

Yo! VENICE

May 15 – 28, 2015 • Issue 4

Wylie Wilson

How Venice Creative Types
Are Discovering Inspiration
At Abbot Kinney Hot Spot



Peta Wilson's store Wylie Wilson on the corner of Abbot Kinney Blvd. and Santa Clara Ave. has become a haven for creative types.

For anyone who makes a purchase, she donates 40 percent of profits to the Pegasus Liberty Foundation, which supports local and international organizations working on the front line around the world to free and rehabilitate slaves.

See story page 6.

COURTESY PHOTO



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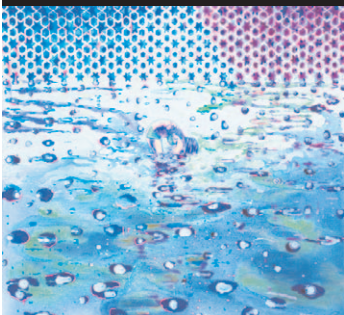
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Stellar Dip, 2014, 51.25" x 59"



Patchwork Landing, 2015, 55.25" x 63"

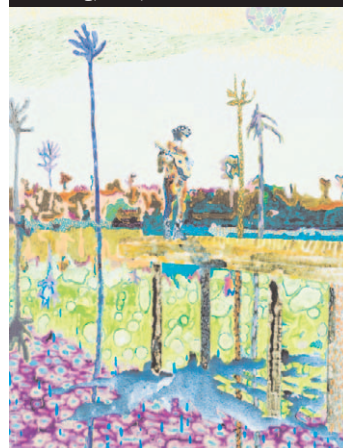


Figment, 2014, 23.75" x 29.5"



Melanie Daniel

Moon Song, 2015, 51.25" x 39.5"



Piecing Together Radically Different Cultures

Brenton Garen

Drawing from her experiences living in Israel for the past 20 years – seven of which she has spent in the mixed Arab-Jewish city of Jaffa – Canadian-born artist Melanie Daniel will open a solo exhibit of new paintings at Shulamit Gallery in Venice on May 21.

"Piecemaker" is a striking body of work that reflects Daniel's negotiation of her own hybrid identity and moments of cultural dislocation.

This selection of paintings presents dichotomous motifs, sublime color palettes, abstracted landscapes, and dreamlike settings that confound concrete storylines.

Unique formal and compositional elements unite to create a sense of unease that is rooted in the artist's personal experiences living in her adopted home.

In her practice, Daniel excels at defying traditional narrative frameworks, achieved through the use of dense and disorienting compositions, the melding of abstraction and figuration, and by deploying jarring color combinations activated through thin color fields and areas of detailed brushwork. In "Piecemaker," the story is always unresolved, as Daniel prefers to create psychologically fraught scenes that evoke both reverie and anomie.

This tension between memory and fantasy highlights her own personal negotiation of Jaffa's diverse backdrop, where local Arab and Jewish cultures co-exist to create a vibrant, complex, and at times, fraught sociopolitical environment.

Throughout the exhibition, which will run through June 27, Daniel continues to incorporate conflicting cultural motifs, referencing Canadian landscape painting embedded with traditional Arabic designs.

Shulamit Gallery is located at 17 North Venice Blvd., Venice. For more information, call 310.281.0961 or visit shulamitgallery.com.

How many pieces will be in this exhibition?

Ten paintings will be exhibited in the main space of the gallery, all oil on canvas. Formats range from large (80 inches) to tiny (25 inches). Each painting was created over the past six months of intense studio work. The shippers come to my studio, take all the paintings away for crating, and they're finally flown out to their overseas destination, in this case, Venice. I love that part – walking back into an empty studio. I enter these high-energy six-month cycles during

Spellbound, 2014, 55.25" x 71"



which I can produce an entire solo show. Then, I chill out for a month or two, recharge the creative juices and get back to work on the next show.

What do you think makes this exhibit unique?

This exhibit fits its venue hand in glove. The Shulamit Gallery's mandate is one that emphasizes cultural tolerance and socially engaged art or art of a hybrid nature. As the show's title "Piecemaker" hints, all paintings are an attempt at piecing together elements of two radically different cultures: Canadian and Middle Eastern. Just imagine highly charged forest landscapes with enough neon pink to lend them a slightly apocalyptic sensibility, populated with furtive characters and Arabesque patterns.

Can you tell a story of one of your favorite works, and how that piece came to be?

One piece, "Scruffy's Emerald Secret" is a favorite of mine. It's moodier than the others and I can identify with the bare-footed loner sitting on a tree stump, hunched over his campfire. Behind him looms this tall green patterned tree, a beautiful freak specimen. It shouldn't be there, but it is. The man shouldn't be there, but he is. Where is his family? Why is he alone?

How did this exhibit come together?

Shula Nazarian saw my works at the Untitled Art Fair in Miami several years ago and that sparked a dialogue and finally an invitation to do a show here in Venice. I'm very lucky to be working with such a committed and open-minded person.

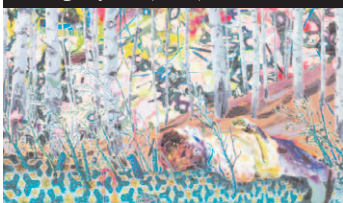
Will you be in Venice for the opening reception?

For real? I'm flying half way around the world just to say, "I'm so stoked to be here!" I can't wait.

Where do you live now?

Today, I'm far from where I started. I grew up in

The Long Way Home, 2014, 35.5" x 55.25"



The Drifting Patch Tree, 2015, 74.75" x 70.75"



British Columbia, and one year while travelling in India, I met an Israeli. The rest as they say is history. Presently I live in Jaffa, a unique neighbourhood south of Tel Aviv where Palestinians and Israelis coexist. It's an oasis of sanity in a country hell bent on revisiting the Dark Ages.

Can you talk about the title of the exhibition?

