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Volume III Issue IV

March 2018

the Pacific Sentinel



MARCH FORWARD!

IN THIS ISSUE

4

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Concerts
In Other News
Movies

6

UNDISCOVERED STORIES

Why We Should Start Exploring
African Fiction
By Daniel Nickolas

8

THE MYTH OF THE SHARING
ECONOMY

by Camillo Assad

12

CHINA MADE ME GAY

Personal Essay
by Alexander Meyers

14

RARE SCUTTLES SKEPTICS WITH
"SEA OF THIEVES" BETA

Video Game Review
by Joshua Engledow

15

CHICAGO-BASED RAPPER SWADE'S
DYNAMIC NEW EP DESERVES YOUR
ATTENTION

Album Review
by Shane Johnson

18

PORTLAND JAZZ FESTIVAL
SHOWCASES PORTLAND STATE
TALENT

by Shane Johnson

20

EARLY MAN
Movie Review

by Aaron Clausen

21

RISING INDIE DUO REFINES THEIR
SOUND ON NEW RELEASE

Album Review
by Shane Johnson

22

THE TENTATIVE EXISTENCE OF
BEAUTY

Beauty Standards are not as Absolute
as People are Led to Believe
by Aurora Mak

24

FALL FROM GRACE

The Story of Rajneeshpuram, OR:
Home of the Biggest Bioterror Attack
in Modern U.S. History
by Andreas Bassett

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FEATURED THIS MONTH

Alexandra Louis just had to take three tries to spell her own last name and was responsible for editing many of these pieces. Let that inform your reading.

Josie Allison is a sophomore transfer studying international relations whose mood has a positive correlation with the quality of avocados.

Andreas Bassett Who is the biggest gangster in the ocean? Al Caprawn.

Jason Mekkam studies English. Likes brevity.

Kasey Colton thinks a lot about the future humanity missed out on when Biggie Smalls was shot. We miss you, Big.

Aurora Mak If you're not my mom: Aurora Mak is studying mathematics at PSU because she couldn't think of anything better. If you're my mom: Aurora Mak loves mathematics with all her heart.

McKenzie Lee wishes she could live in a far off land next to the ocean drinking margaritas everyday, but is stuck in Portland.

Savannah Quorum is a graphic design student at PSU. She's trying to march forward but she'd much rather take a nap.

Alex Skousen studies English and Film at PSU, isn't really sure what else you want him to say...

Shane Johnson is a business major and writing minor at PSU. He would follow Mike Schur to the ends of the earth.

Jake Johnson studies painting in the BFA program and writes about life during the dystopian present.

Daniel Nickolas is working toward a dual major in English and Germanic Languages. He thinks German is the most beautiful language in the world...no, seriously.

Alex Meyers is an English student at PSU. He is stuck between pursuing the lifestyle of a starving artist and making a barely livable salary as a college professor.

Clarissa Fredericks-Wright is the contributing illustrator for this month's illustrations.

WHO WE ARE

The Pacific Sentinel magazine offers an inclusive forum incorporating in-depth content from the PSU community. We advocate on behalf of the marginalized, explore the merits of cultural artifacts, and initiate interdisciplinary communication.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

CONCERTS & EVENTS



Brockhampton

March 2

Crystal Ballroom

The diverse, 14-member rap group Brockhampton will light up the McMenamin's Crystal Ballroom on March 2. The show is an all ages event. Doors will open at 8 p.m. and music will start at 9 p.m.

Bondax

March 18

Holocene

U.K.-based, genre-fusing electronic duo Bondax will play at Holocene on March 18. The event is 21 and over. Doors will open at 9 p.m. with music starting shortly after.

George Clinton & Parliament

Funkadelics

March 21

The Roseland Theater

R&B icon George Clinton is bringing his band and groove of the '70s to the Roseland Theater on March 21. Joining him will be openers Miss Velvet & The Blue Wolf and DJ Doc Roc. This is a 21 and over event. The doors open at 8 p.m. and the show starts at 9 p.m.

Current Joys

March 25

Holocene

Alternative folk rock artist, Current Joys will play at Holocene on March 25. His instrumentals and lyrics are honest, nostalgic, and bound to pull heartstrings. The show is open to all ages and will start at 8:30 p.m.

Taylor Bennett

March 26

Roseland Theater

Rapper Taylor Bennett will be performing in Peter's Room at the Roseland Theater on March 26. You may know Bennett as Chance the Rapper's younger, equally as talented brother. He will be joined by artists Kami and Melo Makes Music. The show is an all ages event. The show starts at 8 p.m.

Crumb

March 28

Analog Cafe and Theater

Psychedelic pop-rock group, Crumb will bring their jazzy sounds to the Analog Cafe on March 25 along with their fellow cumbia influenced, psych-soul band, Combo Chimbita. This is an all ages event. The doors open at 6 p.m. and the show starts at 7 p.m.

IN OTHER NEWS

Oregon Community College Campus Taken Over by "Gang" of Wild Turkeys

A community college in Eugene, OR was recently overrun by a gang of wild turkeys. Greg Evans, a Eugene City Council member stated, "There is turkey feces everywhere," and that "they're not scared of humans." Urban wildlife other than turkeys such as rats are also on the rise. A wildlife control measure ordinance appears to be on the horizon for the city of Eugene, OR in the near future.

KFC Suffers Serious Gravy Shortage in the UK

After a devastating chicken shortage last month, 97 percent of KFC restaurants in the UK are experiencing supply disruptions in gravy. Select restaurants are currently on a reduced menu and some customers are upset. The police department of Whitefield, Manchester has urged citizens to refrain from contacting the police regarding the ongoing KFC gravy shortage.

Smelling Your Partners' Flatulence Linked to Illness Prevention

Hydrogen sulfide, the gas that makes farts smell bad, has recently been linked to help reduce the risk of stroke, heart attack, cancer, and dementia. Hydrogen sulfide is produced in the cells of the body when suffering from illness. Its purpose is to power the mitochondria of the cell in order to help combat ailments. Researchers at the University of Exeter in the UK have developed a new compound, AP39, which aids the body in producing the optimal amount of hydrogen sulfide. AP39 is thought to reverse mitochondrial damage in cells, which would help to treat conditions like diabetes and heart failure. Dr. Mark Wood stated, "Although hydrogen sulfide is well known as a pungent, foul-smelling gas in rotten eggs and flatulence, it is naturally produced in the body and could, in fact, be a healthcare hero with significant implications for future therapies for a variety of diseases."

OPENING IN FEBRUARY

Red Sparrow

March 2

Russian intelligence officers coerce Dominika Egorova, a ballerina, into their “sparrow” program, where she learns the art of espionage and seduction. Her first mission targets a CIA agent, threatening the security of both nations. Directed by Francis Lawrence and starring Jennifer Lawrence, Joel Edgerton, and Charlotte Rampling, “Red Sparrow” is rated R.

Foxtrot

March 2

After their son’s death at a desolate military post, a troubled family grapples with the facts that led to his premature demise. Israel’s official submission to the Academy Awards, “Foxtrot” is directed by Samuel Maoz and stars Lior Ashkenazi, Sarah Adler, and Yonatan Shiray. Rated R.

In the Fade

March 2

When Katja Sekerci’s husband and son are murdered, she spirals into the underworld of Hamburg, seeking revenge against the neo-Nazis responsible for their deaths. Directed by Fatih Akin and starring Diane Kruger, Denis Moschitto, and Numan Acar, “In the Fade” is rated R. Starting March 2, at Cinema 21 only.

A Wrinkle in Time

March 9

When Meg’s father goes missing shortly after he develops a new form of space travel, she must team up with three magical beings to rescue him from a terrible evil. Adapted from the book by Madeleine L’Engle, “A Wrinkle in Time” is directed by Ava DuVernay and stars Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Reese Witherspoon, and Oprah Winfrey. Rated PG.

Flower

March 16

When Erica’s new stepbrother accuses his teacher of fondling him, Erica and her friends set out to find proof, and revenge. Directed by Max Winkler and starring Zoey Deutch, Kathryn Hahn, and Adam Scott, “Flower” is rated R.

Tomb Raider

March 16

Based on the video game series, this adaptation follows Lara Croft as she looks for her father who mysteriously disappeared on an island several years earlier. Directed by Roar Uthaug and starring Alicia Vikander, Hannah John-Kamen, and Walton Goggins, “Tomb Raider” is released March 16. Rated PG-13.

Pacific Rim Uprising

March 23

Earth is under a fresh, high-stakes threat that requires newer, bigger explosions to resolve. Directed by Steven S. DeKnight and starring Scott Eastwood, Adria Arjona, and Charlie Day, “Pacific Rim Uprising” is rated PG-13.

Isle of Dogs

March 23

After all dogs are banned from Japan, a young boy goes in search of his lost canine with the help of new friends. Wes Anderson’s newest endeavor into animation stars Bryan Cranston, Koyu Rankin, and Edward Norton. Rated PG-13.

