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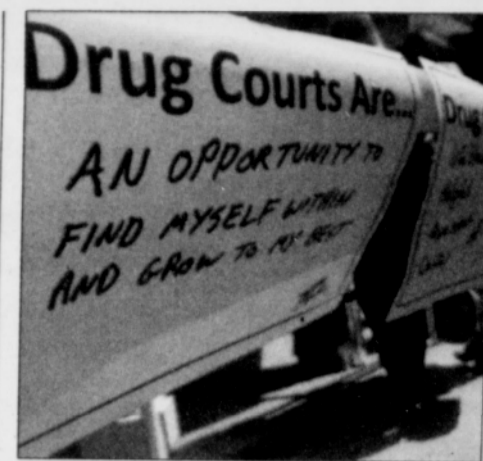
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PHOTO BY DONOVAN M. SMITH/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland musical duo Neka and Kahlo – 7thrdwav3 are celebrating the release of their debut EP. Interracial and lesbian, the couple embraces widely different musical backgrounds to fuel a unique sound for listeners, including such genres as hip hop, rock, soul and gospel.

Please, No Labels

Musical couple explores 'norms' with debut EP

BY DONOVAN M. SMITH
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

To hear what the Portland musical duo Neka and Kahlo – 7thrdwav3 is trying to say in their debut EP, it's probably going to take an abandonment of some of your preconceived notions about music, maybe all of them.

At least that's the hope of this interracial couple for their album which dropped last

week after a long-awaited turn.

During an interview with the Portland Observer, Kahlo (real name is Mila Kokich), and Neka (real name is Shanekah), said the Thirdway EP was inspired by their scars, triumphs, enlightenment, and perhaps most importantly, their fans.

In 2012, Kahlo, was confined to a bed at OHSU, sometimes weeks at a time, while awaiting a desperately needed kidney transplant. The days were exhausting on not only her, but for Neka too, something the couple says strengthened their five-year relationship.

The duo says it's all made for better music.

"We're better together than we are apart, that's something we realized through our trials here at the hospital," Kahlo says.

A northeast Portland native and the rhymespitter of the group, Kahlo says the

two never stopped recording for the EP throughout the months of treatment, even during the dismal days of dialysis.

"I was recording, I think, some of my better verses when I had tubes in my chest," she recalls.

Neka on the other hand is not only the vocal songstress for the two, but provides the airy beats they both muse over. A lesbian product of the Pentecostal church, this southern California native says her eclectic influences lend to genre-bending that won't be easily classified.

"A lot of people, like if you're gonna do pop music, if you do hip hop, you're gonna do hip hop, and we were able to bring some of our gospel aspects into the music. And you know, bring a lot of the diverse cultures

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