"Piecemaker" was a word that occurred to me when I began to notice that many of the Islamic designs I was using reminded me of patterns commonly found in American quilting. Members of quilting guilds often use the moniker "Piece Maker." For me, it conjured the nearly hopeless notion of peacemaking, which when placed in a conflicted Middle Eastern context, sounded about right. I noticed that when I painted an Arabesque star in a more didactic manner, truer to a traditional color scheme, I could preserve something of the original design. But that wasn't what I was after. So, I started

painting the same stars in a chunky, random manner, which made them look more like Shaker quilts. Most of these quilt designs originated in the Middle East, only to be adopted by Europeans and eventually exported to the New World so long ago. I don't try to fuse these two identities or elements, because I don't think I can or even want to resolve this strange narrative for the viewer or myself. They are simply that: pieces from very different worlds which hold enormous potential for more storytelling.

What's next for you?

I also work with a gallery in New York, so my next year will be in preparation for the next show there. My short-term plans involve a happy week in Venice meeting new folks, watching surfers, and savouring as many burritos and quesadillas as opportunity permits. No one understands Mexican food in the Middle East and I'm hooked.

Contact Brenton Garen
brenton@yovenice.com



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Fatal Shooting Fires Up Venice

Melanie Camp
Managing Editor

After a week of protests, a heated community meeting, and a political storm following the shooting death of 29-year-old homeless man Brendon Glenn on Cinco de Mayo, authorities remain tight-lipped about their ongoing investigation.

What we do know is that the shooting happened around 11:30 pm on Tuesday, May 5, on Windward Avenue just west of Pacific Avenue.

Authorities said two officers initially responded to a call about a person harassing people on Windward Avenue. They spoke briefly to the suspect, who walked away toward the boardwalk, police said.

The officers returned to their car but then saw the suspect struggling with someone – apparently a bouncer at the Townhouse bar – on the sidewalk. The officers approached and a struggle ensued, ending with the shooting. According to reports, Glenn was shot twice in the side.

One of the officers involved in the shooting suffered a knee injury, according to the LAPD.

Affectionately known amongst his peers as Dizzle, Glenn had only been in Venice about two months.

Acquaintances said he had moved to the area from New York and struggled with drugs and alcohol. Glenn had sought shelter and assistance at The Teen Project's Venice P.A.D. homeless center, according to the center's Timothy Pardue.

People who knew Glenn said that he was a kind man who constantly told people he loved them. He was known for his "hand hugs" – grabbing hold of someone's hand before saying goodbye. Glenn treated his black Lab mix, Dozer, like "his baby," according to one man.

Witness Tells Account Of Shooting

Miracle Mile resident, Paris, who had recently become friends with Glenn, spoke to Yo! Venice saying he witnessed the shooting.

"I came down here to the beach to sit out on the sand and read a book; I live in Los Angeles, I have a job," Paris said. "These two kids were like 'Hey bro, what's up?' and we started talking and they became really good friends. I met Dizzle three-and-a-half weeks ago and I went and bought stuff for them and gave them food and clothes and they all returned the favor; there's a lot of love out there."

Paris shook as he retold his account of the shooting.

"Dizzle went to make a phone call, he called his Mom," he said. "He was a little upset when he went into the bar to panhandle for food to feed his dog; the security guard threw him out. Understandably he was harassing the customers and for some reason there was a cop there in like two minutes," Paris said. "The cops came up to him and said 'Show me your ID' and he said 'I don't need to show you my ID, I didn't do anything' and they said 'Put your hands up.' He put his hands up and they said 'Show me your ID,' he reached into his back pocket and that's when the first shot was fired and then the cop, I think they kind of bumped into each other or something – the cop caught a ricochet bullet and then just flat out,

boom, shot him right again while he was down on the ground bleeding. So then the cops told all five of us 'get out of here' and we left," Paris said.

Authorities Address Community At Meeting

Shouts of "Murder!" and "Show the tape!" rang out from the standing-room-only crowd at Westminster Avenue Elementary School as Los Angeles Police Department Deputy Chief Bea Girmala spoke on Thursday, May 7, addressing the large group of Venice residents and homeless who turned up to the LAPD community meeting.

When one man challenged Girmala to say murder, she responded, "I am not going to say that. The investigation is still ongoing."

Girmala said the video of the shooting is not being released because "we cannot taint the memories of witnesses."

One man said one reason for the crowd's anger is "they're seeing a lot of deflection."

"For those of you who knew Dizzle, I am extremely sorry," said Councilman Mike Bonin.

Bonin took to the podium amongst a chorus of boos from the angry audience.

Emotions ran high, at one point meeting facilitator Francisco Ortega from the Human Relations Commission threatened to shut down the gathering after the crowd became so rowdy speakers could not be heard.

While many were there to seek justice for Glenn, Bonin brought to attention the larger issue at hand: the Venice homeless crisis.

"We fail the homeless and we fail each other," Bonin said. "Many people here are looking to find someone to blame of Dizzle's death... honor Dizzle's death by ending homelessness."

Police Commission President Steve Soboroff said the community needed to ask, "What can we do to move past this tragedy and make it the beginning of something good?"

LAPD Chief Beck Defends Mayor Garcetti

Police Chief Charlie Beck said he advised Mayor Eric Garcetti not to attend the May 7 community meeting at Westminster Elementary School, that was held to discuss the fatal police shooting of Glenn, saying mayors typically do not attend such sessions.

Responding to questions about why neither he nor Garcetti attended the meeting, which featured an often-angry crowd demanding answers about why police shot Glenn on May 5 near Windward and Pacific avenues, Beck said a host of high-ranking Los Angeles Police Department officials were in attendance, including a deputy chief and the president of the city Police Commission.

"If you want to criticize the chief for selecting not to go to this meeting and putting it in the hands of a very capable (deputy) chief who has complete domain over the vast majority of the incidents or the criticisms that were brought to her, then you can criticize me," Beck said.

But the chief staunchly defended Garcetti for not attending.

