Welcome to the historic First Thursday in The Pearl!

The Pearl District Business Association (PDBA) invites you to explore our Pearl neighborhood - First Thursday Artwalk includes Portland’s most established art galleries. The map also notes Pearl businesses and first Thursday street fair. Not included on the map, but open for business is the many neighborhood boutiques, restaurants and businesses who support this evening of celebration.

Parking gets very difficult in the area on First Thursday. Your best bet is to take public transportation to the Pearl or park nearby and walk into the neighborhood.

The gallery receptions are free and open to the public. The receptions usually go from around 5pm to 8pm. Please check each gallery for actual times.

**ART VENUE CATEGORIES**
- Art Galleries
- First Thursday Street Gallery (summer months)
- Businesses that host First Thursday artists (most open spring to fall months)

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Artists featured in this gallery have appeared on Oregon Art Beat.
- The art galleries and restaurants that host artists are open for First Thursday throughout the year.
- Many of the local businesses that host a First Thursday artist do so during the summer months only (Jun-Oct)
- The First Thursday Street Gallery is open April-October

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First Thursdays in the Pearl

Now in its 30th year, First Thursday in the Pearl is a district-wide celebration that occurs on the first Thursday of each and every month. Originally a gathering of art collectors and dealers, the celebration has grown to a monthly event of over ten thousand people that includes art enthusiasts, wine aficionados and scenesters looking to see and be seen. When you combine a rich and thriving art scene with some of the best happy hour menus found in Portland, you get an event that has quickly become the place to be each month!

The beginnings of First Thursday

The name of Portland’s best known Arts district, The Pearl suggests urban legend. Perhaps an oyster canning factory once sat amidst the aging warehouses, or Chinese seafarers hid pearls beneath cobblestoned Twelfth Street. Whatever the origin, there’s the suggestion of both beauty and ugliness in the name—an elegant gem nestled in a drab, rough shell.

The actual story goes like this: A local gallery owner coined the phrase over 30 years ago to suggest that the buildings in the warehouse district were like crusty oysters, and that the galleries and artists’ lofts within were like pearls. As local business people were looking to label the growing area—the “warehouse district” or the “brewery district” were two suggestions—a travel writer borrowed the phrase and the name stuck.

Thanks to our sponsors!

Cover photography: RobFinchPhoto.com                Map design: DesignAnneli.com

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