Ready Player One

March 30

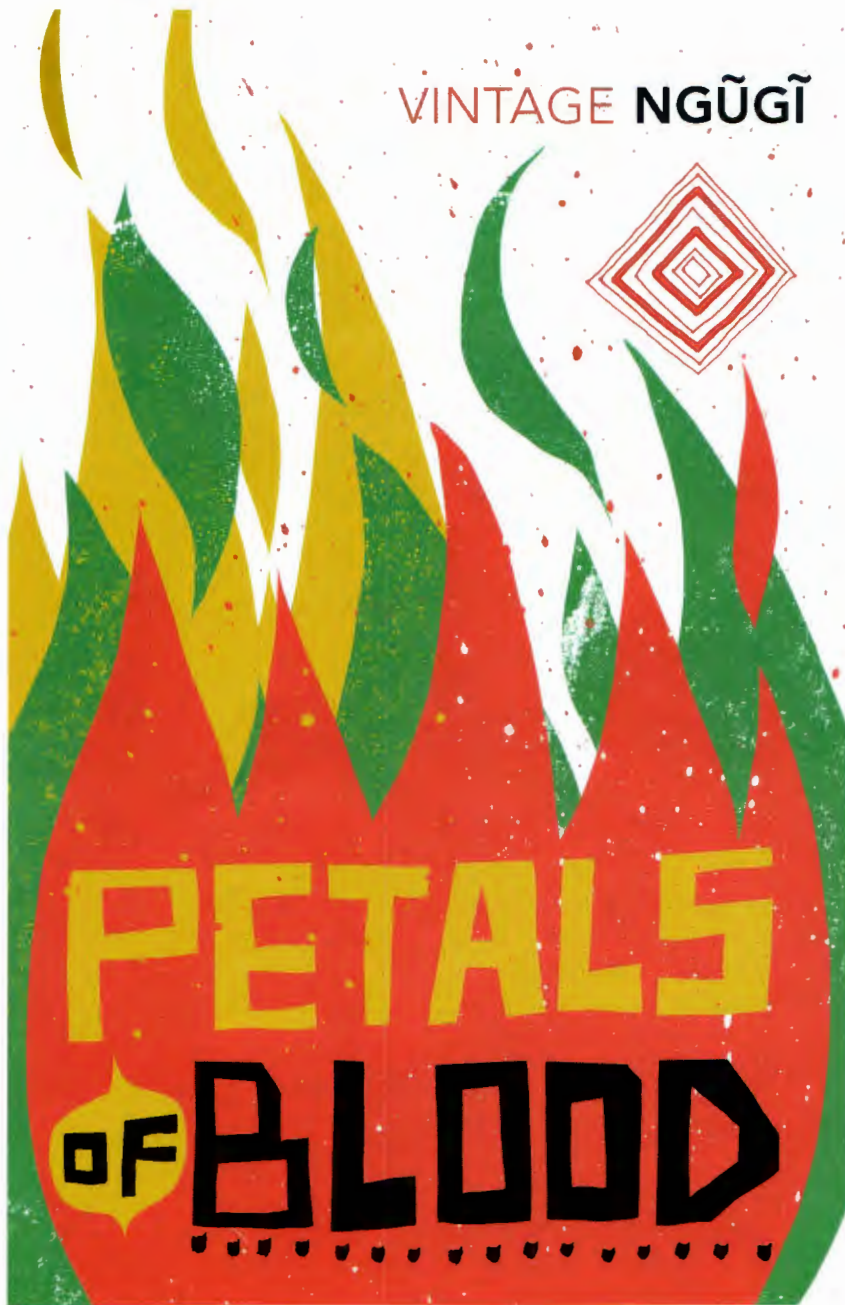
In the near future, overcrowding has spurred the creation of a virtual reality known as the Oasis. When its founder dies, he issues a challenge for players to find a hidden “easter egg” in the game that will grant the finder a few trillion dollars and control of the Oasis. With such high stakes, several powerful entities get involved in the not-so-virtual reality of the players’ lives. Based on the novel by Ernest Cline, “Ready Player One” is directed by Steven Spielberg and stars Letitia Wright, Hannah John-Kamen, and McKenna Grace. Rated PG-13.

Acrimony

March 30

A recent divorcée, Melinda, recounts the depths of her ex-husband’s infidelity and copes with feelings of betrayal. Directed by Tyler Perry, “Acrimony” is rated R and stars Taraji P. Henson, Danielle Nicolet, and Ajiona Alexus.

VINTAGE NGŪGĪ



Undiscovered Stories

Why We Should Start Exploring African Fiction

By Daniel J. Nickolas

By the time European powers met for the 1884 Berlin conference intending to establish official European ownership of African lands, a centuries-long story of cultural, religious, and political oppression had already unfolded. Today, 54 African

nations have gained formal independence, but these nations still face the effects of both colonization and the difficult process of decolonization, the consequences of which have amalgamated into a common story we in the United States often hear about Africa: the story of a continent

crippled by disease, war, famine, and poverty. These are real struggles faced by many African nations—just as they are faced by many nations in the Americas—but when this story becomes the most common (or the only) story we hear, we risk falling into what Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie calls “the danger of the single story.” But what is the danger of a single story?

Stories are not only how we understand and explore our worlds, but also how we change and reinvent them. Most everything we do and most everything we are is a kind of story. How many different histories, experiences, and identities (in other words: stories) comprise a single individual? Could a single description ever accurately portray any one person? Impossible. And if no one person could ever be confined to a single story, how can we confine a continent comprised of over 50 unique countries and over 1,500 living languages into a single, 30-second “African children are starving so please send your money now” advertisement? We can’t. And accepting that Africa must have countless stories to tell opens up new freedoms for us to find stories that captivate and inspire; stories that we in the U.S. have been missing. But where do we find these stories? And why should we be interested in them at all?

Many African nations produce films and literature at rates rivaling rates in the U.S. The film industries in Africa are incredibly popular across the continent; so much so that Africa has its own version of The Academy Awards. Furthermore, second only to Hollywood, the Nigerian film industry known as “Nollywood” is the largest producer of films in the world. And the movies being produced across the continent run the complete spectrum of blockbusters, art house films, and so-bad-they’re-good B-movies. It’s a shame that the United States is hardly exposed to these contributors of cinematic art, especially since it is such a cinema-loving nation. It’s understandable why Hollywood and other film industries would ignore the success of a potentially huge competitor, but it’s doubtful that this is the whole story behind our underexposure to African

produced films. Let's be honest with ourselves and admit that, having too often been exposed to that single story of "poor Africa," the idea that Africa could have several booming film industries was so unexpected that we simply never thought to look.

And film is not the only major medium of African-based storytellers. Africa has become a melting pot of literary genres and styles, creating a fascinating literary landscape that any avid reader would be fortunate to explore. Take, for example, Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's 1977 novel *Petals of Blood*. *Petals of Blood* is a wonderful introduction to literature from Africa, because it's not only a well crafted blend of several different storytelling methods, it's also a novel that anticipates the issues of gender, environment, religion, and politics that we struggle with today. This novel may be 40 years old, but it remains prophetically relevant. But don't be deceived by a recommendation for an older book; African writers have not disappeared, and a quick Google search will show how prolific books from Africa are. Truthfully, these books can be difficult to obtain in the U.S, because literature from Africa, like the film industries, is shamefully underrepresented in this country. It's easy, and accurate, to blame some of this underrepresentation on U.S. publishing houses, but this underrepresentation also happens in part because we, despite our best efforts, still think of literature as something inherently Eurocentric. We fail to move beyond this misguided belief because we don't expect Africa to be a literary place. I admit to being guilty of this. But looking beyond my own misinformed notions about fiction from Africa—particularly the notion that it barely existed—has been a rewarding experience.

To put it bluntly, these are good stories. They're entertaining and engaging and thought provoking, and that should be enough to explain why we should seek out stories from Africa. But if that alone isn't enough, we should seek out these stories because, just as Americans deserve to tell our stories, the diverse countries and

peoples that comprise Africa deserve to tell their stories. The prevalence of African stories is not a new phenomenon. Despite attempts by colonizers to write African history as beginning with "civilization" being brought to Africa, many African nations have mythologies that predate these so called civilizers by thousands of years. Storytelling is a central aspect of many African peoples, just as it is a central aspect of peoples all around the globe. And that's one of the most significant benefits to be gained by venturing beyond our own stories: we'll often find that, despite the obvious differences, we are more alike than we first realized. Exactly like those of us in the United States, people from African countries are smart, funny, love-sick, neurotic, timid, pompous, creative, and most importantly, human. The danger in accepting only a single story is that we are robbed of all the other stories that make people so complex, entertaining, and interesting. African nations are telling their stories—why wouldn't we want to listen in?

The Myth of the Sharing Economy

.....

by Camillo Assad

On Aug. 7, 2016, San Diego Uber driver Brandon Williams was violently attacked by a teenage rider who had forgotten his phone in the driver's vehicle.

Williams stated, "I just heard the loud banging and the glass shattering and there was multiple shots. It was like a semi-automatic so I just thought to duck down as far as I could and drive as fast as I can in a straight line." According to KGTV San Diego, when William's vehicle was totaled, his personal insurance refused to pay anything, and Uber followed suit by refusing to cover any of his costs as a "contractor" and not an employee. Williams shared with KGTV how he was affected by such policies, "Because my personal insurance policy doesn't cover commercial vandalism...over \$15,000, which makes my vehicle totaled."

Why do employees have to pay for damages incurred from their work? According to a legal brief Uber submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission, "Uber operates no vehicles, and does not hold itself out or advertise itself as a transportation service provider. In fact and law, Uber does not provide transportation services of any kind and does not own, lease or charter any vehicles for the transportation of

passengers. On the contrary, Uber is a technology company that licenses the Uber App to transportation service providers. The transportation service

Uber's legal brief may sound like a lot of legal jargon, and it is. It's the way a new technology and its billionaire investors create the image

of a "community" or a "marketplace." The reality is a digital tool which wealthy investors use to profit from vulnerable workers.

When companies such as Uber, Postmates, GrubHub, and AirBnB began filling up users' smartphone screens, it was tough to shake the notion that life was simpler for it. Feeling anxious and need a mental health day in bed? Order some take out. Can't afford a car but need to get home from the bar (or to it)? Get a ride for only \$11. Taxis are expensive and can seem like a hassle when an app makes a ride just a click away. Transactions such as ridesharing, borrowing a car, outsourcing work, eating, shopping, and short-term rentals are increasingly available through these new companies that comprise the sharing economy, the coined term for this community-sourced, exchange-based market.

Mass media such as *Fortune*, *CNN*, *Reddit*, and

Facebook are loud supporters, claiming its innovative benefits. These apps are built by people, linking them through the internet, and feed the increasing desire to divorce work and consumption



providers pay a fee to Uber to use its software technology; the passenger of the transportation service provider pays the transportation service provider for transportation services received."

from large corporations. As written by CNN's Rachel Botsman, "New ideas such as car sharing and social lending challenge conventional models, but history teaches that these emerging ideas should be embraced." The resounding approval champions these companies as communitarian, hip, urbane, and most importantly, convenient.

