

Front Porch

Central Park, Park Hill, Lowry, Montclair, Mayfair, East Colfax, NW Aurora

DENVER, COLORADO

NORTHEAST DENVER

NOVEMBER 2020

Congregations Find their Way During the Pandemic



Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

Pastor Matt Wolf held worship outside Arise Church Denver for the summer and fall months. Beginning in November, services move indoors but masks and social distancing will be required.

Seven months after most houses of worship in Denver were forced to temporarily close to prevent the spread of Covid-19, religious leaders have found new ways of conducting services, including livestreaming sermons, holding outdoor baptisms and bar mitzvahs, and offering drive-by communion. “They didn’t teach us in rabbinical school how to make a TV studio in our basement but that’s what I had to do,” says Rabbi Joe Black from Temple Emanuel. *Story on page 10 by Mary Jo Brooks.*

East HS Scholars & A Legislator: Assessing Our Democracy

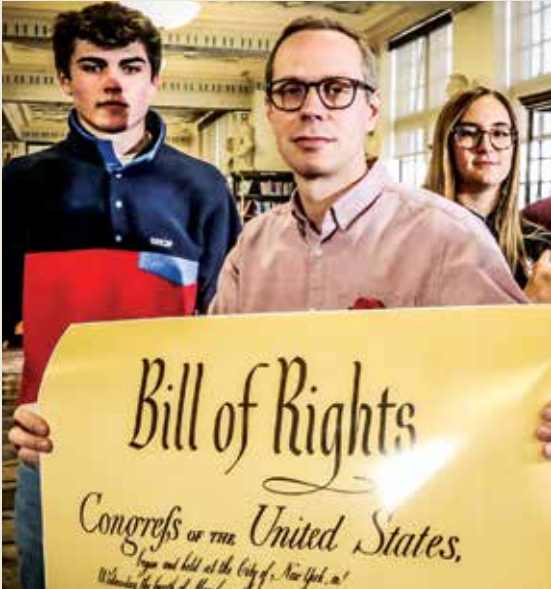


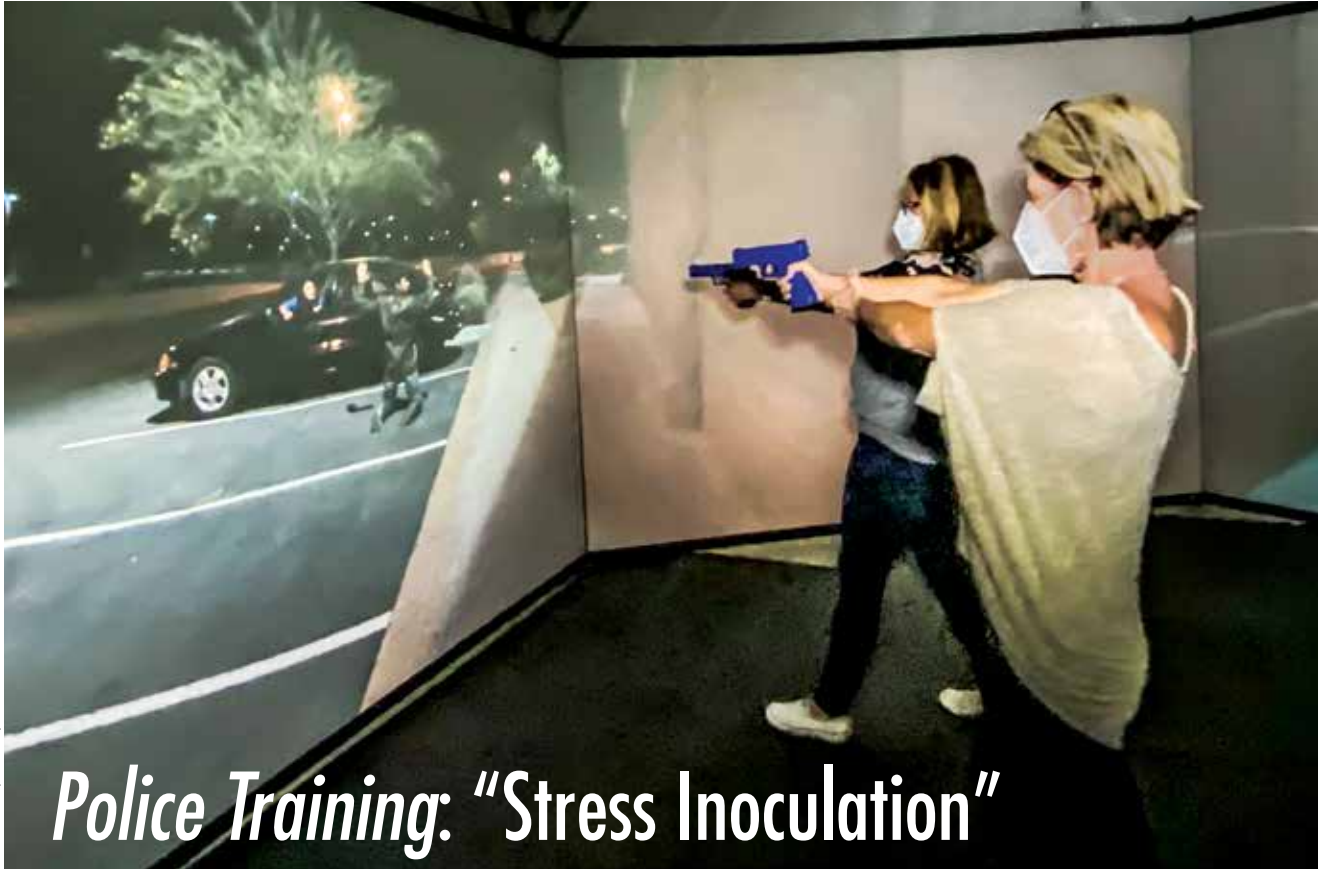
Photo from a 2018 Front Porch story

East High School constitutional law teacher Matt Fulford, pictured in East’s library, recently engaged his students in a discussion of current constitutional questions, including voting rights and the Electoral College. Following that discussion, U.S. Rep. Jason Crow reflected on the students’ ideas and the state of our democracy. *Story by Martina Will, PhD on page 8.*

Kahlo, Rivera, Mexican Modernism Exhibit

View works by some of Mexico’s greatest twentieth-century artists at the Denver Art Museum through Jan. 24, 2021.

Story on page 14 by Martina Will, PhD



Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

Police Training: “Stress Inoculation”

Community members Chris Reed (foreground) and Monica Aldridge persuade a fleeing theater-shooting suspect to drop his gun during a virtual training session at the Denver Police Academy. *Story on page 5 by Martina Will, PhD.*



The poor air quality due to smoke from wildfires lent a red glow to many October sunsets; and the glow was intensified by the red fall leaves.

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for updates on local
news and events.