"Typically the mayor does not go to these meetings. The prior mayor did not go to these meetings and I recommended to the mayor that he not go to this one, so if there's criticism then it should be on



A community meeting was held at Westminster Avenue Elementary School on Thursday, May 7, following the fatal shooting on Tuesday, May 5.
PHOTO BY MELANIE CAMP

me," Beck said. "The mayor has been very straightforward about these issues. He has put a great amount of political capital into dealing with homelessness which is at the root of all these things that we've been dealing with this."

Garcetti, speaking on KNX Newsradio, said he had prior engagements that prevented him from attending, but said he was in communication with people who did attend the session, including Councilman Mike Bonin and staffers from his office.

Garcetti said that in the wake of the shooting, the city has been working on a plan to ensure that people trained in handling suspects with mental illnesses are deployed at the proper times.

"There's some highly trained experts that are in the police department, and we've spent a lot of time in this past week looking at how we can do that even better to make sure these incidents don't result in as much tragedy – and most importantly how we can get them off the street in the first place," the mayor said.

Shooting Sparks Political Storm

In the initial aftermath of the fatal shooting, LAPD Chief Charlie Beck said he was concerned about the shooting, saying it generally takes "extraordinary circumstances" for police to shoot an unarmed person, and the surveillance footage he watched of the shooting didn't appear to show any such circumstances.

The remark quickly earned Beck a rebuke from Craig Lally, president of the Los Angeles Police Protective League, the union that represents LAPD officers. Lally called Beck's comments "completely irresponsible" and said it is too early to suggest the shooting may have been improper.

"As the final trier of fact in the use-of-force investigation and disciplinary process, the premature deci-



Brendon Glenn, 29, was fatally shot at 11:30 pm on Tuesday, May 5.

sion by the chief essentially renders the investigation process void," Lally said. "Additionally, by making his opinion public without having all of the facts, he influences the investigation for all parties involved, including his command officers and the public."

"As in the criminal justice system, everyone is innocent until proven guilty. We encourage everyone to reserve judgment until the investigation has run its course, and the facts are collected and assessed," Lally said.

Beck was on the defensive on Thursday, May 7, saying on a morning television news show that he had not reached any conclusions about the shooting, and was only describing what he had seen on the surveillance footage.

It is that video that attendees at the community meeting were demanding to see.

Beck stressed that there was still a long way to go in the investigation.

Contact Melanie Camp
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Protestors gathered in the days that followed, laying down on Windward Ave. near where the shooting happened.
PHOTO BY MELANIE CAMP



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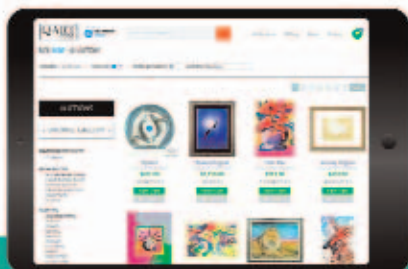
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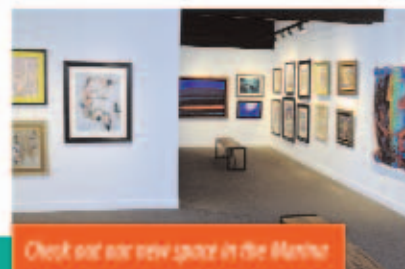


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Wylie Wilson Aims To Give Hope That Real Venice Is Alive On Abbot Kinney



Peta Wilson's store Wylie Wilson is more of a creative space than a store, inviting artists to spend time to get together and conspire, act, and write.

COURTESY PHOTOS



Melanie Camp
Managing Editor

While many Venetians mourn the loss of the businesses along Abbot Kinney that made up the old guard of Venice, like Bountiful and Hal's, and as these old favorites close their doors to make way for a slew of high-end chain stores, one woman, Australian actress Peta Wilson, is holding her own on the street as an individual business owner. Wilson is an artist first and her brand Wylie Wilson gives hope that the real Venice is still very much alive on Abbot Kinney.

Wilson, who played the lead in the 90s TV series *La Femme Nikita* turned to lingerie as a way of mending a broken heart.

"I knew I had to get back out there but I couldn't find any lingerie that I felt sexy in, I don't fit the standard cookie-cutter sizes, so I made my own," Wilson said.

One day a woman came into the Wylie Wilson store with a friend. Wilson noticed that unlike her friend, the woman was not trying on bras.

"It turned out she'd recently fought breast cancer and had undergone a mastectomy," Wilson said. "She'd really lost a lot of confidence."

Wilson offered to make a custom bra.

"The day she came back to try on her bra, the look on her face when she realized how beautiful she was regardless, and more so because of what she'd been through, that was when it clicked," she said. "That's when I knew for sure that I was on the right track."

Wilson ended up giving the woman the bra as a gift.

Being able to give is something that has always motivated Wilson. Today, Wylie Wilson donates 40 percent of profits to the Pegasus Liberty Foundation. The Foundation supports local and international organizations working on the front line around the world to free and rehabilitate slaves.

To date, Wylie Wilson has helped free 1,002 people from slavery.

"Today there are 43 million slaves all over the world and it only takes \$525 to save a life, to remove someone from slavery in a mine in India, and to give them an education, that's what makes me get out of bed at five o'clock in the morning and scrub the floors and get the store ready for the day," she said.

Wilson has found designing lingerie not only to be a satisfying creative outlet but also a way she can support herself and her son outside of show business.

"It was important my son grew up away from all of that," she said.

The name Wylie is a play on words – Wilson merged "why" and "lie" to come up with the name for her brand.

The idea being that a woman is most attractive when she is comfortable in her own skin, no matter what her shape, size, or style.

"I don't look like other girls," she said. "I like to see every single style, for every single shape. All women are different. You've got to have some underwear on that if you go on a hot date and you think he might be okay for a show, at about 11:30 pm at night if he's fun, and the right Rolling Stones song comes on.

