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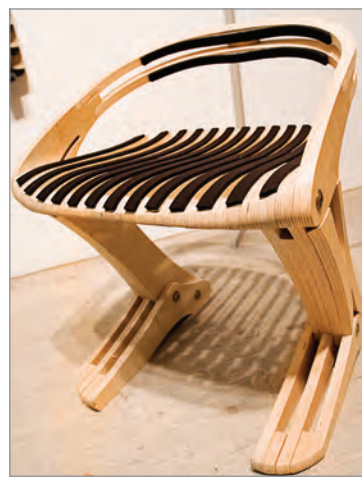
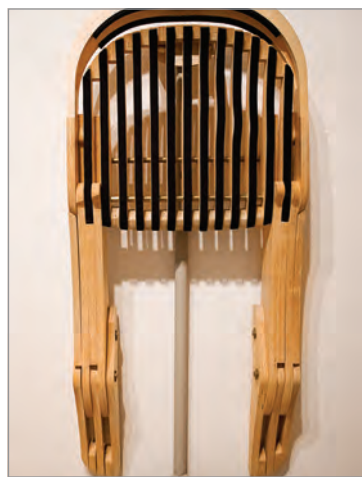
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ABOVE Artist Mimi Li displays her felt-pen drawings in a hallway in the Parker Street warehouse, which served dozens of artists.



LEFT Peter Wall creates interesting and innovative chairs such as this one, which even folds.

GOH IROMOTO PHOTOS/THE UBYSSEY

# Eastside Culture Crawl draws large crowds

BY TREVOR RECORD  
*Culture Staff*

The past weekend saw the 12<sup>th</sup> incarnation of the Eastside Culture Crawl, a free three-day visual arts event. The crawl took place in an array of venues dotting the Eastside, from a mammoth converted warehouse at 1000 Parker Street with dozens of diverse artists, to private homes across the area with anywhere from a single artist to a half dozen.

Media included photography, fashion, painting, pottery, furniture, performance and music. Many had items available for purchase, while others simply had their works out for display. With hundreds of local artists participating, even the hard-to-please were sure to have found something they could appreciate.

The strength of the event was the wide variety of styles and subjects presented across most mediums. Some artists were producing plainly non-offensive art that appealed to a broader audience, while other artists' pieces were deeply symbolic, political, or attached to a particular obsession of the artist. It is this variety

that has resulted in the crawl's climbing attendance. Thousands attended last weekend.

Although a good deal of the artists were clearly out to attract higher income guests who might become buyers, many offered prints, pins and postcards for the monetarily challenged.

"It's a great event, and so diverse," said artist and designer Peter Wall. "You come down and see so many different things, and such a wide variety of people."

A high-pressure stream of guests poured continually into Wall's modest space in the Parker Street warehouse. Wall's strikingly innovative chairs, clockwork kinetic sculptures, and eerily skeletal recycled material candelabras revealed a deeply inventive mind.

Down the hall from Wall was Mimi Li, who was selling colourful felt-pen drawings next to Wild Rose Tattoo Shirts, a clothing company that sells fake, wearable tattoos printed on sheer nylon. Not working in the warehouse herself, Li had moved into the hallway of the building, whose studio space she implied she couldn't afford. When asked to comment on the event she said,

"I heard...the crawl is for normal people, to check up on what the hip people are up to." She later qualified the remark by saying that the "hip" are people secretly embedded in our society, and could be just about anyone, "even your grandma."

If the hip can be reduced to the artists participating in the crawl for our purposes, they were definitely embedded. Outside of the larger studio buildings the crawl had a humble, almost neighbourly aura fostered by signs found across the area that marked out artists' houses that guests could visit.

A handful of houses had yellow, helium-filled balloons to direct the crawl-goers to the correct location. One memorable house had a long trail of balloons leading out into an alleyway, and then a garage, where printmaker Nadia Baker was displaying a collection of anthropomorphic power line transformer prints.

"This is the first year I'm participating as an artist," Baker said. "So I'm kind of missing out on seeing everyone else's work, but it's always so great to see so much work that's all local." U

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