Uber drivers are told because they make their own schedule, they are flexible workers. If they need more money, they can work more; and if they are overworked, they can schedule themselves appropriately. Joining the sharing economy allows new employees to feel a new freedom from bosses, scheduling, and unpleasant workplaces. It successfully propagates a form of income free of traditional workplace oppressions.

The original services and products provided by the sharing economy still exist in most societies. Traditional providers such as hotels, bed and breakfasts, and hostels, are still in business today. Taxi services still operate in almost every city. Restaurants still offer their own delivery services and drivers.

The key difference between these traditional providers and the sharing economy are the risk they assume. Uber, the world's largest transit company, has no regular employees who operate its fleet. The world's most expansive hospitality company owns none of the properties their customers utilize. The most successful food delivery service owns no vehicles nor hires regular employees. Across the globe and especially in the areas where venture capital and technological progression meet, a new restructuring of the economy has risen.

The hottest companies have been able to hit the public consciousness with a certain ease that their predecessor service companies did not enjoy. These companies operate free of the burden of managing large groups of employees, committing investment spending to physical capital, or dealing with local regulators in different municipalities. They need only concern themselves with raising venture capital, managing websites, and promoting brands worth more than the GDPs of most nation states.

In the markets where these companies operate, which now exists in almost all major cities across the world and many smaller ones, a belief is projected on the utility of their services. AirBnB states on their website "No matter what kind of home or room you have to share, AirbnB makes it simple and secure to earn money and reach millions of travelers looking for unique places to stay, just like yours." The hope is that people can take advantage of what they already own and aren't using. When issues arise between customers and sharing economy workers, the corporations stand to lose very little, as they assume almost no financial or legal risk.

In 2014, the city of Amsterdam came to a legal clash with AirBnB over the activities of its hosts. AirBnB hosts had repeatedly violated local ordinances regarding the number of days a year private residences could rent out their rooms for short-term stays. As hosts dealt with lawsuits and police intervention, AirBnB did not assume any of this risk. A billionaire team of investors who reap wealthy dividends every quarter remain financially safe as hundreds of thousands of euros are levied towards the homes which are violating these municipal laws.

AirBnB refuses to maintain any responsibility over the empire it has built. Simultaneously, it pushes the boundaries of every democratically elected municipal government which attempts to protect their communities from exploitative practices. A non-profit organization, Peer, emerged in 2013 to start grassroots campaigns in favor of the sharing economy. Previous state regulations made it incredibly difficult for these companies to operate within the framework of state laws. Successful Peer campaigns in California, Seattle, and even New York allowed ride sharing and AirBnB rentals to operate without cumbersome regulation diminishing their access to markets. The Peers Foundation (now a for-profit company) is funded at last count by donations from 75 different sharing economy companies (including AirBnB and Lyft).

Even the perceived make up of "local folks like me" who have represented the investment in these sharing economy ventures is a result

of misleading propaganda from the companies themselves. AirBnB disguises where most of their income is made by communicating who the majority of their hosts are. AirBnB states that the majority of AirBnB listings are "single listing" homes, meaning the only home that owner rents out. The reality is that the majority of AirBnB's revenue worldwide is generated by a combination of "entire home listings," rentals where the owner is not present in any part of the dwelling, essentially an empty dwelling whose sole purpose is to generate profit through short term rentals. These are often owned by "professional hosts," AirBnB room hosts who receive a significant portion of their income through short term rentals.

One of the greatest costs which the sharing economy has incurred has been the devastating effect professional AirBnB hosts and property managers have had on gentrification in larger cities. Those who already have wealth to invest in properties are driving up property values in neighborhoods which are convenient, centrally located in urban environments, conducive to public transportation, and represent good deals on the housing market. All of these qualities are equally attractive for a working class family or a visiting tourist, but property owners can make more money utilizing these spaces for short term rentals instead of renting it to families or working class adults. The most apparent visual effect of such a rapid change is the increased splintering of communities in lieu of temporary stays for tourists.

An essential element of the sharing economy is the accessibility to enter the workforce. The idea that anyone can easily get involved by utilizing what they already own is heavily promoted. The reality, however, requires hosts, drivers, and other participants to own expensive assets to participate in the sharing economy. This new class of "micro entrepreneurs" must own suitable residential property to qualify for AirBnB or buy modern and standard fitting cars to drive for Uber (most costing upwards of \$12,000). These hosts and drivers represent a new class of technologically hip, moderately wealthy individuals who own expensive properties or can afford costly vehicles.

Technological progression has historically represented one of the most important factors in changing labor economies. When the industrial revolution came about in the 19th century, entrepreneurs and its burgeoning producers were excited by the opportunity for rapid economic expansion. Technology had advanced through the application of cotton gins, large scale mills, and the incremental rise of factories to begin mass producing the needs of society.

The effects of economic paradigm shifts are observable in the context of U.S. history. Fifty years after the U.S began to industrialize, the nation bore witness to the rise of “robber barons” such as John D. Rockefeller, J.P. Morgan, and Andrew Carnegie. These entrepreneurs and venture capitalists were not concerned with the regulation of the emerging industries which had made them vastly wealthy. They utilized their money and political influence to keep wages down, prevent the passage of laws to regulate factories and coal mines, and effectively campaigned to maintain legal child labor. John D. Rockefeller Jr.’s Colorado Fuel and Iron Company would force employees to live in company towns, and if they had any issue with their living situation would go as far as to carry out armed violence against them with private armies of “security” forces (the Ludlow Massacre of 1917 ended with the violent murder of 25 workers). Upton Sinclair’s seminal text “The Jungle” was written in the hopes that people would become aware of the horrifying employment conditions which humans were subjected to in meat factories.

While the modern sharing economy may not see violent murders carried out to maintain company towns, we are seeing similar trends in ideology. Rather than being operated by the workers who provide Uber and Postmates with the labor which it profits off of, it is managed centrally by a large corporate structure and financed and run by billionaires. These companies pitch advertising which paints an image of local community members hiring each other to help out. In reality these “community members” live under the control of Silicon Valley venture capitalists.

The manner in which these new companies can operate so effectively without any physical capital is by profiting off of old industries and services through new means of supply. By utilizing the novel and inherently trust-based format of their businesses, these companies work together to lobby local communities and states to permit lax regulation of their businesses and contractors. When California threatened to regulate Uber and Lyft in 2014, sharing economy lobbying groups rushed to mobilize a politically active force to defeat these measures. In Portland, AirBnB agreed to follow local regulations in a deal with the previous mayor after the city curbed its serious concerns regarding regulations of individual homes and safety codes. The deal struck in 2014 has yet to be implemented. Across the world, the sharing economy has refused to engage with the actual communities it participates in, preferring to do everything to protect their profit motive, no matter the expense to the local community.

Assumptions are made that this technology is positive, aids community building, and provides opportunities for the disenfranchised. Evidence suggests that this style of community building only advances those with the means to own expensive properties and profits the wealthy. These communities are not the disenfranchised communities which need economic uplifting. The sharing economy has left a strong imprint on the public consciousness, and, like the robber barons of the industrial era, the work of the many is leading to the outrageous wealth of the few. Sharing companies think government regulation is infringing on their freedom. They use legal loopholes to dodge responsibilities when things get ugly. Understanding the complex economic issues underlying a new emerging market is crucial for citizens to make informed decisions in the public arena.

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China Made Me Gay

by Alexander Meyers

When people ask me about my time studying abroad—what it was like, what I learned, how I fit all the puzzle pieces of my experience together—China made me gay.

I was under the impression that I was going to visit a repressed country. And now I can say I know what it's like to live in a repressed country. A country that teaches its children to be strictly this and strictly that. A country of codes so interwoven, cryptographers go to school for a liberal arts degree and study the humanities. Babies are blue, babies are pink. We don't cry because we're men. Our blood is red, white, and blue.

I always wanted to go to China. People ask me why, and I wish I knew so I could tell scholarship committees. I built an image of a country and its history as repressive, cruel, and subordinate to world affairs. No doubt an impression influenced by what I hear on the news every day. In some ways, China is all of these things—I struggled to bypass the Great Firewall, the government can make things (and sometimes people) go away, as well as manipulate history. Some of this is reminiscent of our own government, though I don't take for granted the kinds of freedom we have. And yet, China made me gay.

Perhaps it was the brocade, introduced in the Warring States period before Qin, the first emperor to unite China in 221 BCE. I wonder if artists were trying to stitch China together in the chaos. Brocade is an important part of Chinese history, and for any dynasty historians can extract meaning and beauty from the royal brocades.

Rich, embroidered silk. I remember walking through a modern art museum in Chengdu and witnessing an ancient brocade exhibit. There was something about an electric yellow robe I can't get out of my mind. It was embroidered with dragons and flaming birds and swirling clouds.

I wonder if Han Emperor Ai admired his brocaded sleeves while he slept with Dong Xian. Legend has it the two men were deeply in love, and when a general awakened Ai for an urgent meeting, he didn't want to wake Dong Xian. He removed a sword and cut his own sleeves instead of waking him, giving him the gift of sleep. 断袖 "cut sleeves" is a euphemism for gayness in China. It is one story among many that ancient Chinese scholars recorded in long annals about their emperors, and when the scholars died and the dynasties restarted their cycle, time convinced us there was something different about them.

While I was in China, a fire swept through the Columbia River Gorge. I had been passing through the gorge between Portland and my small town in Eastern Oregon all my life. It was strange to feel helpless knowing that a piece of my childhood was burning away. Even though I knew the forest would grow back, and maybe fires are necessary to maintain a forest's health and stability, it was difficult to reconcile the destruction of something I thought a part of myself. I can remember sitting in my new dorm room, half a world away, thinking about all the time I spent in between, no memory of where I was going or coming from.