"I think a woman's sensuality comes from nature; if men can understand the weather and roll with the beauty of the weather, that one day there's a frightening hurricane and there's destruction and the next day it's beautiful. Women are more like the weather than we are anything else.

"A lot of underwear companies you can go and buy five bras, like a halter-neck bra or a cross-back bra, but you want something you can wear with a backless dress. I just made one bra that does it all. They're beautifully made here in Venice, just up the road from the store."

When designing the lingerie it was important for Wilson that it be comfortable as well as beautiful.

"I was trying to make bras but I didn't like underwire," she said. "I needed to find something that was supportive but still comfortable and flexible, I needed to 'stack the rack.' I asked my Dad, who is an ex-soldier in the Australian Army, my brother was a soldier too in the SAS (Australia's equivalent of the Navy Seals), and Dad said, 'Well my Army pants never fell down and neither did your brother's, look at what the U.S. Marines use.' So I did. I bought a second hand pair of pants from a U.S. Marine uniform, I cut them open, and worked out the elastic they used. You can't see it, but the Americans are holding everything up."

While lingerie was the beginning of the Wylie Wilson brand, in its new location on Abbot Kinney Blvd. it has expanded to encompass a broader range.



Peta Wilson

Bags, dresses, home-wears, and art all designed or curated by fellow artists who work under the Wylie umbrella.

"I'm encouraging other painters and actors and musicians to do small capsule collections," she said.

Inspiring the Wylie Wilson store was the idea it be more of a creative space than a store, in fact Wilson will correct you if you call it a store.

"It's not a store, it's a salon, darling," she said, her voice smooth yet husky like a rock star. "Think Gertrude Stein's Parisian Salon where the artists come and get together and they conspire, they act, and they write. We welcome anyone to come in, not just to shop but to bring in a coffee, sit down, and hang out with their laptops and get inspired in the salon. It's a great place for artists to just come and hang out, may be to write or draw. That's the sort of thing we like to encourage here."

Wylie Wilson is located on the corner of Abbot Kinney Blvd. and Santa Clara Ave., Venice.

Contact Melanie Camp
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Garifuna Film Festival

Welcomes A Century Of Change For Indigenous Cultures



Brenton Garen

There's something about Venice's critically acclaimed Garifuna Film Festival that's capturing attention from filmmakers, musicians, and artists from all over the world.

The 4th Annual Garifuna Film Festival, which returns May 22 to 25 at Electric Lodge, is considered an international tower of strength and a major galvanizing force for unity amongst nations.

The festival's focus has always been to give a message of hope and solidarity with conflicting countries and cultures proving they could work together both productively and creatively.

The goal is to heal the divide between nations thereby transcending petty politics and borders.

Festival founder/director Freda Sideroff is well known for cracking the pavement, making new ground for her Garifuna International Film Festival.

Realizing what it means to be stripped of her native culture, heritage, and language – because of the colonialist's need to assimilate native Indigenous cultures and deny them their priceless facets of heritage – she forged the Garifuna Foundation to help children academically as research shows that those who are immersed in their cultures perform better, have higher self-esteem, and lead more productive and happy lives.

Can you share how the festival came about?

Freda Sideroff: I was guided by the ancestors to create the Film Festival to help make people aware of my culture and the importance of its preservation. After we began, I realized it was important to me to support the awareness and the preservation of all indigenous cultures.

Can you talk about how it has evolved?

This year we are celebrating a five-day event May 22 through May 26. May 26 has been proclaimed Garifuna Film Day since 2012 by the city of Los Angeles and the state of California. It started out as a one-day event that presented every element that continues to hold importance and urgency. It expanded to all indigenous cultures because we live in a culturally diverse community and we have much to learn from each other.

Why is it important for the community to get involved?

It is everyone's responsibility to know about and to help preserve our ancient cultures. There is much that we can learn from people and communities that have learned to live in peace with each other and with the earth. It is also important for our communities to bring their own unique cultural knowledge and experience – in the form of dance, art, music, lectures and workshops that are part of the festival – to share with others, and to learn from.

What will people learn, take away from the experience?

The reality of being more alike than different

in many aspects as well as becoming enriched with new cultural experiences as will be presented through films, documentaries, art, and music from around the world. They will also be exposed to very powerful speakers and leaders.

What is the format for the festival?

The Garifuna Festival takes place over five days. There is a schedule of each day that can be accessed through our website www.GarifunaFilmFestival.com. During the day and into the evening we will be presenting amazing documentaries from around the world. There will also be morning workshops that focus on the process of filmmaking and will be great for students of film.

Each evening there will be special events that include keynote speakers, including Marianne Williamson, and Chief Joseph Paulino, and spectacular cultural music presentations. Cultural art will also be displayed throughout the event.

Recognition will be given to members of our community creating ambassadors supporting the preservation of indigenous cultures.

Has this festival always been in Venice?

The festival began in Marina Del Rey the first two years, and then was housed in Beyond Baroque in Venice. This is our second year at the Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Avenue, 90291; which is a great venue.

Who have you had as keynote speakers in previous years?

A couple of years ago we were honored with the keynote speech by Roy Cayatano coming all the way from Belize. Dr. Cayatano is the President of the National Garifuna Council and was instrumental in 2001 by helping to persuade the United Nations to proclaim the Garifuna language, music and dance as Oral an Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

We also had Lina Martinez from Honduras, author Piper Dellums, and writer/producer Victoria Mudd who is an Academy Award winner for her documentary "A Broken Rainbow."

This year we are honored with Marianne Williamson, who is an American spiritual teacher, author, and lecturer. She has published 10 books, including four *New York Times* number one bestsellers. She is the founder of Project Angel Food, a meals-on-wheels program that serves homebound people with AIDS in the Los Angeles area, and the co-founder of The Peace Alliance, a grass roots campaign supporting legislation to establish a United States Department of Peace. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Results organization, which works to end poverty in the United States and around the world.

Electric Lodge Theater is located at 1416 Electric Ave., Venice.

