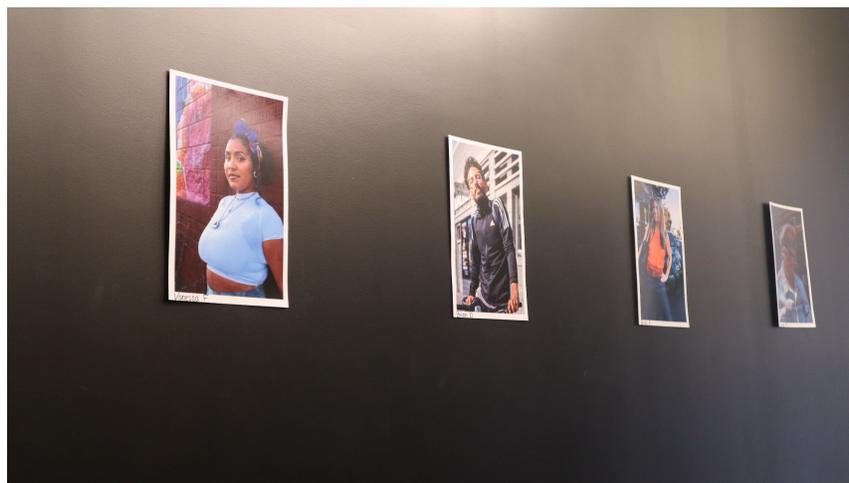


## A Photo Exhibition Capturing Oaklanders Show the Diversity of the Community

By WanYu Yao

Walking upstairs to enter and hang out at a Bar in downtown Oakland, it was hard not to notice a great number of photos sticking on the walls, which were *100 Faces of Oakland Photo Exhibition*, presenting the images of Oaklanders captured by two local photographers, Anthony Weaver and Patanisha Williams. This photo exhibition took place every Friday to Sunday night through October at the High 5ive Rooftop Bar, Kissel Uptown Oakland.

*100 Faces of Oakland* was organized by a non-profit Visit Oakland, as one of the episodes of Oakland Style Week, an annual five-day series of events occurring from October 9 to 13 to celebrate the vibrancy of the city. According to Renée Roberts, the director of public relations and communications of Visit Oakland, Weaver and Williams were selected through the RFP process. Visit Oakland requested for proposals and filtered them depending on their portfolio, and the photographers must be Oakland based.



*100 Faces of Oakland Photo Exhibition at the High 5ive Rooftop Bar. (Photo by WanYu Yao)*

## Telling Stories of the City

The two photographers spent two months from July strolling on the streets in 19 neighborhoods in the city and snapped over a hundred of pictures of people from the community. Weaver and Williams stated that they chose subjects from their look, authenticity, vibe and energy. For few photos they connected with people they already knew, but for most part they reached out to people randomly when glancing at their fabulous hairstyle or tattoos. “They just stood out on the street. We felt like that’s the picture we wanted, and that is how we came up with,” Williams gently smiled as she explained.

Weaver shared the behind story about one of the photos. There was a young lady coming out from an ice cream shop with a sorrowful expression, Weaver embarrassingly walked up to her and asked for the consents to take photos. Without forcing the lady to laugh, he ended up capturing the natural-look photo and made it one side of the Oaklanders for the exhibition.

Those pictures not only displayed the character’s appearances but also conveyed the creativity of the city in multiple ways. Claiming that Oakland has been a trendsetter in music, art, fashion or even social justice, Williams expressed her excitement of having such a platform to highlight that. She suggested, “Although [Oakland Style Week] may not tell the history of that, we’re capturing it currently, as photographers to try to capture what that looks like.” Weaver further added that style is like a universal language from people from all backgrounds. He claimed people love to express themselves and he and Williams were capturing how they do so.



*Anthony Weaver and Patanisha Williams, The Photographers for 100 Faces of Oakland.  
(Photo By WanYu Yao)*

As part of the community, Weaver and Williams cherished the opportunity to make an impact on it. Weaver raised that this city’s story was continued to be told by other people which was not necessarily true, was one sided, and there are many magical things happening in

Oakland. Both Weaver and Williams appreciated people were honored to be selected and captured, and they were inspired to take those faces and stories further, to uplift the city.

### **Attendees Seeing People in the Photos from the Same Community**

People are glad that this exhibition was spotlighted to the public, especially curating in a hotel to let traveling people see Oaklander's uniqueness. Lynnette Conner, one of the Oaklanders living in the city coming for the exhibition, mentioned that she loved seeing the exhibition in a bar possibly reaching out to people who might not be reached. Tamiko Garner, who also worked and lived in downtown, expressed that seeing people they knew in the photos was amazing, and those photographs showed that everybody fits even though they are different. "It's really like you see Oakland from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and diversity in dress. It really captured all of Oakland," Tamiko said, after sharing her favorite piece is a lady in orange with ranch pattern and fluorescent pants, due to the bright color and the coming out energy.

One of the attendees, who is also Williams' son, Andre Ali, expressed that he enjoyed the Oakland style as seeing many figures in the photos wearing city-featured-clothing, either the jersey or local brands.



*The Lady in Orange Captured for the Exhibit. (Photo By WanYu Yao)*

### **Experience Welcoming Feeling of Oakland**

It is the second year to coordinate the *100 Faces of Oakland*. Talking about the unique aspects this year, Roberts responded that every human being is unique that makes the whole exhibit unique. She suggested that both photographers capture the true spirit of Oakland and the individual's sense of style. "One of our strongest assets is the people in our community, and I

think that is the whole purpose of the 100 Faces of Oakland, is to celebrate the beauty, diversity and the welcoming feeling of Oakland.”

Roberts mentioned that Visit Oakland will definitely repeat this exhibition for next year’s Style Week from October 8 to 12, collaborating with two different photographers to spread the love-the tagline of Oakland-around. She encouraged people to come out and experience the beauty of the city.