And there I was on fire, engulfed by invisible flames in China. Waking

up was the hardest. That feeling before you've opened your eyes and you don't know who you are anymore. It's a special feeling called culture shock, when all the little things you take for granted are at once shifted, and even ripped out from under you. Sometimes people experience culture shock more tangibly in day-to-day procedures; for me, it was a brain surgery that approached that fundamental part of the brain where it's all green and blue because those are the colors of life. Isolation picked me up by the collar and threw me down firmly in a white room with a painfully springy bed. Picked at the wires in my brain and twisted them in knots before plugging them into different outlets. Growing up, life was an art project and I was a perfectionist, so I could never leave it alone. I was both the artist and the subject, and I've learned you can't be both. When something you've been working on has been accidentally interrupted and it takes starting over to see how much you've learned. A forest burns so newness can grow.

Maybe I was made gay today. Maybe tomorrow. Yesterday is yesterday and today isn't over yet.

My first preconception about gay people in China was defeated only a couple weeks into my program when I met a group of prospective language partners. I easily connected with one of the girls whose hometown was Kunming; she often dreams about the weather, beautiful all year, and she still sends me pictures of the lakes. She told me her sister was gay and lived with her girlfriend. Neither had told their parents. The girl who would become my language partner understood the tenuous relationship between her

parents and her sister—as the youth forge a new path into China's future, the older generations cling to the old ways—the frail and powerful relationship between past and present, yesterday and today.

I made friends with a girl whose hometown was famous for its peaches in California (my own 老家 grows watermelons, so I know what it's like to be known for fruit). She was always looking for peaches in China, judging their firmness, texture, and taste. I like to think she used the same care when she chose the group of friends she'd spend her time with abroad. We took a weekend trip to 峨眉山 to climb one of China's Four Ancient Buddhist Mountains. At the top, shrouded in mist and coldness, she mistook an orange for a peach.

I wonder if Mi Zixia knew what it meant for André Aciman when he took a bite of a peach in the gardens of Duke Ling of Wei in the Zhou dynasty. I'm not talking about the lexical peach that was introduced to the gay vocabulary when Aciman wrote "Call Me by Your Name." I'm talking about a peach that was so deeply sweet its bearer had to share it with his lover. I wonder if Mi Zixia knew what it meant for me. Gay culture is sometimes referred to as 余桃 "remaining peach." 余桃断袖 is pulled from China's history and refers to the love between two men, a story of remaining peaches and cut sleeves in a four-character chengyu. These stories enchanted me during my time abroad. Though it is important to understand the historical and cultural context both past and present, these stories speak of an enduring human trait regardless of gender—love.

China made me gay. I don't know why. Maybe today made me gay, maybe tomorrow, but not yesterday, because yesterday has ended. Study abroad taught me how to look to the future and to look from the past. I gained a deep appreciation for a country, an understanding for the complexity of life, no matter the place you live.

This personal essay is dedicated to the Freeman Scholarship and the Gilman Scholarship, which allowed me to study abroad.

Rare Scuttles Skeptics with “Sea of Thieves” Beta

By Joshua Engledow

Microsoft’s prized development studio *Rare* has triumphantly risen from a grave of childhood nostalgia. The once-colossal Nintendo subsidiary has fought through a slew of Kinect-related titles and various reboots to bring gamers “Sea of Thieves”—the company’s first truly original project since 2008. “Sea of Thieves” closed beta program, which ran from Jan. 24 through Jan. 31, garnered over 332,000 players and reached the number one position for live viewers on both Twitch and Mixer. For those who had the opportunity to join the closed beta, the impressive statistics aren’t much of a surprise—“Sea of Thieves” is an online pirate multiplayer game that overflows with mysterious islands, captivating ship battles, buried treasure, and loads more to bring gamers the definitive pirate experience.

“Sea of Thieves” throws players into a shared, open world environment that initially encourages cooperation with other players. Upon start up, the player has the option to either embark on their ship alone or join a crew to better their odds against other players out at sea. Whether the player is sailing across vibrant, crashing waves under a thunderstorm or drifting calmly under the sun from island-to-island, the threat of conflict with other real-player pirates is ever-looming. Players may frequently find themselves sword-clashing with another crew on an isolated island for chests of loot or engaged in an all-out canon war to sink an opposing ship. Outside the sacred bond of one’s crew, the pirate code applies—no one can be trusted. This aspect of “Sea of Thieves” gameplay creates a unique dynamic between the crews of a singular open world. Most conflicts arise while the player is trying to complete voyages for the many trading companies the game obtains.

Upon launch, “Sea of Thieves” will boast three different “trading companies” that the player may work for—each of which includes their own unique play style. For the beta, “Gold Hoarders Trading Co.” was open for players to try their hand at searching out and unearthing numerous chests of buried treasure. As players complete missions within this trading company, their reputation with the company increases and allows for more intricate, difficult, and potentially deadly voyages for them to complete with their crew. Therefore, different crew members can rise in the rankings of various trading companies to bring unique and appealing challenges for their crew members to vote on together. This interaction is guaranteed to generate camaraderie amongst players—the result is that the voyages of “Sea of Thieves” become a shared, meaningful experience between crew members. The rich wildlife and environments of the game magnify these kinds of interactions between players.

Sailing in “Sea of Thieves” world is an experience that is undoubtedly one of the most immersive open-world gameplay

experiences Xbox One has to offer. The illustrative style of the game’s world and characters are built to be everlasting. The islands in “Sea of Thieves” are filled to the brim with exciting exploration opportunities above and below land. One player’s curious nature may lead them among dark and mesmerizing crystalline caves, while another’s adventurous courage finds them exploring the sunken skeleton of a bygone ship for treasure. The illuminated turquoise peaks of waves caught by the sun during an ascending tide leaves player to plunge above the most beautiful representation of water in video games to date. With fantastic multiplayer dynamics, unique quests and voyages, and ageless graphics, “Sea of Thieves” may be the new exclusive title that Xbox One owners have been wanting to brag about since the launch of the console. With “Sea of Thieves” now under their sashes, *Rare*’s future looks as promising as it did during the company’s golden era of the ‘90s.

“Sea of Thieves” casts off on Xbox One and PC on March 20, 2018.



screenshot from “Sea of Thieves” beta



Chicago-Based Rapper Swade's Dynamic New EP Deserves Your Attention

by Shane Johnson

February saw the release of a confident, formative project with Chicago-based rapper/producer Swade's EP "Have a Nice Day." There isn't a single weak moment over the course of the project's eight tracks, as Swade displays strongly developed vocal chops over a diverse array of beats.

On the bombastic opening track featuring an energetic horn sample, Swade raps, "I won't ever feel like I've done enough/I been on the low but I'm coming up." That sentiment almost serves as a thesis for the project, as Swade endows

"Have a Nice Day" with the eager-to-please energy of an underrated artist finding his stride. Later on the same track, the instrumental drops out as he raps, "If pressure makes a diamond then I'm Roc-a-fella/I could put the Andes in the Ganges with my a capella." It's clever wordplay that rings true—Swade's compelling delivery is perhaps his greatest strength. He raps through a variety of flows over the EP's eight tracks with the confidence of an artist much further in their career.

The production, handled by Swade himself, Cardec Drums, and Sango, is diverse and engaging. Boom-bap drums

anchor "City of Wind," while "All That I Need" is a more conventional banger with a very catchy hook. Many beats on the project feature compelling soul-samples in the vein of Chicago predecessors Kanye West and No I.D. Swade sings with a gospel choir to humorous effect on the short interlude "Quit Rap" that sees the rapper imagining quitting rap to sell drugs. The penultimate song "Post Mortem" utilizes a distorted vocal sample engagingly while Swade takes an introspective turn. The track's second verse, an album highlight, begins "Can I be honest?/I'm tired of people confusing weakness and kindness." Swade then returns to discussion of his come-up, rapping, "Now this a revelation/Gotta make sure that I'm grounded 'fore I look for elevation/...I'm moving through the madness, this is greatness in the making," and the listener believes it by the time Swade returns to the memorable hook and concludes: "Everything I have I gotta give/Don't wanna die before I live."

The project will especially appeal to fans of last year's soulful southern rap outing "4eva is a Mighty Long Time" by Big K.R.I.T., although "Have a Nice Day" has a creative energy that is distinctly Chicago. With this EP, Swade places himself among the ranks of Chance the Rapper, Noname, Saba, Smino, Towkio, Jamila Woods and other artists who've made Chicago the most exciting and creative city in contemporary hip hop.

Swade has found some moderate success on Soundcloud, but certain songs from "Have a Nice Day" sat at less than 1000 plays on Spotify a week after being released. While the internet has certainly provided an accessible platform for upcoming artists to distribute and promote their music, there are still a variety of barriers to reaching listeners. If there is justice in this world, Swade will find that audience, because he is more than ready.

Portland Jazz Festival Showcases Portland State Talent

By Shane Johnson

The Portland Jazz Festival is an annual celebration of jazz the city hosts every February, featuring a variety of paid and free concerts, lectures, and more over the course of 11 days. As part of the 2018 festival, a small group of Portland State University students were selected to perform in a Jazz Duets showcase concert. Three of the students spoke to the *Pacific Sentinel* prior to the concert about the forthcoming experience. They sat down in the lobby of Lincoln Hall to discuss their preparations and what jazz means to them.

All three ended up studying jazz at Portland State indirectly, but their passion for the music is clear. Lauren Gruber, a junior at PSU getting a Bachelor of Music in vocal jazz, loved jazz growing up but began singing over her own music while pursuing production and audio engineering. "I never thought I could do it, but when I started trying I guess I wasn't that bad," she said with a laugh. "I just fell in love with singing and decided to make it my major."

For Ethan Maier, a pianist for the jazz duets currently earning his Masters of Music in jazz studies, the path to jazz was even less direct. Maier, a classically trained musician who was introduced to jazz through friends in high school, fulfilled a lifelong dream when he went on a six-month motorcycle trip to Latin America. "When I came back from that I wasn't even expecting to be a musician," he said. Maier was applying to be a forest ranger before realizing that music was what he loved. "It took me having to get out of it to really solidify my love of playing music, so I feel more clearly that's my purpose than I ever have."

Tyler Bassett, a sophomore jazz vocal major, began as a tenor saxophone player in high school before unexpectedly finding an interest in jazz vocals. He began his studies at The New School in New York City before transferring to PSU. "I'm doing things here that I didn't have the chance to do in New York," Bassett said. All three praised the strong role of Sherry Alves,



the Instructor of Jazz Voice in the School of Music and Theater, in their artistic development.