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Send Letters to the Editor: FrontPorch@FrontPorchNE.com

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Events & Announcements

Active Minds Seminar: History of the Atomic Bomb
Thursday, Nov. 12, 1–2pm, Zoom Webinar
A look at the origins and history of atomic weapons. We will discuss the achievements of the Manhattan Project and the subsequent nuclear arms race during the Cold War and will end with a discussion of current nuclear proliferation concerns.

Virtual Wine Tasting
Friday, Nov. 13, 6–7pm, Zoom Webinar
Join the MCA and wine expert Grant Harmsen to explore some great wine options for your Thanksgiving dinner. Registered participants will be emailed a Zoom link on Nov. 13, prior to the start of the event.

Virtual Cooking Class
Thursday, Nov. 19, 6–8pm, Zoom Webinar
Join the MCA and Chef Dane’s Kitchen for our Virtual Cooking Class with the theme of fish and salad! Registered participants will be emailed a Zoom link one day prior to the event.

Visit our website at www.mca80238.com to sign-up and purchase your cooking kit. The class will be focused on creating the dish together with step-by-step instruction then instructors will walk the class through assembly, cooking & plating. Each kit includes ingredients to feed 2 people and have pre-portioned seared salmon, avocado, cucumbers, tahini vinaigrette and fresh herbs for garnishing. All recipes are included in each kit.

Active Minds Seminar: Coffee, a Brief History
Thursday, Nov. 19, 6:30–7:30pm, Zoom Webinar
Trace the history of coffee from its origins in Ethiopia to the Starbucks around the corner. We will also examine coffee’s cultural influences as well as the differences between various types of coffee. *Cream and sugar not included.

Annual Members’ Meeting (AMM) & Delegate Election
Wednesday, Dec. 16, 6:30pm, Zoom Webinar
At the AMM members are required to elect eleven (11) members of the community to serve as District Delegates for the consecutive year. Delegate responsibilities include ratifying the MCA’s annual budget and electing all non-appointed Executive Board members. The 2020 AMM will be held via Zoom and members will be able access more information and connect via our website prior to the start of the meeting.

Nominate a Delegate
Nomination period extended through Nov.8!
Any member within a District can nominate themselves, or another within their District. Delegate nomination forms can be found at www.mca80238.com/mca-info/community-delegates. Nom-

ination forms can be returned via email (jgraham@mca80238.com), fax (303.388.1673), or mail (c/o Jenifer Graham, Executive Board Secretary, MCA, 8351 E. Northfield Blvd. Denver, CO 80238).

Snow Event Removal Policies
Below are a few reminders of our snow removal policies for minor and major snow events. A complete list of procedures for both minor and major snow events can be found at www.mca80238.com.
Major Roadways and Arterials are the responsibility of Denver’s Department of Public Works. Snow removal begins before every snow event and continues throughout its completion. Roads are placed on different priority levels and are addressed as equipment becomes available.
Neighborhood Streets are addressed by city officials **only** if a “major snow event” is announced by the City of Denver.
Neighborhood Sidewalks are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner or sub-association. Snow removal on sidewalks adjacent to community or regional parks is the responsibility of the MCA or Denver Parks and Recreation.
Neighborhood Alley Surfaces are to be routinely maintained by the adjacent property owner or sub-association. During minor snow events (8-11”) - the MCA will make a pass through each alley to clean up the center drive lane the night following the storm. During significant snow event (12+”) - the snow removal plan will include the continuous use of heavy and light equipment to remove snow from alley drive lanes, intersections, and significant pedestrian paths.

Colorado Total Maintenance (CTM) is hiring for Snow Removal
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Carry on bravely,
Lawrence Uhling, Administrative Asst.
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Master Community Association

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Front Porch – NE Denver distributes more than 25,000 free papers during the first week of each month. Papers are delivered by mail and/or racks in Central Park, Park Hill, Lowry, Montclair, Mayfair, E. Colfax and NW Aurora.
The *Front Porch* is printed with soy-based ink and the paper contains 30% post-consumer waste. We contribute monthly to replant trees equivalent to the amount of paper used in each issue.



Fall Real Estate in Full Color!

Denver’s housing market has shown no signs of fading. In fact, our 2020 market is on pace to beat last fall’s record. Take a look at the stats:

WE’RE BUSY!

— 26% More homes sold year over year

SELLER’S MARKET PREVAILS

- 54% Fewer homes for sale
- 25% Fewer Days on Market
- 11% Increase in Median Sales Price

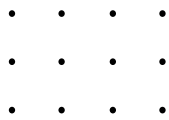
BUYER’S PURCHASING POWER AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH

- Interest rates hit a 10th record low this month
- 4.04% interest rate in September 2019 versus 2.98% interest rate in September 2020
- 10% More buying power

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By Martina Will, PhD

Law enforcement may well be the only profession where you can be called upon to change a tire, address neighbors' disputes over barking dogs, intervene on behalf of someone who has been physically battered by a spouse, and talk down a gunman. All in one day. "Regardless of the purpose of the call," says Capt. Sylvia Sich, the 38-year Denver Police Department veteran now in charge of the Police Academy, "that is the most important thing happening in that person's life right now....And you respond to it that way."

