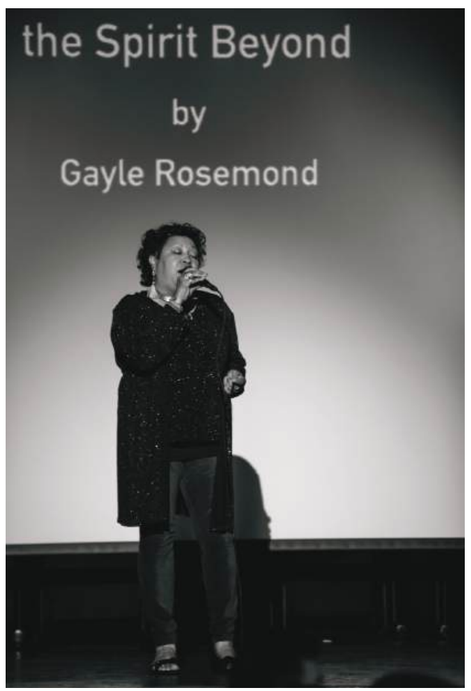


Liberty and Comida For All

"[*Gayle* is a video about] people like me who work hard, are not rich, and don't have the opportunities that other people have. I sing at venues like the Piano Fight and Boeddeker Park Clubhouse. . . . Now I am looking forward to being a solo act with my own electronic backup and being a street musician in the Tenderloin."[49]

Gayle Rosemond

[49]Excerpt from the narrative ***Gayle*** by Gayle Rosemond (2019).



Gayle Rosemond (photographed by Stephen Texeira)

"*Stay Soft* [are] enamel on copper tiles fired at least twice at 1500 degrees in a kiln. They have literally been through the fire. These enamel tiles are an ode to the deep power of women and femme-identified folks in my Tenderloin artist community who have inspired me to see the strength in my own open-heartedness."[50]

Emma Fenton-Miller

[50]Excerpt from the narrative *Stay Soft* by Emma Fenton-Miller (2019).



Stay Soft

"This painting, entitled ***keepers***, is about some people who live, or are homeless, in the Tenderloin. They are not your everyday joe smoos, but after I got to know some of the colorful people, I found a lot of hidden talent, kindness, and brains."[51]

James J. Chappelone

[51]Excerpt from the narrative ***keepers*** by James J. Chappelone (2019).



keepers

"*Piece of Mind: Avocado Plant* suited my way of art [and] fit absolutely perfectly because . . . I believe that nature and everything around us always has a meaning or is trying to tell us something. Nature is my guide to understanding how people adapt and grow."[52]

Winnie Phan

[52]Excerpt from the narrative ***Piece of Mind: Avocado Plant*** by Winnie Phan (2019).



Piece of Mind: Avocado Plant

"*A Beautiful Day in San Francisco* honors movers and shakers with a portrait that celebrated a positive light of Filipino-Americans and Immigrant-Americans. Regardless if you were born in the Philippines or the U.S. we all have a unique story to share on what it means to be Filipino."[53]

Reynaldo R. Cayetano Jr.

[53]Excerpt from the narrative ***A Beautiful Day in San Francisco*** by Reynaldo R. Cayetano Jr. (2019).



A Beautiful Day in San Francisco

"*ThunderPuppets Players: Miracle Plays* is an ensemble work made in community, interactively with our neighbors in the parks and gardens where we work. The theme of this winter's exploration has been Miracles. We have ended the year and begun anew with 2019 in a sense of wonder at the power of small things done together with love."[54]

Kasey Rios Asberry

[54]Excerpt from the narrative *ThunderPuppets Players: Miracle Plays* by Kasey Rios Asberry (2019).



ThunderPuppets Players: Miracle Plays

"*The bride of City Hall for better or for worse*. On the bride's wedding day a single working parent takes a shortcut to avoid the homeless on the way to take her son to school. She walks through the City Hall courtyard, just to find two more homeless people sleeping there too! Oh well that's the San Francisco Tenderloin at Civic Center!"