"Being an American, I feel like tradition can be a hard thing to come by. I go to Mexico, and in each place there's clear tradition, and many people have ancestry that stretches back pre-colonial," Maier said. "In the U.S, I feel like we often have a cultural deficit. For me, jazz is one of those few things that feels very strongly American. I feel very patriotic playing it, I am very proud of it."

Gruber also emphasized the history behind jazz, saying, "jazz really had a lot of significance to those who wrote it at the time, and I think what's really amazing is how it's stayed like that for years." She also noted how that tradition has been built upon, "You could hear the same tune played by five different people - and it was written in the thirties and has a lot of history and meaning behind it—and yet it's still new every time."

"It feels good to play, too," Maier added.

Beyond their love for performing, each described the unique opportunities and challenges that a jazz duet presents the musicians involved, compared to an ensemble or solo performance.

"I think like a lot of times people see the pianist and vocalist and they think the piano's just there to accompany, but I don't feel that way," said Gruber. "It's a lot of give-and-take."

Maier views a primary goal of a duet as coming together in such a way that neither person is leaning too heavily on the other. "It can become a thing where I'm creating the rhythm and the harmony and Lauren is the face of it and providing the melody and meaning behind the music," he said, "but I think it's better if we both take some of that on. It's a lofty goal, but it's still in the back of my mind."

"It's really important to make it a musical conversation with each other on stage," Bassett said.

"I feel like having a whole band and rhythm section is super fun and awesome,

but when it's just a duet, you really are focused just on one person," Gruber said. "It feels more of like a collaboration"

Maier believes that often, the fewer performers you have, the more nuance you can create. "Every little thing you do is heard and felt," he said. But he found it hard to say if the more nuanced performance would be a solo or duet. "In solo, you can only respond to yourself, but in duets, you're almost as naked in front of the audience as you are as a solo performer, however you have a whole other person's life experience to be bouncing off of."

Bassett said that duets have also helped him grow as a performer. He finds that when he is performing solo, he has a tendency not to own the whole stage. "[With duets], I am able to do things I wouldn't normally," he said. "It's also just more fun, you can do a lot of things that you couldn't necessarily do by yourself, such as vocal harmonies or even stage banter."

Maier has performed in the Portland Jazz Festival once before, in last year's jazz duets, and noted that he was deferring a lot of the musical decisions to the vocalists. Gruber and Bassett, for their part, described a mix of nerves and confidence in their preparation. Bassett said it will be his first hour-long set in the duet format.

"It's exciting and nerve-racking at the same time," said Gruber. "I don't really know what to expect, but it's an awesome opportunity and I didn't think that I would be here." She added, "I also don't want to overthink it."

Much of the remaining preparation then came down to repertoire choice. Maier noted that while jazz has a canon of standards that most everyone knows, gigs where performers choose songs as they go don't have the same effect as when performers deliberately select songs closer to their heart.

"If you move from one song strongly into the next tune, it feels like you mean it more," Gruber said.

She aims for diversity in her performances, both by mixing well-known songs with lesser known selections, and by keeping the energy flowing up and down from one song to another.

"A lot of times with jazz, people think of it as just background music, and I want something to turn their heads and be like 'Oh, wait I'm going to listen to that,'" she said.

Bassett aims to grab the audience's attention with his song choices as well.

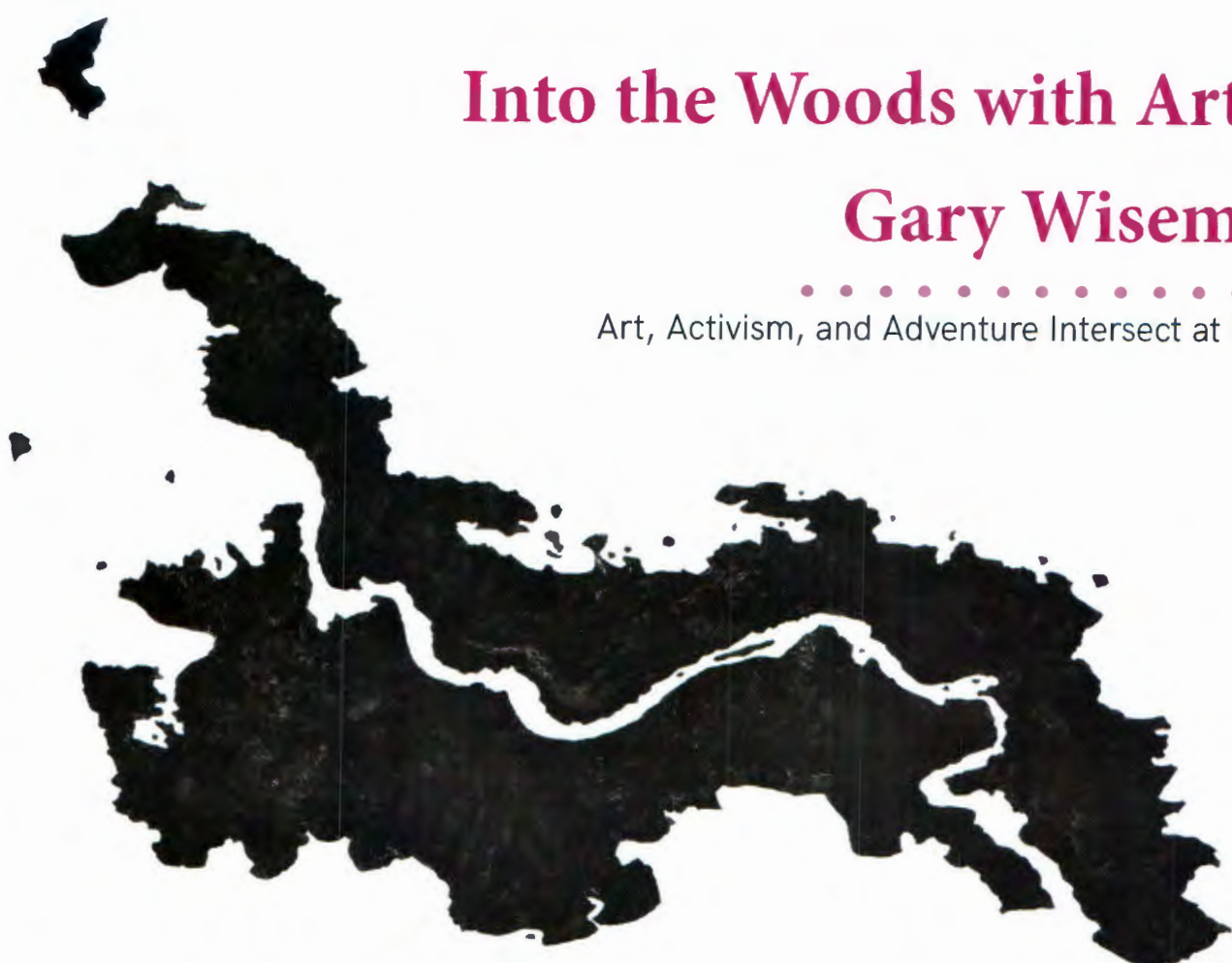
"I try to add my unique spin to whatever piece I choose," he said. While he prefers faster, upbeat pieces, when performing slower selections he aims for songs that include both meaningful lyrics and intense melodies.

Beyond the duets, Gruber and Bassett recently had the opportunity to perform alongside Grammy Award-winning jazz vocalist Kurt Elling.

"Kurt Elling has been such an inspiration to me and it's such a huge blessing not only to share the stage with him but also learn from him," said Gruber. The performance was a tribute to the late jazz legend Jon Hendricks. "[Hendricks] has been so important to me personally and for jazz as a whole, and I'm overwhelmed with gratitude to be able to honor Jon Hendricks and to do that with Kurt Elling."

"Last year I went to see Kurt Elling in New York," said Bassett. "Little did I know a year later I would be performing on stage with him."

Bassett, Gruber, and Maier performed their duets on Feb. 20 at the University Place Hotel. More information about the Portland Jazz Festival can be found at pdxjazz.com. The next PSU Jazz Vocal Ensemble performance is on March 15, at 7 p.m. in Lincoln Hall room 175.



Into the Woods with Artist Gary Wiseman

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Art, Activism, and Adventure Intersect at Pit 36

by Jake Johnson

Art is not easily defined, nor should it be. On Feb. 17, 2018, an unusual cluster of humans took to the woods to visit the site of the 2014 Pit 36 forest fire in the Mt. Hood National Forest, 20 minutes outside Estacada. They followed artist Gary Wiseman as he demonstrated his process for locating and collecting the ideal charcoal from burnt trees. The trip also provided an opportunity to learn about the ecology of the area and the work being done by activists to ensure the forest not only survives, but thrives.

Wiseman and his work are fascinating, but the most interesting element of the trip was the dynamic that existed as a result of eight different people interacting and exploring the woods together. The group included an activist, artists, an outdoorsy ecologist, and a biology major, each perceiving different things. But every one of them was there because something about

Wiseman's charcoal maps of burn sites and his philosophy about this body of work had intrigued them and made them each curious enough to follow him into the woods on a windy overcast Saturday.

BFA student Melissa McGhie organized the trip, offering senior instructor and fine artist Tia Factor's "Painting in Place" class an opportunity to see the process of a professional fine artist. Joining Wiseman, McGhie, and Factor were Kayla Townsley, a biology major and painting student; Karl Freitag, a BFA art practices major; Michael Krochta, a forest watch coordinator from activist organization Bark; and Rachel Freifelder, a Bark ground-truthing volunteer and ecology expert.

Who is Wiseman?

Wiseman's art is largely based in process, discovery, and collaboration. Some of his past work has consisted of happenings and performances with nods

to Fluxus and highly conceptual artists like Joseph Beuys and Marina Abramović.

"I'm pretty eclectic—I don't know if that's a bad thing," Wiseman said. "Drawing is the thing that's consistent."

