

# Emeryville COOL Fun Facts

ISSUE 1

APRIL 18, 2020



is in charge of curating Wareham's collection but let me just say—I personally would not have placed such wildly opposing aesthetics in this close of proximity (yet another reminder that ART IS GREAT FOR STARTING A CONVERSATION!).

One painting (BY AN ARTIST I CAN'T NAME SINCE THERE IS NO PLACARD) consists of a pink, orange, yellow, and blue riff on cell biology in an abstracted 80's vibe.

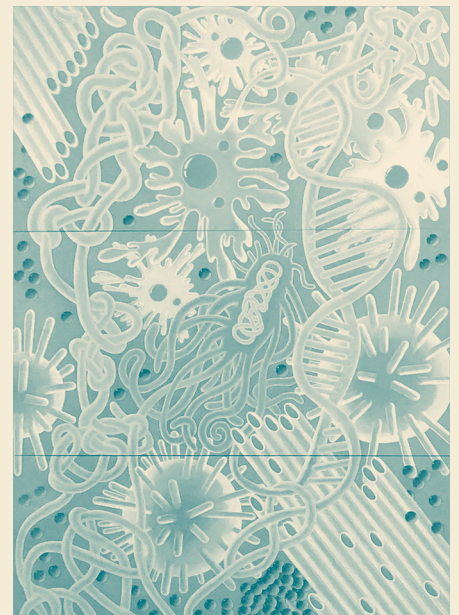
The other (BY ANOTHER ANONYMOUS PAINTER) appears to take inspiration from the 1930's WPA realistic-rendering approach depicting various icons of Emeryville history. Recognizable to me were the greyhounds and bikers of racing lore (did you know the moniker "Rotten City" was not a reference to decomposing fruits and vegetables?!), the Amtrak train, and indigenous Ohlone.

A tableau in this painting that really had me flummoxed is the cannery women scene (nevermind the bear stealing peaches from the conveyor belt; also who let a grizzly into a peach factory?). After a few months of puzzling over this new information about my town, I decided to do some research into the history of the Emeryville canning industry.

Stay tuned for Issue No.2 for a look at the history of the canning industry in Emeryville, facilitated in no small part by the January 1920 issue of *Canning World!*

In the meantime, you'd like to learn more about public art in Emeryville, including a map of artworks updated through at least 2016, check out:

[www.ci.emeryville.ca.us/1309/Emeryville-Art-in-Public-Places-Program](http://www.ci.emeryville.ca.us/1309/Emeryville-Art-in-Public-Places-Program)



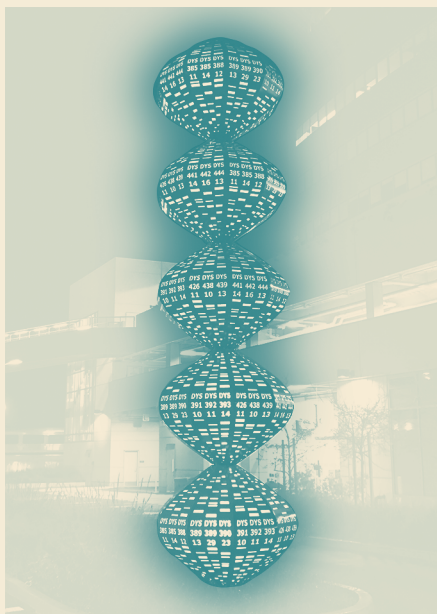
*Hot takes on our local public art?  
Information about these artworks?  
Ideas for future issues???*

**Leave a message at (510) 519-7283**

Greetings fellow walkers of Emeryville enjoying your daily state-sanctioned outside time! Like you, I look forward to my walks with great enthusiasm. However, our streets could benefit from more FUN. *Emeryville Cool Fun Facts* will highlight my favorite FUN aspects of our small city—look out for lots of cool facts coming to a block near you!

EmeryStation West (5959 Horton Street) opened in 2019. As an art fan, the developer's fulfillment of the 1990 Art in Public Places ordinance is pretty badass. The building features several artworks of various types which pay homage to Emeryville history, particularly its recent relationship to biotech. PLEASE TAKE A LOOK.

Outside the building you'll find two works: a metal stairway treatment



titled *Mitochondria* by the Berkeley-based artist Eric Powell, and an unattributed blue sculpture in the parking garage entrance. Eric's homage to the "powerhouse of the cell" is accompanied by a classy metal placard letting us know that "additional information" is available in the lobby (spoiler alert: it is not).

The robin egg blue sculpture features a mysterious array of numbers, letters, and a changing light element. My initial hypothesis: genetic sequencing? But I'm not a science-fluent person, so I wasn't really sure what's going on. Yet I couldn't help but spend a LOT of time contemplating the sculpture's meaning (ART REALLY MAKES YOU THINK!!!). SO, just for you, I dug deep to uncover some cool fun facts.

The sculpture is by Tucson-based artist Blessing Hancock and addresses the topic in the work's very title: *DNA*. Of *DNA* she says: "The painted steel and polycarbonate artwork is internally illuminated and draws inspiration from the artistic expression of biotech and life sciences. . . . A painted steel framework overlays the polycarbonate with an abstract DNA sequence cut pattern."

At night, "animated color-changing lighting [using pre-programmed LEDs] will illuminate the sculpture, creating a soft, diffused glow within the form." Hopefully you have enjoyed this contextual information and can look forward to visiting the sculpture as it changes over the course of the day.

While I enjoyed doing Wareham's job of providing this important background info, as a casual visitor to EmeryStation West, I'd highly encourage Wareham to provide informational placards for all the art.

Moving on. The real star of this private-public art partnership is the lobby. In the northwest corner hang two 20 foot tall paintings. I'm not sure who