For tickets or more information, visit www.garifunafilmfestival.com.



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The future of La Fiesta Brava at 423 Rose Ave. is uncertain with the landlord in the early stages of bringing a new development to the site.



La Fiesta Brava

Venice's Poster-Child For Gentrification

MELANIE CAMP
Managing Editor

It is Venice's own tale of David and Goliath, a small family-owned business fighting for survival against a wave of change that washes through the Venice streets. The buzzword is gentrification and La Fiesta Brava, Venice's beloved Mexican hole-in-the-wall, is fast becoming a poster-child for those against the inundation of new, up-market developments and restaurants in Venice.

The Camarena family own and operate La Fiesta Brava and have done for more than 20 years, after moving to Los Angeles from Mexico. They now face having to find a new location for their restaurant, currently at 423 Rose Ave. in Venice, as a new development is being proposed for the property.

The Venice Ranch Market was also part of the property. The market, which was operated by property owner Miriam Zlotolow, has already shut its doors.

"My Dad built this place. He came here 22 years ago," said Jasmin Camarena, the eldest Camarena daughter. "People have watched me grow up here, a lot of our customers, they've known me since I was 5 or 6 years old. To me they're like family. We'd love to stay. We know that sometimes change is inevitable but it doesn't have to be this way."

Camarena tells of how just five years ago the family were struck a devastating blow when her father was killed in a car accident in Mexico.

"He'd gone back to surprise my Grandmother for her birthday and the car he was in was hit by another car," Camarena said. "We got the call saying he'd been killed."

Camarena, the eldest in the family of five children, and her mother were forced to take over running the business side of the family's restaurant.

Something that before had been her Father's domain.

Jason Smith, a Venice resident who works in a surf store on the Boardwalk, said of La Fiesta Brava, "It's a go to place for my friends and I."

Of the restaurant's possible closing he said, "It's a sad story, especially after everything the mother and daughter went through to keep the place going after the dad died."

Camarena explained the family was given no warning from Zlotolow other than a notice for a change in permit use posted on the door.

"I saw the sign and went up and talked to Miriam," Camarena said. "I asked what it was about and she said 'Don't worry about it' and I said 'What do you mean don't worry about it? You guys are applying for a permit to change from a restaurant and market to a big restaurant.' She was like 'Oh yeah, yeah it's a deal that we made. It may happen, it may not happen. If it doesn't happen, business as usual but if it happens then, you know...' and I was like 'You mean you're going to kick us out' and she said 'Yeah, I'm sorry.' At this point I was ready to cry, I didn't cry but it was, you know, a sensitive matter. She said 'I'm sorry.' That's all she could say. They didn't tell us anything. No warning before, no nothing. Just a sign on the door and that's it. It's been a rough ride."

Bruce Horwitz, who has been responsible for some of Venice's favorite restaurants like Wabi Sabi and Tasting Kitchen on Abbot Kinney, and also Superba on Rose and Superba Bread on Lincoln, is spearheading the new development and he wants it to be clear, "I am not kicking them out, the landowner (Zlotolow) wanted to realize the market rent of the property."

"Being a landlord is not a public service, you take a great risk and on the flip side if there was a crash, community members would not be stepping in to help a landlord pay their mortgage when their space is empty and their store front is boarded up,"

Horwitz said. "It's a risk and there's no safety net."

Camarena said she thought her family had had a good relationship with the landlord.

"We were here before the landlord even owned the property and Miriam, the owner of the property and my Dad, they got along really, really well. My Dad loved Miriam and we just never thought we'd be in this situation," Camarena said.

Camarena said that her father's business relationship with property owner Miriam Zlotolow was more of a friendship. Today the family has no formal lease agreements with Zlotolow, which leaves them in a vulnerable position.

"It's sad," Horwitz said. "But if you have a restaurant you have a long-term lease. It's a bad business decision not too. We all have leases, pay our rents, and when the leases are up we open our wallets and hope for the best. Hospitality is a difficult game. This is a tough business for all of us."

Horwitz said one of his own restaurants, Wabi Sabi on Abbot Kinney, is no longer profitable and for now he bears the cost of keeping it running and keeping staff employed until the new project gets off the ground.

The tough business of running a restaurant is something Horwitz and Camarena agree upon.

"I grew up seeing my Dad build this restaurant, my cousins have worked here, my aunts and uncles have all worked here, and as we got older we started working here," Camarena said. "It's not easy having a restaurant, especially one you're actually working yourselves. It's demoralizing watching it be crushed down by someone who has more money than you. It sucks."

Horwitz signed his lease with Zlotolow a year ago and while the lengthy permit and approval process for the new development is underway, he said he and Zlotolow have been happy to continue to accommodate La Fiesta Brava.

Horowitz even offered to help the Camarenas

move their restaurant into a new space in the old Brickhouse Restaurant at 826 Hampton Dr., Venice.

The Brickhouse lease offered to the Camarena family was \$10,000 a month, not unreasonable for a commercial property in Venice in today's market, but a huge jump compared to the amount the family currently pays for the La Fiesta Brava space.

"We're going to look for other locations and hopefully stay in this community that we love," Camarena said. "But, hopefully if we don't stay in Venice people will come visit us wherever we end up."

As for a plan for the new 2,700 square foot building?

Horwitz said he'd like to create something that becomes part of the neighborhood.

"It's not going to be fancy and expensive," Horwitz said. "It'll be more Rose than Abbot Kinney, a place you can wear your flip-flops."

It's a vision that seems to be more in line with what locals in the area want.

Ben Knox is a regular at La Fiesta Brava sometimes eating at the restaurant as many as five times a week.

"Me and my friends always come for dinner," Knox said. "It's really low key; it's obviously family run, it's really inexpensive and just obviously really good food and a great place to be with your friends."

Knox, who is a Venice resident, has signed a petition in support of La Fiesta Brava.

Knox lives just off Oakwood Park, a couple of blocks from Rose Ave. and said that in the four years he has lived in Venice he has noticed big changes along Rose.