In 2015, the arts organization Signal Fire created their new residency program, Tinderbox, which sought to embed artists within organizations and through that partnership create a body of work. Wiseman was the first artist to be tapped and subsequently placed with Bark, a local organization dedicated to fighting logging interests and advocating for the health of the Mt. Hood National Forest.

Bark: like Skin, but for Trees

The organization has a deep appreciation for forest fires, not because of their destruction, but because they see them as a necessary part of the ecological cycle. Bark believes that through forest fires, new space is created and nutrients are made available to create much more

diverse and rich ecosystems that may not have been able to exist without the burn.

Through his residency at Bark, Wiseman became increasingly interested in fire and burned areas of the forest. Wiseman was inspired to create inks made from pigments created by collecting and refining the charcoal of roasted trees at burn sites he visited with Bark. He created maps of forest fires using charcoal from the burn sites he depicted.

The maps look like ink blot tests, and at first glance seem like abstract art, but closer inspection reveals carefully crafted maps oozing with the texture of a handmade medium. Wiseman manages to communicate the rawness of nature and the power, darkness, and beauty of a forest fire in what at first may wrongly appear to be simple illustrations.

Cold, Wet, and Windy

After meeting at the Grocery Outlet and getting coffee at the farmer's market, we carpooled to Harmony Bakery in Estacada for a snack—it appears this bakery is a recurring stop for Bark's quests into the forest. We got donuts and kept driving. We passed what appeared to be a stunningly bright maroon beach at the edge of a lake. It was later revealed by Townsley to be algae blooms.

Upon arrival at Pit 36, we found a jawbone, oil spills, and shotgun shells. We then headed off into the woods. Krochta talked about how the area used to be home to a Russian immigrant town, but after it kept burning down they just decided to abandon the area altogether with none of the town's descendants still living anywhere closeby.

The wind whipped the trees with a peaceful whirring reminiscent of John Muir's "A Wind-Storm in the Forests." Most of the trees left standing had red lines painted across them with dots on the stumps indicating they weren't to be cut down. The minimalist tagging added a surreal unease to the forest.

After rambling over fallen and cut logs, we came upon a clearing that was used to dump a lot of the burned trees. It looked like a ritualistic fire pit, large charcoal logs arranged in a circle around burnt orange earth. Wiseman examined the charcoal and collected some before discovering a burned out hollow stump he seemed pretty excited about. He explained

that because the exterior of the stump was intact, the charcoal contained inside was protected from the wind and rain and less likely to have the ideal softer charcoal stripped away. Freitag jumped inside to attempt to harvest the good stuff.

We marched on, found a few more burn circles, and enjoyed the view from the edge of a forest hill overlooking the Clackamas River and beyond. Freifelder pointed out *Mahonia nervosa*, commonly called Low Oregon Grape. This semi-spiky-leafed plant was apparently one of the first plant species to really make a comeback after the fire.

Freifelder and Krochta talked about how forest fires are integral parts of a forest's ecosystem. Insects such as bark beetles are attracted to forest fires and inhabit trees as soon as the fire is put out. After the beetles arrive, the black-backed woodpecker comes in and feasts on the beetles. The fallen dead trees become nurse logs, full of nutrients being broken down and fertilizing the environment. The recently opened forest canopy provides sunlight to the forest floor, allowing ground-plants to thrive where it may have been difficult before.

Disaster Capitalism and the Firefighter Industrial Complex

Krochta talked about how unfortunate it is that the Bureau of Land Management gives logging lobbyists the same consideration they give activist groups like Bark, and other science-based organizations. He said it takes a lot of monitoring to make sure the lobbying Bark does and the settlements they'd reached with the BLM and the Forest Service take constant monitoring; if BLM agrees not to sell timber from an area, Bark has to stick around and constantly monitor activity to make sure they don't try to sell it in a slightly different way. Freifelder and Krochta shook their heads saying they didn't want to get started on the firefighter industrial complex or the disaster capitalism of the BLM and the logging industry lobbyists. Krochta talked about how the BLM doesn't even really make much money from timber sales and it's more profitable for people to be able to enjoy the nature and pass through local shops and restaurants.

The wind picked up making it harder to hear each other. Mighty howls and gusts

swung the forest canopy from side-to-side and sent a few of the trees crashing down to the hillside, unable to stand up to the wind's power. Instead of sticking around to witness nature's great performance, we headed back to the cars.

Freitag excitedly poked some bright orange fungus with the consistency of boogers, but seemed a little deflated after realizing his lens cap had disappeared at some point. We found a small skeleton in a ditch. Most of the meat and fur was gone except for a furry paw. McGhie overturned stones looking for clay to experiment with by turning it into pigment. We said goodbye to the forest and the algae lake, stopped at Harmony to use the restroom, and headed back into Portland.

Wiseman's current work consists mostly of drawing and painting, but he's working on collaborative projects as well: a project looking into trauma and health and curating artists whose work is engaging concepts Wiseman and his collaborators find interesting. McGhie and Wiseman both have art practices centered in collaboration, education, process, and discovery. It seems this trip was merely a piece of their collaborative art.

Toward the end of the trip, I told Wiseman I thought the interactions of all the different people given their individual backgrounds make the adventure incredibly interesting but extremely difficult to describe in anything smaller than a book. Wiseman likes to think his role as an artist is to ask questions, but his answer felt perfect:

"Art gives us an opportunity to explore things language doesn't really have a good grasp on."

Early Man

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Aardman's Molded Misfire



Released: Feb. 16, 2018
Directed: Nick Park
Written: Mark Burton and James Higginson
Starring: Eddie Redmayne, Maisie Williams, and Tom Hiddleston
Rated PG

By Aaron Clausen

After a meteorite strikes the ground cavemen gather around it. As they surround the meteorite, one of them decides to kick it, thus creating the game of soccer. Many years later, the cavemen have forgotten all about soccer, and now hunt rabbits. The bronze age begins, invading the caveman's land which creates a war (of soccer) between the stone age and the bronze. The rabbit hunting tribe is forced to reconnect with their ancestors to play a game of soccer, and win back their land.

Nick Park and Aardman Animations have been behind some of the best claymation films have to offer. Together they made "Chicken Run" and "Shaun the Sheep," but their most popular venture is "Wallace & Gromit". All of them have been extremely well received and are adored by their fans. With "Early Man," however, their success may have stumbled. Their latest project is very much a hiccup in the Aardman filmography. The rushed plot, poor character development, and lack of

character motivation eat away at what could have been an excellent movie.

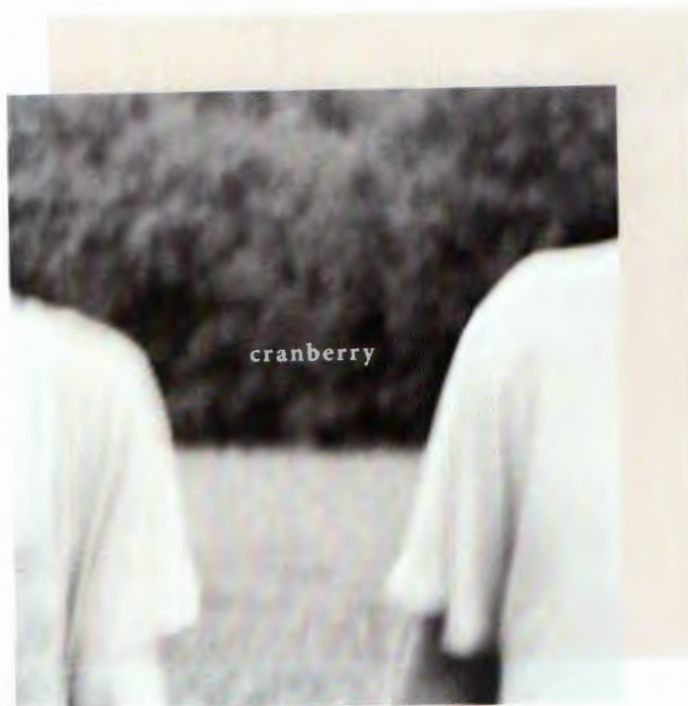
"Early Man" does have some strong aspects. The whole voice cast give excellent performances. Doug (played by Eddie Redmayne) is a goofy, innocent, and charming caveman, easily compared to Redmayne's portrayal of Newt in "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them." Maisie Williams plays Doug's semi-love interest, Goona, but was mostly just a huge soccer enthusiast. It is hard to say whether or not Doug and Goona were supposed to be in love because the character's interests were pretty poorly executed. Goona just wants to play soccer and that was pretty much the only reason she helps Doug. Doug just thought she was pretty. The standout of the film was Tom Hiddleston playing the villain, Lord Nooth. It was surprising to see Hiddleston's name next to the character in the credits because Lord Nooth sounds nothing like him.

While the film does falter in the writing department, its production quality

is the type of top notch claymation one would expect from Aardman Animations. Nick Park and his team of animators created yet another whimsical-looking world. The iconic Aardman eyes and the cheesy smiles are bound to make any audience member smile. There is just something so childlike and fun to the look of the film. Except for one prehistoric dinosaur duck, which is probably one of the scariest looking things the animation studio has ever come up with.

Soccer fans will probably enjoy "Early Man". Aardman die-hards and claymation fans will probably love it. It will more than likely break even, but it doesn't look like it'll be a money maker. Overall, there was potential here, but it's a pretty big misstep for a usually superb director.

Rising Indie Duo Refines Their Sound on New Release



by Shane Johnson

Much of today's music feels particularly difficult to categorize into neat, straightforward genre descriptors. Perhaps it has always been that way, but the rise of the internet and digital production software has made creating and sharing music far more accessible than ever before. Genre lines feel increasingly blurred, with the vast quantity of music at our fingertips on streaming services appearing more like a spectrum of styles than neat genre groupings. As a result, the terminology to effectively and precisely describe an artist's sound is often lacking, and attempts to create precise enough subgenres quickly become futile.