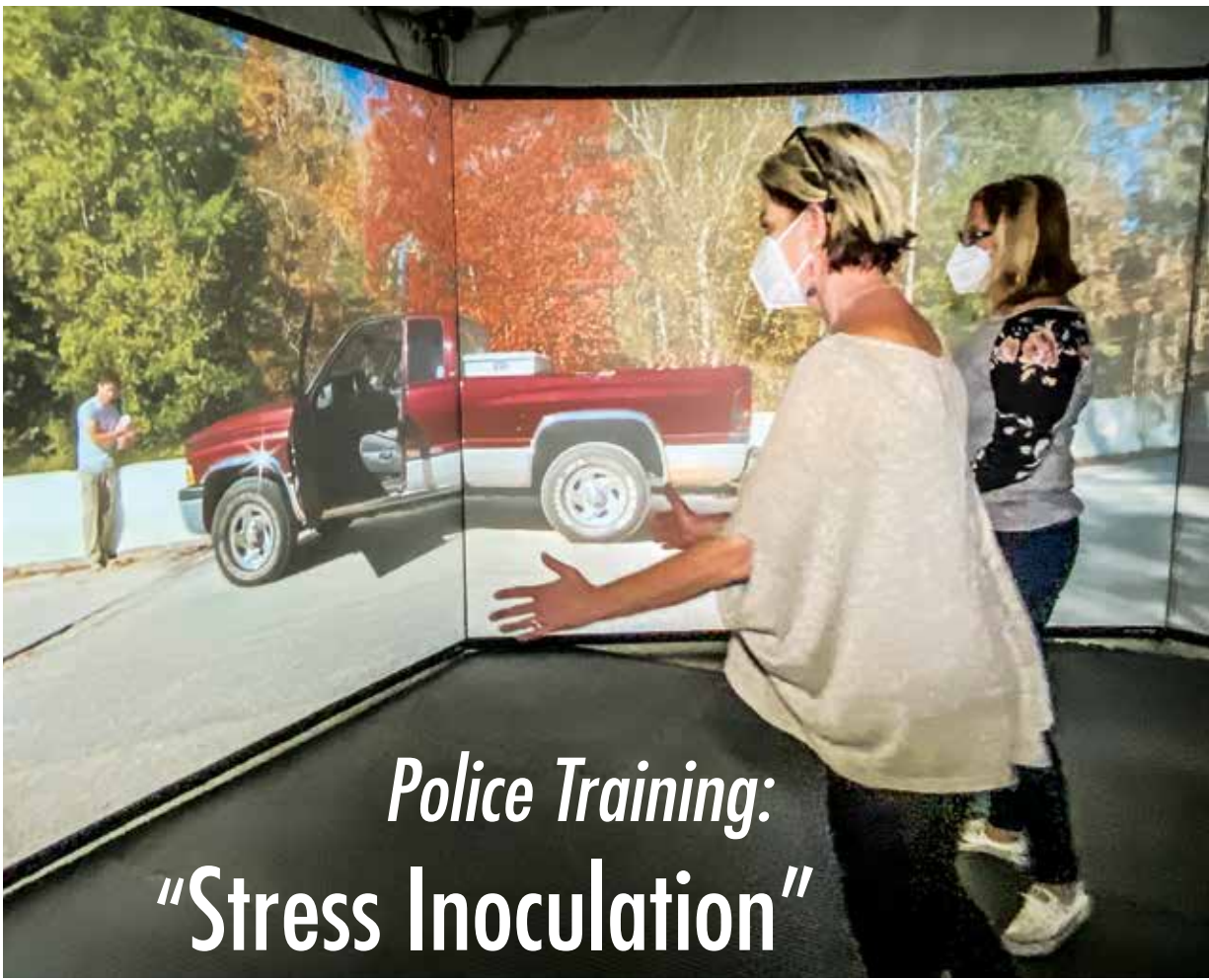
Training

Located in the Central Park neighborhood, the Denver Police Academy is an old airplane hangar that was transformed into the education and training facility for police recruits in 1994. The Academy opened its doors so the *Front Porch* could learn more about its training in the aftermath of a summer that brought renewed attention to law enforcement reform, funding, and training. Though inadequate training has been cited as a problem in some departments around the country, Sgt. Noel Ikeda, who oversees Academy training, says, "We do more hours of training than what's required." With 1018.5 training hours, DPD requires almost double the 556 hours standard for Colorado peace officers before recruits graduate and begin four months of field training with careful oversight, part of a nine-month probationary period.

All of the officers emphasize the importance of communication and verbal de-escalation in their work. "Our communication skills are paramount," says Technician Anthony Norman, who is a recruiter for DPD. Recruits learn to engage in "verbal judo" and verbal de-escalation techniques—they are taught to only resort to physical de-escalation when they've exhausted their verbal arsenal. "Sometimes de-escalating doesn't work," admits Technician



Capt. Sylvia Sich stresses the importance of communication and training for safety in any situation.



Dan Figueroa. "Either the guy isn't open to that, or maybe I'm just not good enough with my verbal skills." Figueroa oversees recruits' training in the VIRTRA, a 300-degree small arms simulator that presents different scenarios law enforcement officers routinely encounter, allowing them to practice their verbal de-escalation skills and a host of other techniques.

Armed with bright blue plastic handguns that fire lasers, Central Park residents Chris Reed and Monica Aldridge try an exercise recruits undertake as part of their training. Standing before the VIRTRA, the two women engage in two

immersive scenarios. In one, a father experiencing a mental health crisis holds his infant over the side of a bridge; in another they are called to a theater shooting-in-progress. The VIRTRA allows recruits to partake in what Figueroa refers to as "stress inoculation." He can run different simulations to challenge recruits' decision-making skills under pressure and ratchet up the stress as needed to push them to be better officers.

"I was sort of surprised how I reacted," says Aldridge after the exercise. She felt Figueroa's guidance really helped her to be calmer and not, for example, shoot at the panicked civilians running from the theater as she entered. Still, when an armed plainclothes police officer suddenly appeared in her peripheral vision, she realized that for a moment she forgot the suspects' description. She felt the physiological impact of the scenario even after leaving the Academy. "I feel like if there

had been a heart rate monitor on me, my heart rate would have been up," she admits. "Even after I got home I felt like I had some adrenaline from this."

Reed says that as the pair debriefed on the way home, she realized there were things in the theater scenario she hadn't picked up on or fully grasped in the moment. "Things were happening so fast. I definitely felt like I was calm and cool and could call on my faculties to de-escalate in the first scenario [with the baby]; I felt far more capable with the mental health issue than taking down an active shooter."

"A simulation like that would be beneficial for civilians who want to open carry and want to be the good guy; you just don't know how you're going to feel when you're in that situation," Aldridge says. Figueroa explains that it's not uncommon in a situation like the theater scenario for (continued on page 6)

The Police Academy has a 300-degree small arms training simulator that shows scenarios officers often encounter. Trainers can instruct and replay scenarios as they work with recruits on both verbal de-escalation skills and judgment calls on use of their weapons.

The distressed-father-on-the-bridge scenario impelled community member Christine Reed (foreground) to put down her weapon in an attempt to gain the father's trust and bring the baby to safety. While an officer might holster their weapon in this situation, Sich points out that officers would never put their weapon down.

Front Porch photos by Christie Gosch



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(continued from page 5) people to fire their weapons in response to hearing a shot; this “sympathetic fire” is one variable the Academy works to prepare recruits to avoid.

Sgt. Eric Knutson says the Academy teaches recruits to “crawl, walk and run,” with VIRTRA being the walk. “They get to make mistakes there. We get to stop it, pause it, reset it and redo it. And then the live scenarios that are run, *that is our RUN.*” DPD conducts live scenarios with actors in a mock apartment setup within the old hangar. “We’re seeing their eyes, we’re reading their body language, and we’re actually getting to that level of understanding,” through the live scenarios, says Knutson. Figueroa says even though recruits do learn how to fire weapons and fight, “first we teach them how not to fight. And that’s where we spend more time.”

Post-Floyd Changes

About a year ago, DPD filmed a scenario for the VIRTRA that anticipated some of the challenges the department faced during this tumultuous summer. In this scenario, a hostile crowd surrounds an officer, and the recruit arriving at the scene has to intervene, not to calm the crowd, but to talk the officer down so the public can continue to exercise its free speech rights. “Our duty-to-intervene training began long before there was a House bill,” Knutson says, referring to the Law Enforce-

ment Integrity Act that the General Assembly passed earlier this year.

