



OCCUPANT NARRATIVES

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS - FAMILY, ARTIST, STAFF & VISITOR



THE DYNAMIC NEIGHBORHOOD: Finding Stability in Flux

It's been twelve years since we first moved into our once brand new apartment unit. Looking back it's hard to remember what life is like in a static neighborhood where the faces around you change once in a decade. Here we face new people every week.

At first it was an exciting experience, meeting new people from all over the country and even some from other countries. Joe and I were young and were able to experience the diversity of the world without ever stepping more than a hundred feet from our back door. Additionally having world renowned artists creating exhibits that we could view at our leisure was a bonus for two Rice University graduates with degrees in Art History and Photo Journalism. The first year was full of excitement and unfamiliar faces.

By our second year in the apartment, we had become close friends with our neighbor Tara Reinhardt who was a recent college graduate working on an on-going photography exhibit mapping the community of Marfa. She came over often for dinner and she would chat with Joe about new photography techniques. I was always a little jealous of how much they chatted, but the bond between all of us who lived in the apartments was part of what I loved so much. We all had our own routines and we operated separate from the flux of the arts center.

In September of our fifth year in the apartment I got pregnant with our son Mathew. We had discussed moving during that year but couldn't bring ourselves to leave. We wondered how it would be trying to raise a child in a place where there is a constant influx of new and strange people. But, we also knew the bond that was shared between all of us who lived in the 'over-look' as it began to be called. We wanted our child to grow up with the family of 'over-lookers' that we had grown to love.

The first few years we were extremely protective of Mathew, as most any parents would be. However, very quickly and effortlessly Mathew became knit as tightly into the fabric of the over-lookers as any one of us. He quickly became best friends with our deck-mate's son, John Fisher and we became as close with Fisher's as we were with Tara. It's not uncommon for all of us to share a picnic style dinner on the deck with the company of fellow over-lookers and the occasional hotel guest that we've felt comfortable enough to invite up for a good home cooked family-style dinner.

-Abby Timmons

LIGHT OF LIFE

In my bed,
I wake up to a chill,
a single blade of warm sunlight slices through.
I follow the stairs up to the warmth of the rising sun.

Outside,
the chill lingers from the night before,
it's quickly defeated by the strengthening sun.

Inside,
I take the stairs,
heading up to the developing room.
The artificial seems dim and lifeless in comparison.

The photos,
my only connection to reality,
they come to life slowly with light.

Outside,
now the heat is dense,
visitors trying to escape quickly to shelter.

Inside,
I retreat to my cool subterranean bed.

-Tara Reinhardt

TWENTY-FOUR ROOMS: Viewpoint of a Hotel Service Manager

I know these rooms better than I know my own home. Each and every detail of all twenty-four rooms. According to management, I am in charge of servicing twenty-one guest rooms and three suites. However, there is much more to these rooms than first meets the eye.

While they are all identical rooms to the common person, I see a much clearer detailing to each individual space. It's an interesting viewpoint I get to experience. I have gotten to know every tiny detail and can begin to map changes in each room over time. I can tell you that rooms 4, 12, and 14 all have a table with a wobbly leg. The table in room 12 was broken by four guys on a summer road trip. Room 13 has a stain on the floor right by the entry door and it was left by a couple who were visiting last September. The bathroom doors in rooms 7 and 26 squeak and the door in room 19 is hard to close.

I can also tell you that all the rooms on the roadside are noticeably hotter than those on the courtyard side, but the roadside is also much quieter. And as for the rooms farthest from the hotel offices, you are guaranteed to come in contact with at least one member of the Timmons family at some point during your stay.

While, I'm sure I could notify maintenance of each problem and it would be quickly resolved...I don't. Why? Because these are the things that keep me sane. They are part of the personality of each room, much like the temperature difference between roadside and courtyard rooms. The differences between rooms give me a sense of grounding throughout the day, something to keep my place. Without these tiny imperfections between the identical units I would easily get lost in the repetitiveness inherent in my job.

So to answer your question about what a guest room is like here, I wouldn't be able to tell you without going through each and every one. While in design they are all identical, I can tell you that both the location of each room and the marks of guests left over time has turned each room into it's own unique place.

-Cecilia Ramos

ART and JOURNEY

The desert,
a black hole for hours and minutes,
the drive continues.

The horizon,
a small lump of structure,
groves and groves.

The town,
seems sparse and vacant,
you can feel life hiding within.

The lobby,
an oasis from the heat,
my anticipation peaks.

The gallery,
the shelter of life,
excitement all around.

The art,
the piece I came to see,
my journey is complete.

Home,
a familiar place,
memories linger.

-Tom Doleman

