

= Lovejoy Columns =

The Lovejoy Columns , located in Portland , Oregon , United States , supported the Lovejoy Ramp , a viaduct that from 1927 to 1999 carried the western approach to the Broadway Bridge over the freight tracks in what is now the Pearl District . The columns were painted by Greek immigrant Tom Stefopoulos between 1948 and 1952 . In 1999 , the viaduct was demolished but the columns were spared due to the efforts of the architectural group Rigga . For the next five years , attempts to restore the columns were unsuccessful and they remained in storage beneath the Fremont Bridge .

In 2005 , two of the original columns were resited at Northwest 10th Avenue between Everett and Flanders Streets . The Regional Arts & Culture Council was searching for photographs showing the murals in their original location for an ongoing restoration project . In 2006 , Randy Shelton reconstructed the artworks on the columns using the photographs for reference .

= = Description and history = =

The Lovejoy Columns supported the Lovejoy Ramp , a 2 @, @ 000 @- @ foot (610 m) viaduct that stretched from Northwest 14th Avenue and Lovejoy Street to the Broadway Bridge . It was constructed in 1927 ? 1928 . Between 1948 and 1952 , Athanasios Efthimiou " Tom " Stefopoulos (died 1971) , a Spokane , Portland and Seattle Railway night watchman , artist and master calligrapher in the copperplate style , drew upon the columns in chalk and later painted them . His work was spontaneous and not commissioned . Stefopoulos painted Greek mythology and Americana imagery in a calligraphic style ; the designs depicted " fanciful " owls , landscapes " bedecked with homespun aphorisms " , and ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes of Sinope navigating the streets of Athens with a lantern . He painted around a dozen murals , though photographic evidence does not exist for each of them . The paintings became a local landmark and quickly gained Stefopoulos notoriety and media coverage .

In the late 1990s , developer Homer Williams persuaded the city to demolish the viaduct to open up dozens of blocks in the redeveloping Pearl District . Preservation efforts began immediately . In 1998 , Georgiana Nehl completed a painting of the columns called Guardians : Under the Lovejoy Ramp to " catch a small flavor of these ' guardians , ' while they were still in place in their surprising location ? before they were lost in the name of progress " . In 1999 , James Henderson took a series of photographs of the remaining pigments of the original paintings ; he recorded the murals using cross @- @ polarized lighting and used digital enhancement to restore the colors . The Regional Arts & Culture Council administers at least six of Henderson 's photographs , which were printed in 2002 and each called Lovejoy Column .

= = = Demolition = = =

The viaduct was removed in 1999 , but the architectural group Rigga persuaded the city to preserve the paintings and the columns . Rigga said that if the murals had been removed from the columns , " much of their magic would be lost " . The City of Portland 's Office of Transportation earmarked funds to remove ten columns ; an ad hoc committee called Friends of the Columns was formed to raise money for their storage , restoration and public display , which was estimated to cost \$ 460 @, @ 000 . City Commissioner Charlie Hales said , " Saving the Lovejoy columns and the artwork provides a real bridge between the rich history of this industrial area and its future as a residential neighborhood . I am pleased that we are able to save these columns and look forward to them being placed on some of the park spaces in the River District . " According to the James M. Harrison Art and Design Studio , " Extracting the columns both captured the space created by Tom and preserved a ruin that would continue to tell a story . The fragile paintings preserved the mighty concrete . " During the next five years , attempts by the city , and non @- @ profit and entrepreneurial groups to restore the columns were unsuccessful . Boora Architects ' Northwest Marshall Street Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study (2001) , funded by the Portland Development Commission , proposed installing the columns at the intersection of Northwest 9th Avenue and Naito

Parkway .

The columns were featured in a 2003 article by the Getty Conservation Institute called " The Conservation of Outdoor Contemporary Murals " , which described best practices for preserving murals and included photographs of the columns during the demolition phase , with conservator J. Claire Dean assessing one of them . From August 10 to September 4 , 2004 , Portland @-@ based artist and filmmaker Vanessa Renwick exhibited a paper and video installation called Lovejoy Lost , featuring camera work by her and Gus Van Sant , for the PDX Window Project .

In November 2004 , Willamette Week reported that the columns were being held at a storage yard at Northwest 14th Avenue and Savier Street , beneath the Fremont Bridge . The paper said , " [h] alf @-@ covered in blue tarps , their rusted steel girders sticking out of concrete like veins from a freshly amputated arm , they await the political momentum to rescue them from rot " . Real estate developer John Carroll hoped to site the columns at the Elizabeth Lofts , but former Rigga member James Harrison said he was reluctant to believe it would happen , given their history . Harrison told Willamette Week , " [t] hese things can turn on a dime " .

= = = Resiting = = =

Carroll 's and Harrison 's efforts were realized in 2005 when two of the ten original columns were resited at Northwest 10th Avenue between Everett and Flanders streets . The 29 @, @ 000 lb (13 @, @ 000 kg) columns featured a majority of Stefopoulos ' paintings . Harrison reportedly watched with " something like fatherly joy " during the installation and said , " [w] e 're installing a ruin " . Carroll said displaying the columns as public art " will preserve an element of the city ' s past for current and future generations " and acknowledged support from the neighborhood , Friends of the Columns and the Portland Development Commission . The Regional Arts & Culture Council was searching for photographs showing the murals in their original location for a restoration project , which would be completed the following summer . In 2006 , the columns were reconstructed from the photographs by Randy Shelton . The City of Portland 's Bureau of Planning said the resited columns " [celebrate] a period in the district ' s history , showcasing the art for a broader audience " .

An event called " Public Space Invasion " was held in the plaza containing the columns in 2011 , inviting guests to " explore the legal limits of Portland 's more peculiar public spaces " . It advertised " crafts among the condos " and the opportunity to " picnic beside a freeway " . In 2013 , a bicycle tour called " Lovejoy Columns and Tom " focused on the conservation of the columns , the " almost forgotten history " of Stefopoulos and the rise of the Pearl District . The tour was narrated by Harrison on behalf of Friends of the Columns and guided by " Portland 's Museum Lady " Carye Bye ; it raised money for a gravestone for Stefopoulos ' unmarked grave at Rose City Cemetery . It included a guided tour at the Hellenic @-@ American Cultural Center and Museum , which was exhibiting Master Penworks of Tom Stefopoulos to view pen @-@ and @-@ ink art by Stefopoulos . It also included a viewing of Renwick ' s unfinished film Lovejoy and an optional visit to Stefopoulos ' grave . In her documentary , Renwick chronicled the effort to save the columns and restore the paintings .

= = Depictions and reception = =

The Daily Journal of Commerce called the columns a Portland " urban legend " . According to Richard Speer of Willamette Week , " generations of Portlanders grew up counting the Lovejoy columns as one of the city 's most unique attractions " . Speer also said the columns were once " postcard favorites and seemed as much a part of the city 's landscape as the Hawthorne Bridge " and have an " endearing , perspectiveless style " . The murals appeared in Van Sant 's film Drugstore Cowboy (1989) , Foxfire (1996) and a music video by Elliott Smith .

The resited columns have been included in published walking tours of Portland . In her 2006 book Walking Portland : 30 Tours of Stumptown 's Funky Neighborhoods , Historic Landmarks , Park Trails , Farmers Markets , and Brewpubs , Becky Ohlsen said , " Whatever you make of the artwork

, the inspired effort that went into preserving it ? not to mention the awesome spectacle of those massive columns ripped free , their rebar guts exposed to the air ? is damned impressive " .