With this Act, Colorado made national headlines as one of the first states to take pro-active measures for police reform. The legislation—some of which won’t go into effect until 2023—bans some techniques, mandates body-worn cameras, and creates a statewide database for the use of force, departmental violations and other issues. It also requires that officers “intervene when another officer is using unlawful physical force and requires the intervening officer to file a report.” (<https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb20-217>)

Failure to intervene can result in an officer’s decertification. “We will not tolerate bad apples,” Ikeda says.

The Act bans the carotid choke hold or carotid compressor technique, which Knutson explains “cuts off the blood supply to the brain temporarily.” He says “10 to 15 years ago, we [DPD] had decided that the only time an officer can ever use that is in a deadly force encounter, meaning that the officer could have shot that individual...we still trained it, but you can imagine how often it was used.” Knutson adds that the likelihood that an officer would be in a deadly force encounter and

choose to holster their weapon and instead use this technique was always extremely low. Though it was kept in the training repertoire, removing it was “not a big deal.” Knutson says de-escalation techniques have always been central to the training.

DPD has also changed the hand position permitted on other techniques, allowing officers to position a hand on a face, avoiding the neck area entirely. Whenever an officer unholsters their weapon, whether mace, a Taser or a handgun, they must now document that action with a “show of force” report, even if they do not employ the weapon.

“We believe in police reform,” says Ikeda. When asked what has changed in DPD’s training since Floyd’s death, he says “Nothing has changed. Our curriculum is exceptional.” He says he hand-picks trainers and staff to ensure that recruits are learning from the best. Knutson concurs: “We’re in a constant state of evolution—and so police reform is welcomed because it’s something that we’re already doing.”

All of the officers wish the public would recognize that not all who dedicate their lives to service and choose law enforcement are somehow the same. Most who wear the badge do not condone the actions of the minority of bad officers. Many of the officers grew up in Denver, and they name their high schools and neighborhoods with pride. Their stories are as varied as those of the community they serve. “We are the public,” says Figueroa. “We are you.”



The instruction in the theater scenario where there were active shooters was “keep your head on a swivel, line your sights up.” Trainers can adapt the scenarios in response to recruits’ behaviors and actions to teach and elicit specific skills.

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East High School teacher Matthew Fulford engages constitutional law students in a Zoom discussion about voting rights and other constitutional questions. Voting rights, for example, are not explicitly enumerated in the U.S. Constitution—and states are given lots of power over how to implement and interpret those rights based on the 14th and 15th Amendments.

By Martina Will, PhD

As Denver voters mull over six long pages of candidates and ballot initiatives and wonder “Where do I find out about all these judges?” a group of East High School students is discussing big picture questions such

as the franchise itself and the strengths and weaknesses of the Constitution. Following one such discussion, the *Front Porch* asked Colorado Rep. Jason Crow (D-06), whose name is also on the ballot as he seeks re-election, to reflect on the students’ ideas and other issues relating to our democracy.

East HS Scholars & A Legislator:



“The Electoral College threatens democracy,” says Kari Jackson, who would like to see an end to what she believes is a biased institution.

The Limits of the Franchise

“Nowhere in the U.S. Constitution, other than in the amendments, is there an explicit declaration of the right to vote,” observes social studies teacher Matthew Fulford. He asks students what provisions—if any—imply a right to vote, and

how suffrage has both expanded and contracted over time. Fulford teaches an AP Government and Politics (“Con Law”) class that competes in—and often wins—national contests; he brought students together via Zoom to share their thoughts.

Though not yet old enough to vote, these students are well-informed about the power and the limits of the franchise. Kari Jackson discusses the expansion of the franchise in the wake of the Civil War, but at the same time notes that the Fourteenth Amendment came with “a little loophole” that allowed states to withhold the vote from criminals. “And there hasn’t been an explicit voting right” to rectify this, she says. She believes revoking felons’ voting rights is deeply problematic, and just one way in which voter suppression persists.



Impact of *Shelby County v. Holder*

States retain a great deal of authority to interpret and implement voting rights as they see fit. Lilia Scudamore, the only senior in the group, cites the Supreme Court’s 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*. That

“It scares me....It’s very unnerving,” says Charlotte Donelson, when she hears Trump supporters on the news saying they won’t respect the election results if Trump loses.



Ben Getches finds it ironic that the Electoral College, which was established to ensure representation, increasingly means “we’re focusing on the six or seven swing states,” which he sees as limiting representation.

landmark decision led to some of the very changes that today are resulting in long lines at polling stations; namely, state and local governments can now make changes to voting laws and practices without federal “preclearance.” Scudamore says this decision essentially “undid the Voting Rights Act” (which outlawed discriminatory voting practices adopted in many southern states after Reconstruction). “The same day that it passed, Texas disenfranchised 600,000 people in one day,” she says, noting that it (*Shelby*) disproportionately impacted non-White voters.

In fact, many of the gains in minorities’ access to the franchise in the years following the 1965 Voting Rights Act were predicated on federal preclearance. The impact was greater representation of non-Whites in Congress and greater voter turnout by non-Whites. Eliminating this requirement led to swift changes in the wake of *Shelby v. Holder* that negatively impacted voter turnout and reduced polling stations, especially in African-American counties.

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Assessing Our Democracy



Lilia Scudamore warns of the dangers of packing the Supreme Court, which would make “the one branch of the U.S. government that is supposed to be the nonpolitical branch possibly the most political.”

Five years after the decision, *The Atlantic* concluded “it’s become clear that the decision has handed the country an era of renewed white racial hegemony.” Crow understands students’ concerns, and says the House of Representatives has been working to safeguard democracy by enshrining protections through legislation. “We passed the Voting Rights Advancement Act last year in the House to address the *Shelby v. Holder* decision that really took the teeth out of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.... It reinserts some oversight and important protections for folks throughout the country.” [That 2019 bill passed by the House (228 – 187) was *not* passed by the Senate and signed into law.] Crow says much of the voter suppression that occurs around the country happens at polling stations. He thinks a lot of the inequities in voting could be short-circuited through the measures Colorado already has in place, including automatic voter registration and mail-in balloting. These measures increase access to voting while limiting the opportunities for voter suppression.

Fundamental Changes Needed?

Many of the students advocate for fundamental reforms to suffrage as a solution to what they see as undemocratic practices limiting our democratic institutions. Rashad Brimah believes

partisanship is a fundamental problem with our political system today: “People care more about their party than upholding the Constitution.” Ben Getches suggests ranked choice voting as a solution that would foster greater democracy. “The main way to fix this is ranked choice voting,” he says, suggesting that by ranking their candidates in order of preference, voters could show their support for more than the two main parties, making for a more representative system. “Then you could vote outside of partisanship.”