Esmeralda Pooner



The bride of City Hall for better or for worse

The Little Grass Elderly Choir, We Love You

Singing! It can heal our hearts. It releases us from our internal woes, reduces our daily stressors, and helps us feel great about ourselves. Singing can also heal our bodies. The joy in our hearts from singing helps strengthen our body's immune system, makes more effective the prevention of illness and treatment for our health, and reduces our likelihood of sickness and having to see a doctor.

Singing! We are a cappella. We don't have any musical accompaniments. Our shared experiences have identified the critical role of group engagement and trust in order to be harmonious as a group and in our songs. Over the past four years, we have learned to sing almost a hundred songs together. Whether the songs are in Cantonese or in Mandarin, when we are singing, every one of us sings in a cappella with the notes dancing in rhythm, the beats moving with precision and at a good pace, the melody's highs and lows, and the shifts between forte and pianissimo.

Our voices together in song are pleasing to the ear and express our deep affection for our songs and for one another.

Through our songs, we remind one another of the good times we have shared through the years. Our songs help us reminisce about the distant blessings. Our songs help us celebrate the joyous moments with each passing year.

We use our songs to warm the hearts of our neighbors. We use our songs to express feeling young at heart with our neighbors. We use our songs to share with our neighbors that our lives are no longer lonely, no longer dull!

The name Little Grass in the Little Grass Elderly Choir means we are all grassroots representatives in our Tenderloin community. The choir's theme song is also called "Little Grass."[55]

De Yi Wang

Translated by Winston Tseng and Siu Han Cheung

[55]Excerpt from the essay "The Little Grass Elderly Choir, We Love You" by De Yi Wang (2019).

"The title of my artwork is *Our Neighbors*. Throughout my time in the Tenderloin I have seen many of the same faces on my way to work. I wanted to stop and talk to people and see what brought them to the Tenderloin and just learn more about them."[56]