Austin-based duo Hovvdy create music that has been described by the music media as "borderline slowcore" (NME), "lo-fi" (SPIN), "bedroom-pop" (NPR), and "pillowcore" (Hovvdy themselves). Hovvdy released their sophomore album "Cranberry" Feb. 9, and the album proves the band to be self-assured and skillful in crafting their specific sound, whatever words you may use to describe it.

The songs the duo make appear rather simple on the surface, but a more accurate word would be subtle. The way they bring various musical elements together is deliberate and distinct; gentle guitar chords mingle with melodic riffs; accompanying instruments, used sparingly, swim faintly amidst the fuzz present on many tracks; the vocals are placed back within the mix as if just another instrument. That both members began their musical careers as drummers is evident in the album's deceptively creative drum patterns on certain tracks.

"Cranberry" singles "Petal" and "In the Sun" in particular seem to expand and polish the sound of Hovvdy's debut album "Taster." "Late" and "Float" are also highlights, while "Truck" finds the band effectively employing a subtle slide guitar. Where the band most succeeds is creating a specific atmosphere; a gentle warmth permeates the entire project. The songs on "Cranberry" are drenched in sentiment, like the feeling of reminiscing on good memories from years past, and this mood is mirrored by their simple

lyrics. "Talk with old friends like I need to / We look up, feel time, just smile," they sing on "Petal." Beautiful album opener "Brave" finds them harmonizing wistfully, "Yesterday I woke up outside/saw you for the very first time/Remember it perfect/Don't wanna be one you forget." Across the album, lyrics are paired with melody to create a distinct mood.

The band's strength in creating a singular sound starts to become a weakness toward the back half on this album—many of the 12 tracks on "Cranberry" begin to bleed together on initial listenings. A few more detours into different tempos and song structures would benefit a future Hovvdy album. With their profile on the rise after a 2017 that saw Hovvdy join the talented roster of indie label *Double Double Whammy* Records and tour with Pinegrove, "Cranberry" nonetheless serves as an effective sophomore album, providing material that should attract new fans and please old ones alike.

The Tentative Existence of Beauty

Beauty Standards are not as Absolute as
People are Led to Believe



By Aurora Mak

From a scientific standpoint, beauty depends on symmetry of the face and proportionate physical features that subtly tell the rest of the world that someone is healthy and ready to procreate. From a philosophical standpoint, it's in the eye of the beholder. To some, beauty is athleticism and dedication to health; while to others it's looking like the models that walk high-fashion runways. Advertisements for cars, cosmetics, clothing, and even food and drinks often showcase the standards of beauty for the time we live in. But when looking at the history of beauty and the massive scope that is "being beautiful" in other cultures, beauty standards begin to look like what they truly are: irrelevant.

Depending where on Earth one is, beauty standards take on a very different look. Tokyo Girls' Update, a website devoted to making Japanese pop culture accessible to the rest of the world, states that Japan, for example, values "cuteness rather than sexiness," which manifests in their culture as pale skin and slender figures being seen as most attractive. They see smaller faces and larger eyes as being features that accentuate cuteness. In contrast to Japan, Brazilian culture emphasizes the exact opposite. According to L'Oreal, Brazil values a tan, and the ideal body shape is the "corpo de violão" or a "guitar-shaped" body.

The issue with beauty standards is that they only emphasize certain physical traits, which leads to the assumption that traits that do not conform exactly are unsightly and undesirable. Gabrielle Deydier, a special needs teacher, is the author of "On ne naît pas grosse" ("One is Not Born Fat"), detailing the abuse she experienced due to her being overweight. While the beauty standard in France is natural beauty that is effortlessly feminine, they also see being overweight "a grotesque self-inflicted disability," stated The *Guardian* in its interview with Deydier. She recounts a time when a coworker told her it was "unfair on the children" because they would now be bullied "for having a fat teacher" along with their disabilities.

Deydier suffered years of insults, discrimination, and abuse due to her not conforming to what is seen as beautiful, causing her to fall into depression.

Deydier's experience with French beauty standards ruined her self-esteem and made her feel ashamed; and that same trend is seen in the United States. Millions of Americans suffer from eating disorders in the hopes of controlling their weight, either to appease someone else's expectations or their own. But more often than not, personal ideas of beauty are the same ones that have been pushed by advertisements and Hollywood. Women and young girls across the nation stress over looking good, but the tragic part is that beauty standards are not set in stone—they change through the decades. As the years go on, the definition of what's beautiful swings back and forth in the United States—from being stick thin to embracing natural curves, from bleached, processed straight hair to voluminous curls with just the right bounce. Even the ideal thickness of eyebrows changes throughout time.

All of this inconsistent repetition of what's beautiful and what's not does numbers on a person's psyche. If someone has a naturally curvy body, they can feel the immense pressure to diet and lose weight simply to appease the trend of the decade. Someone who is flat-chested may spend massive amounts of money to augment themselves because that's what "beauty" is.

The name of the beauty standards game changes every few years, but the players never get a break. Being trendy takes precedence over being healthy far too often, leaving millions battered and insecure. The latest trends are not rules that must be followed to find success, joy, or happiness in life. Stressing over weight, height, skin tone or texture are things that ought not have the power to completely reshape an individual's self worth.

Beauty standards control everyone's lives in one way or another, be it through the movie stars that are idolized or through the subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle comments from peers. Americans are

taught in elementary school that they are all unique, all special, but what happened to that idea when puberty hit? Suddenly, no one is a unique, free-spirited kid anymore. How is it that we've let our self image be determined by whether we pass an arbitrary standard? Beauty cannot be measured in a laboratory or allocated by a committee, and yet it is used by advertising committees and cosmetic laboratories to shape how the masses think.

In modern society, beauty standards have no place whatsoever. They cause harm to a person's sense of self and the only people they truly benefit are the minority that fit the mold for that decade. But wait another ten years and those placed on a pedestal either crumble to the ground or scramble to fit the next arbitrary mold. And it's arbitrary because the idea of beauty is irrelevant. It doesn't matter if someone's face has the golden ratio or if their hair is perfectly coiffed when they've spent years hating their thighs or how their stomach pokes out a little. Beauty standards don't teach people to embrace the natural traits they already have, but to be envious of the things they don't.



Fall From Grace



The Story of Rajneeshpuram, OR: Home of the Biggest Bioterror Attack in Modern U.S. History

by *Andreas Bassett*

Between Aug. 29 and Oct. 10, 1984, 751 people in The Dalles, OR unexpectedly contracted food poisoning. 41 of those individuals had to be hospitalized. Fortunately, there were no fatalities, and it seemed as though a large-scale disaster had been unwittingly averted. The salad bars of ten local

restaurants were later found to have been contaminated with *Salmonella* culture. It would take one whole year before the Oregon Public Health Division (OPHD) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) discovered that the *Salmonella* outbreak was in fact premeditated. Two officials from a commune in Wasco County, OR were later arrested and

convicted on charges of attempted murder in connection with the poisonings.

This marked the rapid decline of the Rajneeshpuram commune-turned-city, the uncanny origin of the bioterror attack.

In order to fully understand the magnitude of what later came to be known as the 1984 Rajneesh bioterror attack, it is necessary to go back to Rajneeshpuram's inception and chief architect, whose nickname is the basis for the name of the spiritual community. The behind-the-scenes story of the attack is both unsettling and incredulous.

Rajneesh (Dec. 11, 1931-Jan. 19, 1990), born Chandra Mohan Jain, was also commonly referred to and known as Acharya Rajneesh, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, Bhagwan, or Osho. From humble beginnings in a small village in the Madhya Pradesh state in central India, Rajneesh grew up to become a self-proclaimed and rebellious anti-theist, but was studious and engrossed in his schoolwork. His precociousness led him to develop into a promising student, and at the age of nineteen, Rajneesh enrolled in Hitkarini College in Jabalpur, a city roughly 125 miles east of his hometown of Kuchwada. After going through what he described as a mystical experience under the shade of a tree in Jabalpur, Rajneesh claimed to have become spiritually enlightened on March 21, 1953.

Later on, he completed his B.A. in philosophy in 1955 and then earned an M.A. in philosophy in 1957. Afterwards, while teaching as a professor, Rajneesh began to travel and lecture outside of academic institutions which eventually led to him amassing a large following. His teachings were also appealing to the higher echelons of society, and quite a few of his more wealthy supporters ended up becoming patrons. His discourses regularly discussed capitalism, science, and technological advances, while being critical of institutional religions, socialism, and popular figures such as Mahatma Gandhi.

Over the course of a decade, Rajneesh ascended to the status of renowned spiritual leader. He was known to run multiple therapeutic meditation camps, and as a direct result of his work, meditation centers sprang up in India toting Rajneesh's teachings and principles, known at the time as the Life Awakening

Movement. With a very devoted and growing fanbase, he began to accept disciples into his following. One of Rajneesh's first disciples, Laxmi Thakarsi Kuruwa, became his personal secretary. The daughter of one of his early supporters and patrons, Laxmi had powerful ties to politicians and political parties. She eventually helped Rajneesh raise enough money to give up travelling in order to temporarily settle in Mumbai, where followers and visitors could more easily attend his teachings.

After health-related setbacks, Rajneesh's team purchased two large houses on six acres of land in western India; this came to be known as his "ashram" (religious retreat in East Indian religions), a spiritual community, oasis, and retreat. Until 1981, the ashram was the Rajneeshee home to intellectual and spiritual teaching, lecturing, and group therapy sessions. By the late 1970s, Rajneesh's community thrived and received on average 30,000 visitors a year, with many of those visitors coming from abroad, mainly Europe and North America. Rajneesh had originally started out disseminating philosophical and spiritual discourse, but now his ashram had become distinguished for unconventional and controversial group therapy sessions that involved violence and questionable sexual encounters. The Indian government gradually caught wind of Rajneesh's fandom and attempted to put

an end to the flourishing community. The government cracked down on Rajneesh with allegations of drug use within his disciples, tax fraud, and physical harm to his followers and visitors. In addition to pressure from the government to continue operation, the ashram was growing at an unsustainable rate.

So he upped and relocated to eastern Oregon.