Though some states are using ranked choice voting, Crow says it has had mixed impacts. He suggests that these types of significant changes are premature when we have not exhausted the other options for reform. “I think there’s this instinct to want to jump several steps ahead on where we are, when you know a large number of Americans—millions of Americans actually—struggle just to exercise their fundamental right to vote and to have access to polling stations. I think the focus really has to start there,” Crow says.

Other students lay the blame for our democracy’s limitations at the feet of the Electoral College. Scudamore believes the Electoral College, too often, “is unrepresentative of the popular vote,” a problem that has increased as the U.S. population has grown. Reflecting on the Founding Fathers’ intentions in creating the Electoral College—to ensure smaller states’ representation in the national vote—Charlotte Donelson cites the example of Wyoming, with about half the population of Rhode Island but with almost the same number of electoral votes (Wyoming has 3, Rhode Island 4).



Lindsay Bader says, “Since the President gets to appoint the Supreme Court justices, people we aren’t electing are deciding what the Constitution means for us.”



“A lot of the states that went red in the last election are states with stricter voter ID laws, so there’s definitely a lot of voter suppression in different states,” says Rashad Brimah.

“It is pretty outdated....we should get rid of it,” says Donelson.

While Crow appreciates that “There are population shifts that mean that more of the Senate represents fewer Americans and certainly that’s something that we need to talk about,” he doesn’t wish to “engage in hypotheticals two weeks out from the election of our lifetime.” He supports the present ballot initiative favoring the National Popular Vote, which would affirm Colorado’s participation in this national effort to circumvent the Electoral College. “I think it’s good for the state. I think it would help support the idea that one person equals one vote, and that the will of the people in the popular vote should select the president. I firmly believe that, and it’s about protecting our democracy and protecting the vote.”

Protecting Democracy through Legislation

Whichever candidate one supports for the presidency, it is undeniable that the Trump administration’s unprecedented approach to governing has resulting in some valuable lessons. The things that voters and legislators took for granted because they were “the norms and customs and traditions of our democracy,” says Crow—like providing tax returns to the public—proved elusive at best over the past four years.

As a remedy, in September 2020, the House introduced legislation called the “Protect our Democracy Act.” Crow says it “puts protections in place and codifies things that we have come to terms with in the Trump administration, that need to be put into statute.” According to *The Washington Post*, “seven committee chairs signaled their legislation is intended to ‘prevent future presidential abuses, restore our checks and balances, strengthen accountability and transparency, and protect our elections.’” The new law would also come with enforcement power, including congressional subpoenas.

As the election nears, Crow says he is concerned about the president’s words that seem to lay the groundwork for a disputed election and the peaceful transition of power, should the president not win reelection. “I’m paying very close attention to that, having a lot of discussion with my congressional colleagues about it, and we’re going to be vigilant and defend our democracy, and defend the vote, and defend the election as we should do and as we have a constitutional obligation to do.”



U.S. Congressman Jason Crow talks to a constituent during his 2018 election campaign.

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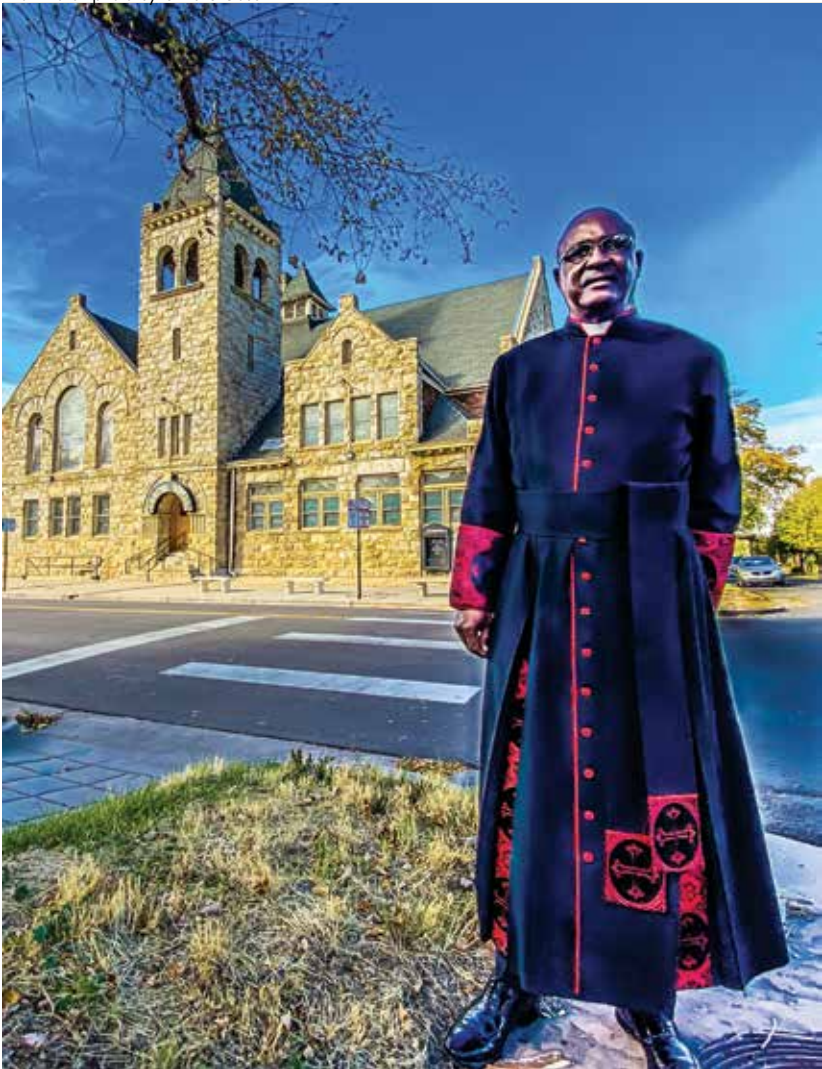


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Left: Pastor Frank Davis of Zion Baptist Church has been holding indoor services for about 60 people every Sunday, with most parishioners choosing a live video feed instead.

Right: Montview Presbyterian co-pastors Clover Beal and Ian Cummins held an outdoor baptism for 11 families. Brent Westrop and Lindsey Smith were grateful family members could be there as their daughter Abigail was baptized.



Congregations Find their W

By Mary Jo Brooks

Even before Governor Jared Polis issued his stay-at-home order at the end of March to prevent the spread of Covid-19, leaders at churches, temples, and mosques across Denver knew they had to quickly devise ways for people to worship from home. Religious services, by their very nature, involve people sitting closely together indoors, singing, shaking hands, even hugging—all potential virus-spreading behaviors.

Most faith communities already offered video streaming of services, but it was often just a camera at the back of the sanctuary with little production value. “We knew almost instantly that we had to

create something more immediate, more intimate,” says Clover Beal, co-pastor at Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church. The church staff decided to use a professional cameraman to pre-record the services, including highly produced musical numbers and sermons delivered with the minister looking directly into the camera. “We invited members of our congregation to create a special place in their home and light a candle so it would feel like worship. Of course, we thought this was just going to last a few weeks or so,” Beal says with a laugh.