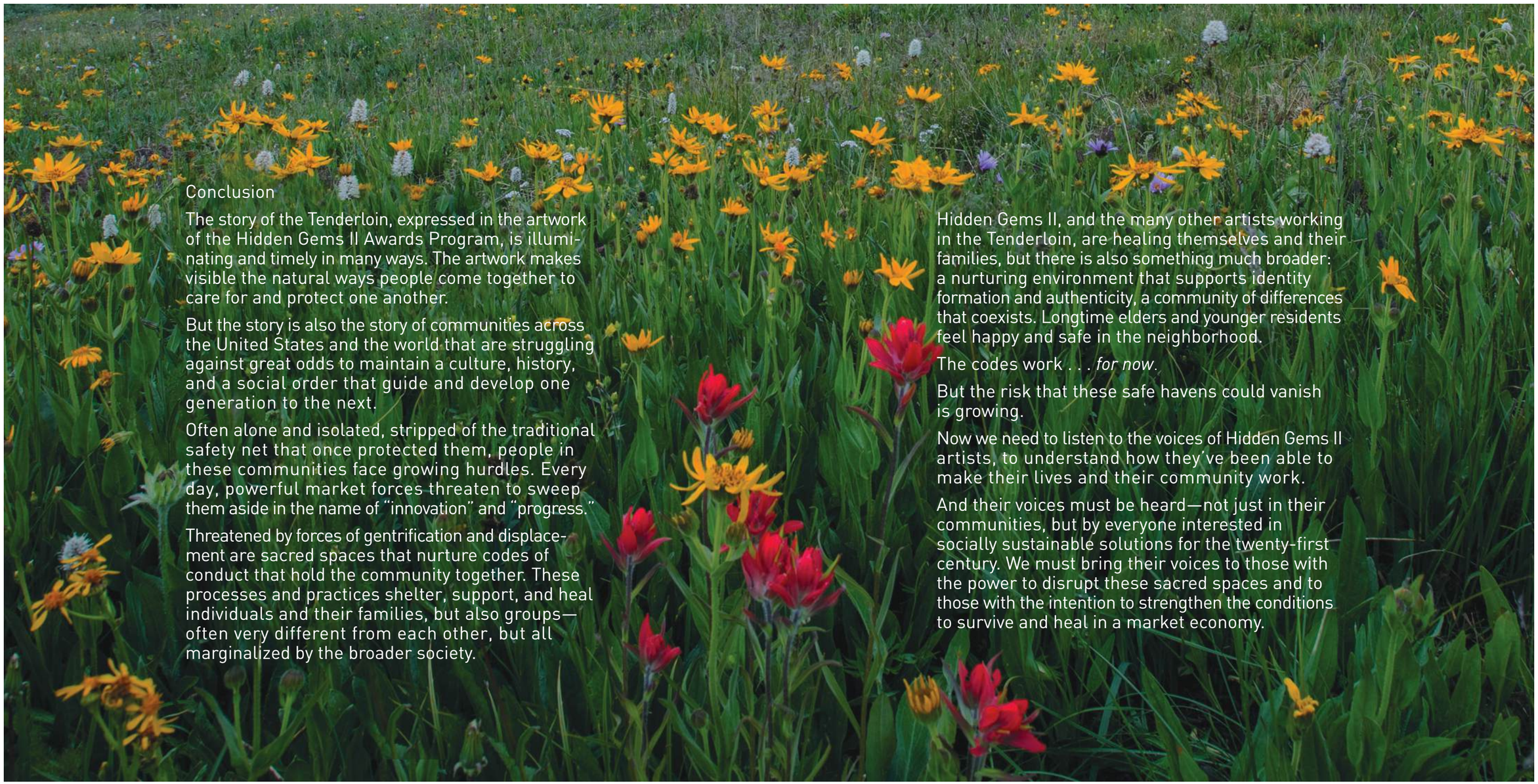
Ashley Munro

[56]Excerpt from the narrative ***Our Neighbors*** by Ashley Munro (2019).



Our Neighbors





Conclusion

The story of the Tenderloin, expressed in the artwork of the Hidden Gems II Awards Program, is illuminating and timely in many ways. The artwork makes visible the natural ways people come together to care for and protect one another.

But the story is also the story of communities across the United States and the world that are struggling against great odds to maintain a culture, history, and a social order that guide and develop one generation to the next.

Often alone and isolated, stripped of the traditional safety net that once protected them, people in these communities face growing hurdles. Every day, powerful market forces threaten to sweep them aside in the name of "innovation" and "progress."

Threatened by forces of gentrification and displacement are sacred spaces that nurture codes of conduct that hold the community together. These processes and practices shelter, support, and heal individuals and their families, but also groups—often very different from each other, but all marginalized by the broader society.

Hidden Gems II, and the many other artists working in the Tenderloin, are healing themselves and their families, but there is also something much broader: a nurturing environment that supports identity formation and authenticity, a community of differences that coexists. Longtime elders and younger residents feel happy and safe in the neighborhood.

The codes work . . . *for now.*

But the risk that these safe havens could vanish is growing.

Now we need to listen to the voices of Hidden Gems II artists, to understand how they've been able to make their lives and their community work.

And their voices must be heard—not just in their communities, but by everyone interested in socially sustainable solutions for the twenty-first century. We must bring their voices to those with the power to disrupt these sacred spaces and to those with the intention to strengthen the conditions to survive and heal in a market economy.