"Definitely in the last month or two months it seems that a lot of restaurants, old staples, are hav-

La Fiesta Brava page 9



La Fiesta Brava

From page 8

ing to shut their doors and move on. It's not good," Knox said. "If they could support small businesses like this staying, upgrading, advancing their ways a little bit, partnering on that front, it'd be cool."

On April 23 there was a zoning hearing at the West Los Angeles Municipal Building regarding plans for the La Fiesta Brava location. Representatives for applicant Horwitz requested a change of use from the existing market and deli to a restaurant with a covered patio and outdoor dining area. This new restaurant would serve a full line of alcoholic beverages within the 8 am to midnight hours of operation.

A purpose the hearing was to gauge public opinion and many stood up to speak against the development. The Camarena family presented a petition with more 1,000 signatures showing support for their restaurant. As a result, Assistant Zoning Administrator Lourdes Green granted a 60-day extension. LUPC, Venice's Land Use and Planning Commission, has added the project to its May 26 agenda.

A big issue for locals in the area is parking. Many of the old Venice homes on the streets that run off Rose Ave. do not have their own parking spaces and more and more residents are finding themselves competing with restaurant goers for street parking.

The new restaurant development at the La Fiesta Brava location would be required to provide a total of 18 parking spaces on the site. At the hearing on April 23, those speaking in support of the project presented an alternate parking layout of 11 spaces, another four spaces credited as non-conforming, and to make up the final four required spaces, an alternative of 16 bicycle stalls was requested to be considered instead.

Another issue residents are concerned about is the effect of the City approving another liquor license in an area that is already over saturated by planning standards.

"A lot of bigger restaurants won't operate unless they get the liquor license," Camarena said. "We're small enough that we don't need the liquor license."

James Allan of Coldwell Banker said he feels even though the gentrification of Venice as a whole and now also Rose Ave. has been a positive thing to the economy of Venice, he would love to see more of the local community, long time residents, and business owners sharing in the booming growth.

"It's a shame to see many establishments disappear that have helped mold the character and charm that makes Venice so unique," Allan said. "This is off course is harsh reality of capitalism and the evolution of communities as a whole and would encourage the locals of Venice giving as many of the local businesses the support they need to maintain their business in Venice."

Horwitz said there's an idea that if its project fails to get approvals for the new development that La Fiesta Brava will get to stay, but the landlord will lease to whoever pays the most.

"The landlord just wants the market rent for their property," Horwitz said. "What if it was a Starbucks? There are plenty who want to get a foothold in the next Abbot Kinney."

Camarena is upset their wasn't more open communication.

"They're telling people if it wasn't them it'd be someone else but may be it wouldn't be someone else," Camarena said. "Maybe we'd be able to come to an agreement. It's the fact that there was never the opportunity is what hurts the most."

"It's got to the point where people are coming to Venice because they liked how Venice was but they're changing everything about Venice, what it was about, what it stood for."

Camarena said a lot of their customers are artists and they're coming in and saying, "I'm living out of my car right now, they kicked me out of my studio."

"People don't realize, they think, it's only a restaurant it's not going to effect anybody, but it has a trickle down effect," she said. "It effects everyone who lives here and they might not see it first hand because they may not interact with the people we interact with but it's really sad. We have customers and sometimes I'll give them their meal for free because they're counting their pennies out on the table. Because of everything that's happened they can't afford anything. It breaks my heart."

Camarena continues, "But now that we're here, we love the support."

"We didn't think we'd have this much support but the fact that we do is very motivating in a way that helps us push through," she said. "Because honestly, it's a depressing situation to be in. I'm the eldest of five kids and it's just my Mom and the restaurant's our only source of income. How are we going to pay the house and my brothers' and sisters' educations? It's just a devastating blow, especially after everything we've been through. It feels amazing that the community backs us up so much. I knew they liked the food, I just never knew they liked it this much."



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Firefighters Stack Up Pancakes

LAFD firefighters flipped pancakes at their Venice station while Rotarians greeted locals and served up the breakfast on Saturday, May 9.

The Rotary Club of Playa Venice Sunrise hosted the event from 8 am until noon.

Venice Paparazzi was there once again with their photo booth. There was a jumper for children, station tours, a DJ, and more.

The breakfast cost \$5 per person with all proceeds going to the Rotary club.

Fire Station 63 is located 1930 Shell Ave.,

Venice on the corner of Shell and Venice Blvd.

Rotary Club of Playa Venice Sunrise meets Wednesdays at 7:15 am Whiskey Red's, 13813 Fiji Way, Marina del Rey. For more information, visit www.playasunrise.org.

— Melanie Camp



More than 1,000 meals were served at Saturday's Fire Station 63 Pancake Breakfast.

PHOTOS COURTESY VENICEPAPARAZZI.COM



CALENDAR

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Upcoming

Hotel Erwin/Barlo Kitchen & Cocktails/High Rooftop Lounge will host "Best of The Beach" and kick off summertime with "Tour de Venice" this Saturday, May 16. It is a fundraising event that will feature pop-up boutiques from favorite Venice Beach artisans, retailers, salons, designers and more. With activations throughout the hotel, the event will include art, music, food, jewelry, and all things Venice. General tickets \$10; VIP \$40. It will be held from 1 pm to 4 pm at Hotel Erwin, 1697 Pacific Ave. Visit hotelerwin.com.

Venice Art Walk returns this Sunday, May 17 with its artist studio tour, auction, exhibit and community celebration. Join Los Angeles' hottest established and emerging contemporary artists in raising over \$650,000 in critical funds for the 20,000 low-income, uninsured and homeless patients of Venice Family Clinic. The event is from 10 am to 6 pm at 340 Main St., Venice. Visit veniceartwalk.org.

Muscle Beach Power Lift-Off will be held Saturday, May 23. It is free admission and open to the public. However, to be in the contest there is a \$60 registration fee. The event at the Muscle Beach Gym will take place from 9 am to 4:30 pm. For more information, visit musclebeachvenice.com.

