

# The Black Portlanders

## Photographer advances project to even higher level

By OLIVIA OLIVIA  
PORTLAND OBSERVER

One of Portland's youngest and most talented artists sits in a corner of the Glyph Café and Artspace in the Pearl. She carries her camera in her bag and waits for an opportunity – the opportunity to catch the life of a small segment of the Portland population: black folks just like her.

Intisar Abioto hails from Memphis, a city rich in African-American history and one that boasts a whopping 62 percent of the population that identifies as black. Portland's paltry 7 percent black population has lead to the city frequently being referred to as the "whitest major city" in the United States.

About two years ago, Abioto began snapping shots of people of color in Portland. She sometimes would start a conversation, learn more about how they moved here or if they were native born, and commit the stories to memory, sometimes even sharing them on her blog.

Her project quickly became known as the Black Portlanders, and was praised by international and local news organizations like Al Jazeera, The Oregonian,

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PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

*Intisar Abioto is a Portland photographer inspired to use her work to tell the personal stories and history of Portland's black community.*

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