Hidden Gems II Awardees

Thomas Albietz
Lizette Alvarez
Mary Claire Salmingo Amable
Kasey Rios Asberry
Lisa Maria Barbas
Eric Lewis Basher
Charles Blackwell
Mama Bling Blang
Brian Bourassa
Dorian Brockington
Reynaldo R. Cayetano Jr.
James J. Chappelone
Siu Han Cheung
Rick Darnell and Jeff Marshall
Rea Lynn de Guzman
Paz de la Calzada
Emma Fenton-Miller
Travis James Fisher
Ethel Hays
Anthony Horn
Kimberly Jefferson
Jesse James Johnson
Sibo Keo
Siu Kwan Man Mui
Jon Lee
Rik Lee Leipold
Xiao Mei Li and Hu Wei
Chansothearun Lopez
Ling Sherri Lu
Matthew Paul Maes
Kim Mosteiro
Connie Moy
Ashley Munro
Axel Craig Osterberg
Derwin "DuVaul" Parker
Txutxo Perez
Stanley Perryman
Winnie Phan
Esmeralda Pooner
James Pounders Jr.
Caroline Poyaoan
Khalid Rasool
Zoriya Roginski
Gayle Rosemond
Adam Saavedra
Devin Saunders
Thomas G. Senicka
Shena Shevy
Tan Eakapong Sirinumas
Jennifer Siswandi
Peter Sophabmixay and
Jirawat Phookongchana
Angela Summers
Yuki Togawa
Lynn Tribble
Kham Vongratsamy
De Yi Wang
Ira Watkins
Kay Weber
Qiu Yun Wei
Janet Williams



Hidden Gems II Awardees 2019 (photographed by Stephen Texeira)

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Don Falk
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Lindsay Gauthier
Elsa Jacob
Kimberly Jefferson
Jesse James Johnson
Stephanie Johnson
Andy Keefer
Sewasew Meaza
Goro Mitchell
Connie Moy
Talia Panadero
Winnie Phan
Gayle Rosemond
Garret Rosenblatt
Michael Rouppet
Kouichoy Saechao
Muang Saephan
Tan Eakapong Sirinumas
David Sweet
Melody Takata
Stephen Texeira
Yuki Togawa
Paul Tsang
Winston Tseng
Kay Weber
Michelle Yang
Winnie Yu

Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco
Cambodian Community Development, Inc.
Hospitality House's Community Arts Program
Lao Seri Association
Liss Fain Dance
Little Grass Elderly Choir
Organic Mechanics
Self-Help for the Elderly
Skywatchers | ABD Productions
Tenderloin Chinese Rights Association
Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation
Tenderloin People's Congress
The Aspen Institute
Theater of Others

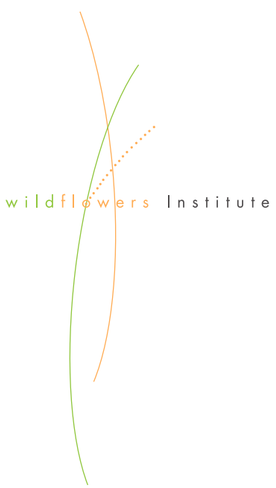
About Wildflowers Institute

Wildflowers Institute is a culture lab dedicated to revealing a social order that already works in diverse communities and to harnessing this energy from one generation to another. Wildflowers makes visible shared purposes, a code of conduct, and spiritual and cultural practices that unleash self-determination and that connect people and organizations. These forces serve as the building blocks for sustainable community innovation.

Moreover, we uncover the conditions that nurture and strengthen these forces, and we organize gatherings for insiders and outsiders to experience what we have learned. Since July 10, 1998, the institute has worked in nineteen vulnerable communities in the United States, Mexico, and China.

The institute chose the name Wildflowers because wildflowers grow in clusters and cross-pollinate at their borders. Wildflowers grow deep and intertwine at their roots, which hold sufficient moisture for meadows and forests to grow where wildflowers flourish. Similarly, the very foundation of the community is self-organized groups and associations naturally interconnecting and growing independently and among one another. For more information about the institute, visit www.wildflowers.org.

Stories of the Tenderloin is intended to educate policy makers, leaders, program directors of foundations, and socially concerned individuals and groups about the natural ways people come together to care for and protect one another and to heal in a market economy. This book is also intended for noncommercial purposes and will be distributed at no cost. Wildflowers Institute is a not-for-profit organization, and our work is to help people inside and outside the Tenderloin to see its essence from the experience and point of view of residents and local artists.



wildflowers Institute

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