

# Empowering Life with Art



Annabelle Araya, a first generation African American artist from Portland, reflects on the African Diaspora in her paintings.

A first generation African American artist from Portland is getting some deserved recognition for her paintings, works that uplift, empower and identify the state of our community.

Annabelle Araya was born in Eritrea and immigrated to Portland un-

der a refuge program. Her work has been selected for display in 2021 at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at Portland State University.

Araya is one of 20 Black Lives Matter artists the museum recently announced it was supporting by awarding them each a \$2,500 grant to use

their voice, experience and artistic expressions to reflect on social justice efforts in response to systemic racism.

"I want to keep hope alive through my art, to transition the state of mind of self awareness," Araya said. Her artistic medium reflects on the Diaspora of Africans to the Americas,

past to present.

"I touch past and present and convey the fluidity of the joys, sorrows, trials, tribulations and aspirations of my people. If you take note, I go from childhood to the natural progression to the elders. A very traditional African transition. We honor our elders."

## Record Homeless Deaths

A new report shows that 113 people died in 2019 while lacking permanent housing in Multnomah County, an increase mainly due to an increase in people experiencing homelessness, more than in any previous year studied.

## Innocent Killed in Gang Crossfire

Authorities said a Portland woman who was not the intended target was killed in a gang-related shooting last Thursday near North Vancouver Avenue and Stanton Street. Kelly Marie Smith, 53, was making deliveries as a food service contractor with her husband, when she was hit by crossfire bullets, police said. Her husband survived the attack.



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## Mistakenly Shot Uber Driver Dies

An Uber driver who police believe was shot in a gang-style ambush that was

## The Week in Review



a case of mistaken identity, died from his injuries last week. The local resident, Dhulfiqar Mseer, an immigrant from Iraq, was about to pick up a fare around midnight on Dec. 12 in the Woodlawn neighborhood

when he was shot multiple times while behind the wheel of his white Honda Accord, authorities said.

## Dispensary Worker Killed in Burglary

Crime Stoppers offered a \$2,500 reward last week for information leading to the arrest of a gunman who shot a marijuana dispensary worker



during an armed robbery on Dec. 14 at Cured Green on North Lombard and Washburne Avenue. The victim was identified as Michael Arthur, 44.



## First COVID-19 Vaccinations

COVID-19 immunizations began last week, kicking off a statewide effort that could see thousands of health care workers getting first doses. Officials expect to vaccinate more than 100,000 health care workers and long term care facility residents by the end of the month.

## Death Blamed on Tent Candle

One person died last Wednesday when their tent caught fire along the I-405 on-ramp to the Fremont Bridge, according to Portland Fire & Rescue. The victim and another adult were sleeping when at some point, a candle used for warmth was knocked over and rapidly consumed the tent and its contents, officials said.



## BLM Sign Draws Fine by City

Portland has fined a business owner \$292 for displaying a Black Lives Matter sign (wweek photo above) that violates the city's sign code. Someone didn't like the 42-foot long banner on Columbia Boulevard near the intersection with I-5 and filed a complaint, officials said.