Now, seven months into the pandemic, faith leaders say they’ve found multiple new ways to not only worship, but to con-

duct meetings, youth group fellowship, even communion, bar mitzvahs and baptisms. “We suddenly had to learn about this thing called Zoom,” says Rabbi Joe Black from Temple Emanuel. “They didn’t teach us in rabbinical school how to make a tv studio in our basement but that’s what I had to do.” Black says the first thing the temple did was prioritize what services it could provide. “Our number one value was saving lives. We didn’t want to put our congregants or our staff at risk.” It has meant streaming worship services, postponing weddings, and limiting graveside services to immediate family members. Bar mitzvah services were held outside this summer and early fall, but have now ended for the winter.

Arise Church Denver (formerly Stapleton Church) also initially offered only video-streamed services, but in June it added an outdoor service which attracts as many as 150 people each Sunday. In November,

worship moves back inside—with precautions. “We’ll have two services, allowing just 100 people per service. Everyone will have to wear a mask, even when singing,” says Pastor Matt Wolf.

Catholic churches in Denver resumed in-person masses in mid-May, but initially just for 10 people at a time. As state regulations loosened with “Safer-at-Home” guidelines, churches were allowed 50-100 people per service indoors, depending on the size of the sanctuary. Several Catholic churches also offered outdoor confession and drive-by communions. “I’ve been so impressed with how the parishes have reacted to the pandemic,” says Mark Haas, with the Archdiocese of Denver. “They know they serve a vital role in people’s lives so they’ve found new ways to connect with them.”

In-person services at the Northeast Denver Islamic Center mosque have also resumed, but with some important health precautions. Everyone must have their temperature checked at the

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Left: Worshipers at Christ the King Catholic Church were allowed to return to indoor services in May, observing all state restrictions for masks and social distancing.

Right: Rabbi Joe Black, seen in his basement studio in the upper left Zoom square, and other members of his clergy, wave farewell at the end of Temple Emanuel's Rosh Hashana service.



ay during the Pandemic

Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch



Imam Abdur-Rahim Ali delivers his sermon at the Friday service at the Northeast Denver Islamic Center mosque. In-person worship resumed in July.

door, they must perform their ritual washing before prayer at home instead of at the mosque, and they must bring their own prayer rugs. "We only allow 35 people inside, we keep an overhead fan on to keep air flowing and I've shortened the service to just 30 minutes," says Imam Abdur-Rahim Ali. The mosque's weekend school, which serves 125 young people, holds classes via Zoom.

Zion Baptist Church, the oldest African American church in the Rocky Mountain West, is holding indoor services but with greatly reduced numbers. Prior to the pandemic, over 300 people regularly attended every Sunday. Now about 60-70 attend in person, all wearing masks and spaced far apart in the sanctuary. "We're making do. We're social beings so this is difficult. We have a custom of expressing our faith by coming together, so this is a dramatic change," says Pastor Frank Davis.

The biggest challenge for all of these houses of worship is planning for some of the most important religious holidays, which traditionally draw large crowds of people. For Yom Kippur at the end of September, Rabbi Black hired a professional video production team to record and edit portions of the service. More

than 8,000 people tuned in to watch.

Leaders at the Catholic Archdiocese, Arise Church Denver, and Zion Baptist Church say they are still trying to figure out how to best meet their congregants' needs for Christmas Eve. All hope to offer multiple services indoors, but with coronavirus numbers spiking in Denver, they will keep a close eye on any new restrictions that might be put in place by either the mayor or the governor.

Montview Presbyterian, which added outdoor vesper services in July, will continue holding services outside as long as it's not raining or frigid. "We figure if folks can bundle up for Bronco games, they can bundle up for a 30-minute outdoor worship service," says Beal. Last year, more than 4,000 people attended Christmas Eve services at Montview. This year the church plans to offer up to six outdoor services in its parking lot, with hopes of creating a live-animal nativity scene for young families.

NOTE: In late October, a federal judge ruled the state cannot force congregants to wear masks or limit gatherings at two Denver-area churches, citing religious freedom. Governor Polis has filed an appeal. All religious leaders interviewed for this story say the ruling would not change how they proceed with worship services.



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Much like everything else this year, film festivals have changed. The Denver Film Festival is virtual, and while you may not have access to the red carpet or the interviews, you will have unprecedented access to the



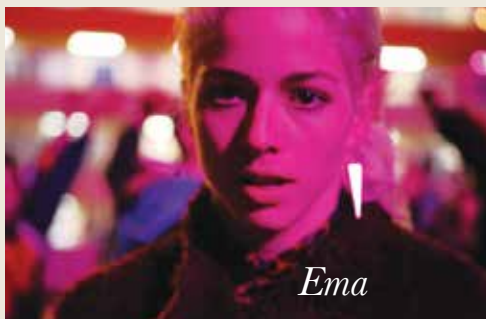
76 Days

films. Here, I review four films playing at this year's Festival. The Film Society and the Festival need support in these times just like everybody else does, and with the virtual format, you don't have any excuses for missing a screening. All of the films reviewed here are available until Nov. 8, and all have a 48-hour unlock window and a 48-watch window once unlocked. See the complete schedule online at www.denverfilm.org. "See you" there.

Ema (Chile—2020)

This moody, atmospheric, and dynamic film from internationally acclaimed Chilean director Pablo Llorain (*Jackie, Neruda*), is a visual and auditory treat. The titular character (Mariana Di Giralamo) portrays a dense, tempestuous, and sensuous reggaeton dancer who embarks on a journey of self-discovery after a shocking accident that tears apart her family. Her husband, the temperamental dance troupe choreographer Gastón (Gael García Bernal), serves as her counterpoint in another great performance from Bernal.

Llorain once said that "all art is political," a sentiment that seems to come from another time and is one we do not hear very much in Hollywood. This film is true to Llorain's words, and Di Giralamo's electric performance and Llorain's stylish directing highlight Ema's plight to be free of male dominance and societal pressures. The always slow-moving camera serves as the visual accompaniment to Ema's spirit, and the breathless, sensual dance sequences serve as the energy that runs at her core. It is a political film, yes, but not one that dulls you with message. Ema is the message.



Ema

'Til Kingdom Come (2020)

This fascinating documentary chronicles the strange and unlikely relationship between Israel and the American Evangelical community. The dynamic takes shape through several different stories, including Kentucky pastors and Evangelicals as well as the Trump and Netanyahu administrations. Many of the American donations are funneled into a philanthropic organization consisting of Jews and Christians—a group that has a strange amount of influence.