Rajneesh replaced his secretary-turned-personal-assistant with another female disciple, Ma Anand Sheela, who helped arrange the establishment of a new ashram in the U.S. It turned out that Laxmi was let go for failing to secure a new location in India. In 1981, the initial stages of a new Rajneeshee utopia commenced. 64,229 acres of farmland stretching across Wasco and Jefferson County in Oregon was purchased for \$5.75 million, with much of the proceeds coming from generous donors and supporters. The acquired property was previously known as "The Big Muddy Ranch," but was fittingly renamed to "Rancho Rajneesh." The residents of the new ashram quickly moved to incorporate the commune as the city of "Rajneeshpuram." A mall, post office, airport, various centers and halls, even a public transit system, and many other community structures were built to legitimize the brand new Western Rajneeshee spiritual mecca. The farmland was cultivated for growing clean, organic produce, and the ashram was passed off as

a farming community so as to stay within legal boundaries.

The Rajneeshpuram craze caused mass hysteria in the first half of the 1980s; the ashram-turned-city exploded in size and population. Thousands of homeless people from everywhere in the U.S. were brought in on buses and given homes to live in and a new purpose in life. New citizens of Rajneeshpuram were encouraged to vote in local elections in order to sway them in their favor. The Rajneeshees even pestered the neighboring city of Antelope, OR, eventually taking over the Antelope city council and renaming the city to "Rajneesh." Needless to say, Rajneesh's fresh new home in the wild west was met with criticism and outcry from Oregonian locals who opposed the development of an overtly religious city. As a result, the Big Muddy Rajneeshee Rancho was the subject of multiple legal cases and investigations between 1981 and its disbandment in 1987.

After the move to Oregon, Rajneesh's activity as enlightened spiritual guru declined due to age, increasing health problems, and piecemeal legal hurdles. He became secluded, spent most of his time in his trailer, and rarely made public appearances. For a few years, Rajneesh took a break from teaching. At one point, he owned 93 Rolls Royces, which made him the single largest owner of the high-end cars in the world. His community of disciples, followers, and supporters showed their devotion to the great Osho by increasing the private collection to an excessive total of 365 Rolls Royces, one for every single day of the calendar year. The citizens of Rajneeshpuram only saw him in one of his cars from time to time, driving by in the city or on his way home to his trailer. By this point in time, Rajneesh entrusted most of the city's decision making to a communal matriarchal council. He also entrusted Sheela, his personal assistant and now-president of the Rajneesh International Foundation, with a great deal of authority to call the shots in his stead. Consequently, as the '80s rolled on, tension between Rajneesh's coterie spearheaded by Sheela and the Rajneeshpuram community leaders arose. Following their previous success in conquering Antelope, OR, Rajneeshee officials in late 1984 took a run at the





Wasco County Circuit Court in order to continue their expansion of influence. In an attempt to secure two out of three seats in the November 1984 election, Sheela and other community leaders orchestrated incredulous maneuvers. The Dalles, OR, Wasco County's most populated city, was targeted and biological agents in the form of Salmonella culture were deployed to incapacitate non-Rajneeshee voters between August and October of 1984. Many innocent citizens came down with illnesses and 751 cases of gastroenteritis were reported in the area.

On election day, irate local residents showed up in large crowds to prevent a Rajneeshee victory. Many suspected that they were responsible for the large-scale poisonings. In the end, they were triumphant.

The Rajneeshees pulled their candidates out of the election after facing severe backlash from neighboring communities. Multiple state and federal agencies investigated the Salmonella contamination in The Dalles, OR. Poor hygiene on the part

of food handlers was initially blamed, although the investigations never ruled out bioterrorism. Rumors of the Rajneeshpuram conspiracy circulated, but no evidence could back up the claim that they had a hand in the intentional poisoning of establishments in The Dalles.

A few months later on Feb. 28, 1985, Oregon Congressman at the time, James Howard Weaver, spoke in the U.S. House of Representatives and directly accused

the Rajneeshees of contaminating salad bars with Salmonella. The evidence he presented was circumstantial and many thought Howard was bandwagoning on the Rajneeshee-hate-train.

Then, after having fallen out of the public eye for a few years, Rajneesh broke his silence. By July 1985, Rajneesh had returned to regularly practicing his teachings. He came out and stated that it was time for him "to speak his



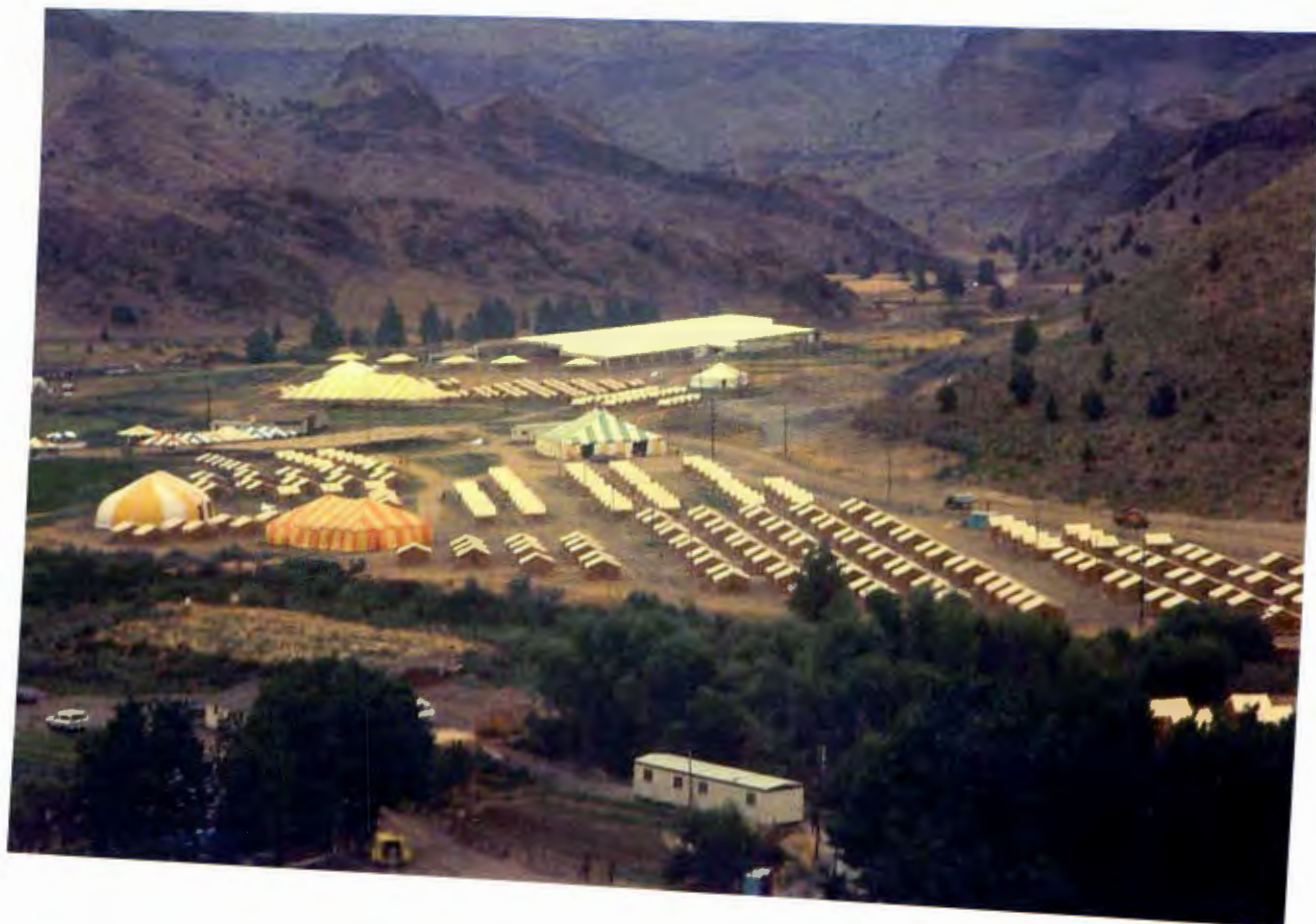
own truths." When Sheela and other inner-circle disciples mysteriously left Rajneeshpuram for Europe out of the blue, Rajneesh held a damning press conference. In Sept. 1985, roughly one year after the Salmonella incident, he publically blamed Sheela and her team of associates for the 1984 bioterror attack as well as other alleged crimes carried out without his knowledge, such as attempted murder of Rajneesh's doctor, more poisonings of authority figures, and espionage within Rajneeshpuram and Rajneesh's living quarters.

Though Rajneesh's claims were at first met with public suspicion, further investigations by U.S. authorities confirmed his allegations. Investigators discovered numerous glass vials of Salmonella in medical clinics in Rajneeshpuram. The CDC later concluded that the Salmonella culture discovered in Rajneeshpuram was an exact match to the contaminated salad bars in The Dalles, OR. Sheela and her confidants were hunted down and convicted shortly after.

Half a month later, Rajneesh renounced his status as religious teacher. Everything started to go downhill. The ashram's citizens and supporters burned 5,000 copies of the 78-page book of scriptures, "The Book of Rajneeshism." The signature orange robes disciples and followers wore were also burnt in a giant bonfire. Hundreds of Rajneeshes deserted Rajneeshpuram for good. The American Rajneesh paradise had been desecrated by wicked corruption, and Rajneesh had no choice but to save face and leave before it was too late.

The aftermath of Rajneeshpuram's total collapse was ugly. The entire city was dissolved and the remaining valuables were sold off in auctions, including the impressive collection of 365 Rolls Royces. Sheela was extradited and sentenced to a total of 59 years for attempted murder, first-degree assault, second-degree assault, wiretapping conspiracy, and orchestrating the 1984 Rajneesh bioterror attack. She was released on parole due to good behavior after serving 29 months in a

minimum-security federal prison. Sheela now lives in Switzerland. Rajneesh was given a ten-year suspended sentence, five years of probation, and a hefty fine. He left the U.S. in November 1985 and never returned. Rajneesh rebranded himself back in India as "Osho" and continued to deliver public discourses at his old ashram. He died of natural causes on Jan. 19, 1990.



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