Z-Flex Jay Boy Classics 2015 will be held Saturday,

May 23. Help continue Jay's legacy in skateboarding with a bigger and better event format that includes and Un-sponsored Bowl Jam, Legends Session, and Invitational Cash Grab. Competitors will compete for their share in a \$5,000 prize purse. It will be held at Venice Beach Skate Park from 9 am to 4:30 pm. For more information, visit www.zflex.com/jay-boy-classic-2015.

An evening with the Merchants of Venice – 4th Annual Venice Chamber Business Expo will be held Wednesday, May 27. The Venice Chamber of Commerce invites the community to share business specialties with other Chamber members and with the Venice community at large. Join them for a fun evening where people who live and work in Venice and come together to meet, mix and mingle. The expo is open to the public. Admission is \$5. It will be held from 6 pm to 9 pm at the Boys and Girls Club of Venice, 2232 Lincoln Blvd. For more information about sponsorship opportunities and registration, contact The Chamber at 310.822.5425 or email Info@VeniceChamber.net.

Art Exhibits

L.A. Louver concludes an exhibition featuring artist Enrique Martínez Celaya this Saturday, May 16. 45 N Venice Blvd. 310.822.4955. lalouver.com.

De Soto Gallery presents "Joaquin Trujillo: Mal De

Ojo" through June 28. 1350 Abbot Kinney Blvd. 323.253.2255. desotogallery.com.

Shulamit Gallery presents "Melanie Daniel: Piecemaker" May 21 – June 27. 17 North Venice Blvd. 310.281.0961. shulamitgallery.com.

The Duron Gallery at SPARC presents "New Codex: Oaxaca - Immigration and Cultural Memory" May 23 through Aug. 29. 685 Venice Blvd. 310.822.9560. sparcinla.org.

G2 Gallery presents "Bird L.A." and "Getting There: A Wildlife Crossing over the 101" through June 7, 2015. 1503 Abbot Kinney Blvd. 310.452.2842. theg2gallery.com.

Ongoing

Volunteer at A Window Between Worlds. A Window Between Worlds is a nonprofit organization dedicated to using art as a healing tool to empower and transform individuals and communities impacted by violence and trauma. Held the third Saturday of each month from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm; 10:15 am for first-time volunteers. For more information about A Window Between Worlds, visit www.awbw.org.

First Friday's on Abbot Kinney Blvd. returns June 5, from 6 pm to 10 pm. Every first Friday of the month, Abbot Kinney transforms into a late-night hub of

activity, with stores open late until 10 pm, food trucks, art openings, special event, live music, a photo contest, and more. abbotkinneyfirstfridays.com.

Venice Farmers' Market is every Friday from 7 am to 11 am. 500 N. Venice Blvd. (at Venice Way). venicefarmersmarket.com.

Venice Art & Collectables Market is held second and fourth Saturday of the month from 9 am to 3 pm. Venice High School, 13000 Venice Blvd. venicecollectablesmarket.com.

Ecole Claire Fontaine hosts "Music in the Garden" first Saturday of each month from 10:30 am to 11:15 am. The event features a local musician or band followed by a drum circle. Kids and families welcome. 1047 Abbot Kinney. \$5/ticket. Facebook.com/MusicInTheGardenConcertSeries

Calling all seniors! Pacific Resident Theatre hosts Theatre Fare, a free theatre reading series for seniors (but open to all) every second Tuesday of the month from 9 am to 11:30 am. This class is led by and with PRT artists. PacificResidentTheatre.com.

Cow's End Kid's Sing-A-Long Mondays n' Thursdays for ages zero to three from 10:30 am to 11 am. Admission is free, but tips are encouraged. 34 Washington Blvd. thecowsendcafe.com.

Another Tragedy In Venice

MARK RYAVEC

YO! Venice Contributor



What can we learn from the tragic death of 29-year-old Brendon Glenn, a beach dweller shot to death in a confrontation with police officers in front of the Townhouse bar on Windward Avenue on May 5?

Well, first that Brendon was yet another traveler, from Troy, New York, who was attracted to the easy life of sun, panhandling, and booze on the Venice Boardwalk. Since the homeless all have cell phones and occasionally laptops, too, the message that it's all a great party here in Venice is constantly circulating coast to coast.

Next is that Brendon was a troubled young man, struggling to find a job while still in the grip of an alcohol addiction. He told his counselor at the Teen Project on Windward the day he died that he had started drinking at 11 am.

While all his friends on the Boardwalk are quick to remark on his friendliness, he was combative that night, getting into a physical altercation with the doorman at the Townhouse before the police tried to restrain him.

Some want to read the shooting as part of the larger national portrait of police violence towards Black men. I see it within the continuum of violent incidents stemming from the lawless, "Lord of Flies" atmosphere along the Boardwalk and elsewhere in Venice.

Here in our beachside community a supposedly civilized society allows 741 homeless people –

the unofficial count from earlier this year – to live on the town's parks, streets, and alleys and does almost nothing about it.

The result is ugly and shows the dysfunction of our city and county governments which have for too long been more focused on the care and feeding of its employees than meeting its core mission, which is the care of its residents and the indigent.

Let's tally the victims of this neglect since just August 2013, less than two years.

A transient living in his car in Venice takes offense to a drug deal gone bad on the Boardwalk and mows down 17 pedestrians with his car, killing Alice Gruppioni, an Italian visitor in Venice on her honeymoon. The driver is now on trial.

A transient is caught on CCTV beating the crap out of another beach dweller with a chair.

In April of last year a young mother and two children barely escape a home invasion at 4:30 am on Horizon as the homeless invader breaks through a glass door pane, covers their apartment in blood from his cuts and in his PCP rage pulls two bolted sinks off the wall of the bathroom.

Over several months four more home invasions follow within six blocks of the Horizon break-in, committed by campers living along Venice Beach.