The film won't win any awards for its cinematic prowess, but it wins for access and the sheer bizarre world it portrays. We see behind the curtain, the interviews are illuminative, and we leave with a better understanding of the dynamic as well as a bitter taste about some of the people and relationships. There many well-meaning people that walk through this world, but there are also snakes in the garden.



'Til Kingdom Come

76 Days (2020)

It was inevitable that we would be flooded with documentaries about the pandemic, and this one from China is the first out of the gate. Following the lives of a disparate group of Wuhan residents and the hospital workers dealing with the first outbreak in the world, we get a rare look into the place where the pandemic began and at the people on the first front line. Most of

us have seen the eerie images of an empty city, but seeing a lone ambulance speeding across a massive bridge—no other traffic in sight—brings the horror home. That could be any of us on the other end of the bridge.

This is a raw and intense film without frills or Hollywood trappings. It also works to demystify the pandemic for Americans who may believe this was foisted on us by the Chinese. To see the suffering, exhaustion, and sheer panic among everyone is to understand that this is a human problem.

Freeland (2020)

Aging pot farmer Devi (Krisha Fairchild) lives off the grid, where she has been growing popular pot strains for years. Once marijuana is legalized, however, she finds herself in a struggle to survive in a world where you can now walk to the corner to get what you want. As the Festival notes, "Shot on actual off-the-grid pot farms during harvests," the film is punctuated by wonderful performances and beautiful cinematography of the wilderness buttressed against the small towns and the large cities just beyond. It is a touching story and a beautiful film. The ticket price also includes a director Q & A that will play after the movie.

Vincent Piturro, PhD, is a Professor of Film and Media Studies at Metropolitan State University of Denver. He can be reached at vpiturro@msudenver.edu. And you can follow "Indie Prof" on Facebook and @VincentPiturro on Twitter.



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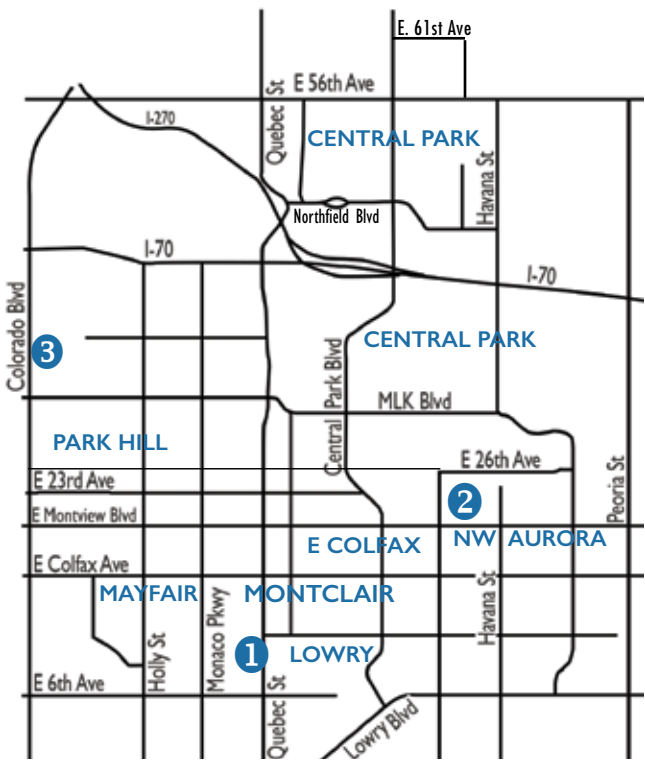
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...NE News Updates



By Carol Roberts and Martina Will, PhD

1 Target and Five Other Tenants Announced for the Exchange at Boulevard One in Lowry

A small-format Target will occupy approximately 30,000 square feet of retail space in the Exchange at Boulevard One, located at First and Quebec in Lowry. The small-format Target offers “a specially curated retail experience” for Lowry and nearby neighborhoods, says Marshall Burton, president and CEO of Confluent Development in a press release. Five other tenants, along with Target, were announced in mid-October—two restaurants, a coffee shop, yoga and a medical office: Mod Pizza – 2,750 sq. ft.; Sushi Ronin – 2,000 sq. ft.; Logan House Coffee – 1,850 sq. ft.; and SCL Health – 15,700 sq. ft.

The Exchange at Boulevard One, co-owned and co-developed by Confluent Development and Kelmere Development, is a 175,000 sq. ft. development. The first phase, at 135,000 sq. ft., broke ground in April 2019 and is anticipated for an on-schedule completion in spring 2021. The development will have about 500 parking spaces, including a 231-stall underground parking garage, bicycle and scooter parking, and electric car charging stations.

2 Stanley Virtual Reality Installation

Aurora is the first stop in North America for the Academy Award®-winning virtual reality installation *Carne y Arena*, which invites viewers to quite literally walk a mile in someone else’s shoes. Telling a story that engages viewers with powerful visuals while examining the human condition is something of a specialty for its creator, Mexican director Alejandro G. Iñárritu (Roma, Birdman, The Revenant, Amores Perros to name a few). Without giving away too



much, be prepared for an immersive experience that offers a fresh perspective on immigration. Be sure to take time to read the individual stories at the end, which challenge some popular misconceptions. The experience focuses on Central American and Mexican migrants—although the southern border is the point of entry for migrants from all over the world. Tickets are timed, and only one person goes through at a time. Sponsored by Denver Center for the Performing Arts and the Stanley, tickets are sold online only at <https://carne.denvercenter.org/>. The installation runs through Jan. 30, 2021.

3 The Future of Park Hill Golf Course

When Westside Investment Partners purchased the 155-acre Park Hill Golf Course in July 2019, its sale came with a “conservation easement” that specifies the land can only be used as a golf course. The advocacy group Save Open Space (SOS) believes the conservation easement means the unused golf course must remain open space in perpetuity. The City and Westside believe, with the approval of City Council, the land can be better used in other ways. In Nov. 2019, the City and Westside made an agreement that the community would have three years to give public input on future uses of the land and then put a redevelopment plan to a vote of City Council.

At a virtual media event on October 22, Westside announced the latest step toward that plan. Kenneth Ho, who leads the

project for Westside said, “The number one thing we’ve heard is that the neighborhood really wants to lead and have the neighborhood voice heard in terms of what the property becomes.” The event was the formal announcement that The Holleran Group will join the Westside ownership team and work specifically on community outreach and engagement in developing a plan for the golf course. Holleran is a social enterprise group dedicated to empowering communities to create solutions for sustainable wealth. “Equity equals opportunity,” said Norman Harris, co-founder of The Holleran Group; they will focus on “a socially equitable approach to development that not only assures that our neighborhood has the loudest voice in the process, but that the neighborhood shares in the economic benefits.”

Ho said he has heard a desire for redevelopment that includes a grocery store, affordable housing and economic opportunities for those who live in the area. “We believe that the Park Hill golf course represents a unique opportunity and challenge to revitalize both the spirit and the economy of Northeast Park Hill. The sheer size of this property really provides unique opportunity to do that.”



Developers of the Exchange at Boulevard One in Lowry announced their anchor tenant will be a small-format Target with construction to be completed in the spring of 2021.

4 Covid: New Technology, Masks & “Shrink Your Bubble”

The Colorado Exposure Notifications app developed by Apple and Google went live on Sunday, Oct. 25. The service can alert users if they have been near someone who has been positively diagnosed with Covid-19. When users enable the service, their smartphones will share anonymous tokens with other users through the phones’ Bluetooth technology. If another user tests positive for Covid-19 within a 14-day period and uploads their results, users at risk of infection will receive an alert of potential exposure. Learn more at addyourphone.com.

With Covid cases in Colorado reaching their highest since the pandemic started and hospitalizations rising, the director of Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment on Oct. 23 asked Colorado residents to “shrink your bubble” and “please take every effort to reduce contact with members of other households.” And on Oct. 16, Mayor Hancock announced that through Nov. 16 in Denver, face coverings must be worn when outdoors with people other than those from the same household when social distancing is not possible. And the number of people allowed to gather in unregulated settings is *reduced from ten to FIVE*.

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Left: Kahlo's *Diego on My Mind* (1943), shows her in a Tehuana headdress.



Lower Left: Rivera's *Calla Lily Vendor* (1943), depicts traditional dress and hairstyles.

Front Porch photos by Christie Gosch



Denver Art Museum

Frida, Diego, and a Who's

By Martina Will, PhD

“It was the entrance of an Aztec goddess,” writes Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes of the one time he saw Frida Kahlo in person. Her arrival in Mexico City’s Palace of Fine Arts caused a stir. The occasion was a concert, but the music of her arrival was her own: “the apparition that announced herself with an incredible throb of metallic rhythms and then exhibited the self that both the noise of the jewelry and the silent magnetism displayed.”

Confined to bed for much of her life due to childhood polio and a devastating streetcar accident, Fuentes concludes that Kahlo was in fact “more like a broken Cleopatra” than an Aztec goddess. In her diary, Kahlo writes “I paint myself because I am so often alone and because I am the subject I know best.”

Fame and Facemasks

Born to a Jewish-German immigrant father (whose photos also appear at the DAM) and a Catholic Mexican mother who was part Spanish, part Tehuana from Oaxaca, Kahlo has come to represent the quintessential Mexican identity. This would likely please her, as she and her husband, artist Diego Rivera, helped to define and construct Mexicanidad. This interpretation of Mexican identity found its principal roots in Mexico’s indigenous people and traditions. Kahlo and Rivera were among many intellectuals of the period after the Mexican Revolution (1910-20) who rejected the Spanish colonial influence and elevated native cultures to create a Mexican identity and aesthetic.

The Denver Art Museum’s *Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism* exhibit, conveys some of the power of Kahlo’s personality. The exhibit is from the private collection of Jacques

and Natasha Gelman. Twenty of Kahlo’s works complement 130 others that either center on her or add context and understanding to her life and times. The exhibit illuminates both the solitary Kahlo and the Kahlo who formed an integral part of a vibrant community of artists, intellectuals and revolutionaries at a particularly rich moment in Mexican life. Intimate photographs by luminaries such as Lucienne Bloch and Lola Álvarez-Bravo contrast with the abundantly public and mass-reproduced images of her self-portraits that became ubiquitous in the late twentieth century. The exhibit is from the private collection of Jacques and Natasha Gelman.

Four or five decades after her 1954 death, Kahlo gained a fame that she never experienced during her lifetime. Her Casa Azul home in Coyoacán has become a pilgrimage site. On any given



Rufino Tamayo’s *Portrait of Cantinflas* (1948), reflects Mexico’s Golden Age of cinema. It depicts a beloved comedic character, the subject of more than 30 films.

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Who of Mexican Greats

day, tourists from around the globe form long lines to see where she and husband Diego Rivera lived. Facebook popup ads hawk everything from t-shirts and tote bags to facemasks with her likeness.

Politics and Activism

Perhaps less pleasing to Kahlo would be the mass marketing and consumerism wrapped up in her image. The commodification of all things Kahlo is a striking contrast to her Communist principles. Kahlo joined the Young Communist League in 1927, at age 20. Both she and Rivera were longtime members of the Mexican Communist Party, even after it was banned. They often marched against fascism and imperialism and on behalf of Mexico's working class. When Josef Stalin exiled Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky, the couple hosted Trotsky and his wife Natalia for almost two years in their home. Just days before her death in 1954, Kahlo—sitting in a wheelchair—demonstrated with 10,000 other Mexicans against the U.S.-orchestrated coup in Guatemala. When she died, Rivera cloaked Kahlo's coffin in a flag emblazoned with the hammer and sickle, an image she included in paintings and on the orthopedic corsets she had to wear. In short, politics were fundamental to her identity and work.

Though politics are largely absent from the DAM exhibit, two photographs show Kahlo and Rivera demonstrating against fascism and in solidarity with workers. The reproduction of Rivera's mural prominently

features the proletariat and Communist leaders. This is a revised version of the mural that he had started painting in 1933 in the lobby of 30 Rockefeller Plaza. Nelson Rockefeller had it plastered over when Rivera refused to remove its portrait of Lenin.

The Context

Though Kahlo is definitely the headliner here, in addition to 20 of her works, the exhibit includes prominent pieces by Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, Miguel Covarrubias, David Alfaro Siqueiros, María Izquierdo, Carlos Mérida, Lola and Manuel Álvarez Bravo, and others who defined Mexican identity and Mexican modern-



Above: Elevating Mexico's native cultures was fundamental to Mexicanidad, which the DAM describes as a movement that "merged indigenous culture with national heritage." In this Nickolas Murray photo, Kahlo holds an Olmec figurine.

Right: Kahlo and Rivera shared a love for political activism, and here participate in an anti-fascist demonstration in Mexico City, 1936.



Kahlo's, *The Love Embrace of The Universe, The Earth (Mexico), Myself, Diego, and Señor Xolotl* (1943). Señor Xolotl was her dog, an itzcuintli.

ism in the mid-twentieth century. The exhibit design, from its colors to its shapes, takes its inspiration from pre-Columbian forms and colors (recall that Mexico's pyramids used to be covered in gorgeous color).

"From working in Detroit, I knew we could tell a story," says curator Rebecca Hart. Hart has a special affinity and expertise in Mexican art, and was previously at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), where Rivera and Kahlo spent time in the early 1930s. Rivera's *Detroit Industry Murals* remain a point of pride for the DIA, and even Rivera's scaffolding has a hallowed place in storage there.

The exhibit will be at the DAM through January 24, 2021, and for those wishing to learn more about Mexican modernism, the DAM is offering an online course as well.

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