In October of 2014 a transient sleeping on a walk street attacks Robert DiMassa because Robert's service dog had urinated near where the transient was sleeping. The damage to DiMassa was two broken ribs, severe abrasions on his legs, two black eyes and a bloodied lip. The culprit was never caught.

Then, in an incident similar to the events that

took Brendon Glenn's life, a transient went into the Cow's End and demanded money from the patrons. The owner, Clabe Hartley, asked him to leave, and the fellow attacked Clabe, wrestled him to the floor and bit off his finger tip.

In Brendon's case, he was harassing Townhouse patrons and passersby and the doorman tried to back him off. One report says he had earlier gone into the bar to panhandle and been evicted by the doorman. Later Brendon picked a fight with the doorman, which led to the police getting involved.

What's the common denominator in all these incidents? The instigator was homeless (and most were white).

There is more to learn from all of this.

Why are there so many homeless in Venice and what's being done to help them get off the street?

Well, the sunshine helps bring them here from all over the nation. (That's why many of us are here, too.) Then there's a slew of short-sighted court decisions and legislation that makes it much easier to live out in the open in California, and in Los Angeles in particular. This is compounded by a squishy, homeless-loving City Attorney, Mike Feuer, who had advised the LAPD to not enforce the City's "no camping, no camping equipment and no encampments" rules (which are enforced in other city parks like the one next to City Hall).

Then there is the time honored tradition of giving complete responsibility of any area in the City to the councilmember (in this instance Mike Bonin). The result is that the Mayor and City Council have washed their hands of any responsibility for Venice despite it being a phenomenal tax generator for the City and the primary park/beach destination in Los

Angeles. For example, Griffith Park has fewer visitors and yet gets park rangers, but not Venice. A recent proposal by the Venice Neighborhood Council to add a Recreation and Parks Department superintendent, accountable for management of the Venice Beach Recreation Area, to the City budget was ignored by Mayor Eric Garcetti.

At the recent LAPD community listening session on the shooting there were two notable absences: Mayor Garcetti and L.A. County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl. Their absence is also reflected in the dearth of City and County services. Other than the \$350,000 that the County gives to the St. Joseph Center annually to focus on moving the 40 homeless most likely to die on Venice streets (or parks) to housing and services, there is no County or City financial support to provide any relief to the other 700 homeless folks living here (other than meager general relief which some receive). There are no counselors from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, who can arrange housing for our homeless. There is no funding for the Teen Project, which must depend on donations. There is no funding for People Helping the Homeless (PATH), which provided critical services and housing to the homeless when Bill Rosendahl was councilman.

So, Venice continues to be abandoned, with just a few LAPD officers to contain the uncontrollable. The situation reminds me of Los Angeles' early years as a wild, ungoverned frontier outpost. And as everyone knows, people get harmed or killed fairly easily in such an environment.

Mark Ryavec, a 29-year resident of Venice, is president of the Venice Stakeholders Association, which is suing the City and County of Los Angeles for maintaining a dangerous public nuisance along the Venice Beach Recreation Area.

From Tragedy, Healing

MIKE NEWHOUSE

YO! Venice Contributor



In the days after Brendon Glenn was killed last Tuesday night, in the heart of Venice, I was starkly reminded of one of our community's biggest challenges. But, my perspective may surprise you. What first came to mind was not how we police. It was not about racism or homelessness. It was not about mental illness, or the insidious nature of drug or alcohol abuse. Instead, I was reminded that too often we all can have the instinct to chastise, blame, and vilify, rather than, discuss, listen, and connect.

The most visible example of this was what happened at the Town Hall meeting last Thursday following Brendon's death. What was a right headed effort to bring Venice together – and to discuss what can and must be done to avoid such future tragedies – quickly deteriorated into anger and divisiveness.

To be sure, Brendon's friends and family were rightfully angry and heartbroken. And to be sure, many in the crowd who may not have known Brendon, but have for too long felt disrespected – or empathize and sympathize with others who have – felt a lifetime of indignities boil to the surface. Of course, on the other side

of things, dozens of police officers, elected officials, and social service volunteers and professionals, uninvolved in Brendon's death and working to avoid such future tragedies, were made to feel responsible for deeply engrained and longstanding community wounds that they did not create.

To be clear, I do not point this out to assign blame for the tenor last Thursday night, or since then. From my perspective, perception and emotion are reality... for all of us. Everyone's voice, on all sides of this issue, should be heard, listened to and respected. For those who demand to see the surveillance tape of the shooting, they feel it is their right, and I understand their perspective. For the police officers, investigators, and elected officials who explained that they simply could not taint witness testimony by releasing the tape, their points, and the points of those who agree with them, are also understandable. And, we should not forget the realities for Brendon or the officer involved in the shooting. At the end of the day, whatever the investigation concludes, a young man is dead, and the officer's life will never be the same.

Time will tell what happened on May 5. But, justice will only be served if we fight the urge to blame, fight the urge to preach and fight the urge to vilify. Instead, we must encourage a discussion on why Brendon died, and steps we

can take together to ensure that this situation never happens again. We need to put our minds together to continue to strengthen relationships between our police officers and our citizens. We need to ask what new resources do the police and social service providers need to help get folks off the street and into shelters, transitional housing, and ultimately permanent supportive housing. We need to ask what we can continue to do to break down old stereotypes, and replace them with the realities of individual personal relationships. We need to ask how we can help those who are mentally ill, or suffering from addiction. We need to ask how we can create more jobs, so that those able to work have real opportunities. All of these dialogues already exist in Venice, but they cannot survive, and they cannot grow, if we choose to tear each other down.

I can only speak for myself, but I tend to see human nature, and the world, as inherently good. Let's not let Brendon's death compromise that nature. Instead, let's make his memory a legacy of constructive dialogue, and an opportunity to bring us all together to solve the challenges that divide us.

Mike Newhouse is a 19-year Venice Resident, an Attorney, and President of the Venice Neighborhood Council (for identification purposes only).

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