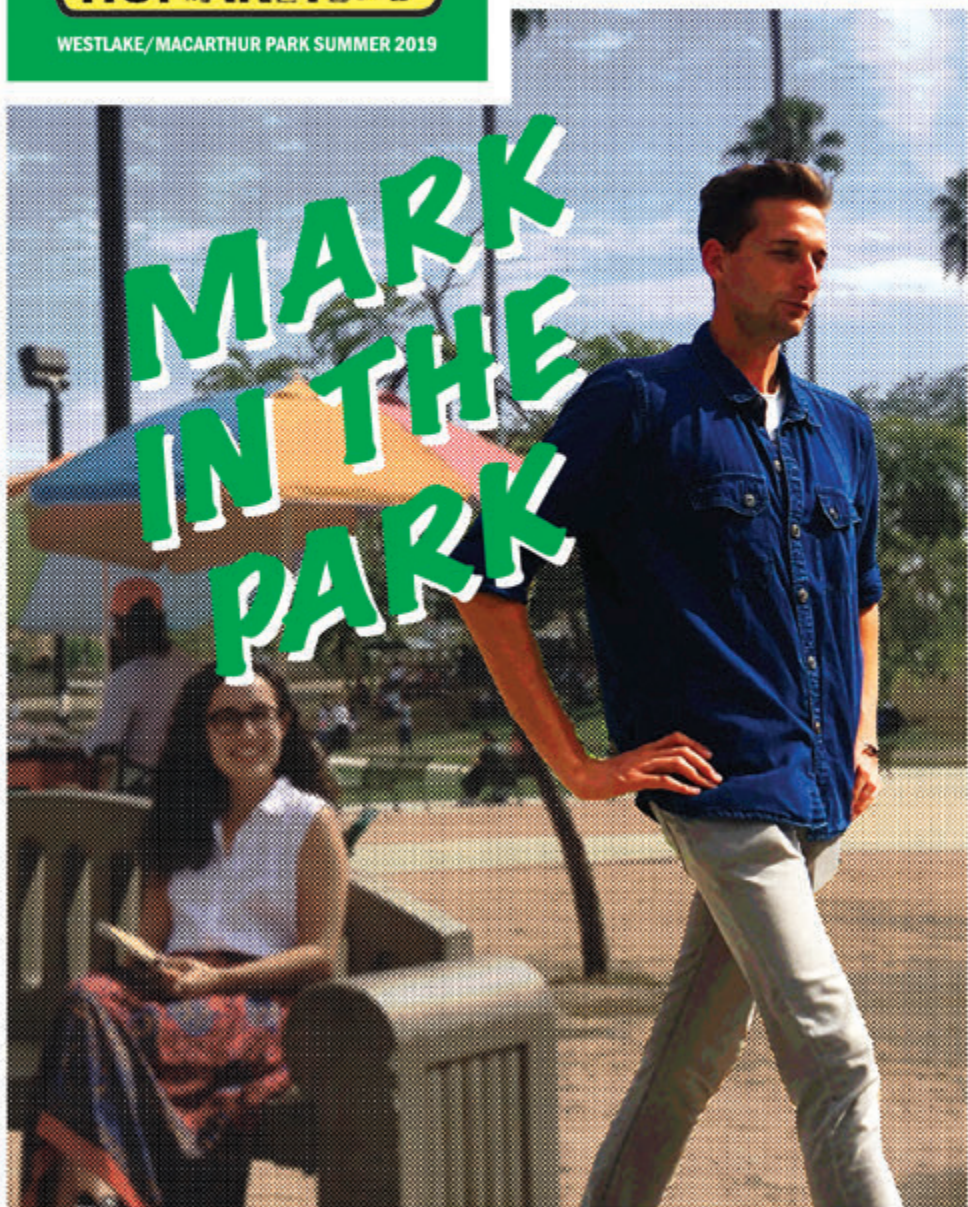


Casos de
**URBAN
HUMANITIES**

WESTLAKE/MACARTHUR PARK SUMMER 2019

**EXPECT THE
UNEXPECTED!**

**MARK
IN THE
PARK**





I hope the park didn't get too dirty after I left yesterday.

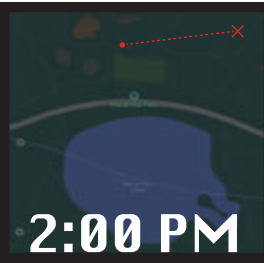
City park employees work everyday from 1:00 to 5:00 pm making sure that our parks remain clean. Mark works in MacArthur Park.



CURBED LOS ANGELES
THIS JUST IN!!!
37 NEW PARKS IN THE LAST 9 YEARS.
STAFF CUT BY 33%.
BUDGET DWINDLES TO \$81 MIL/YEAR.

Some help would sure be nice. But, I'll just do what I can to make the park at least a little bit better.

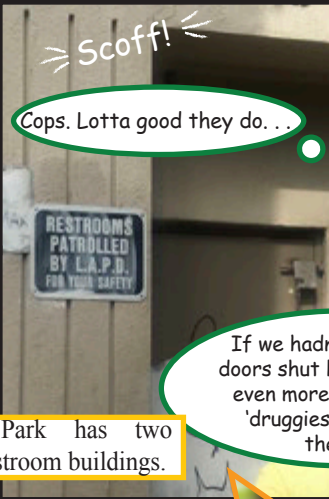
1:00 PM



Time for the bathrooms



MacArthur Park has two permanent restroom buildings.



Scoff!

Cops. Lotta good they do...

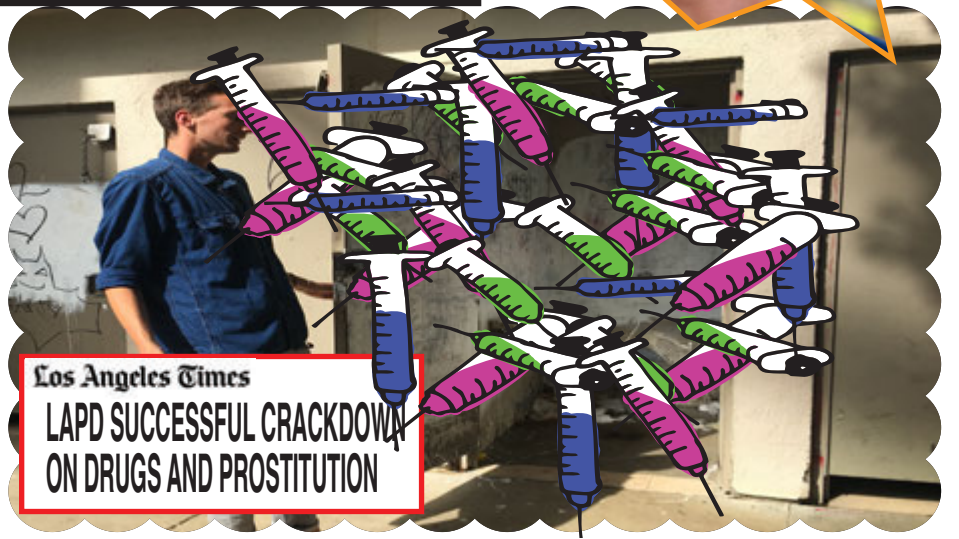
If we hadn't welded the doors shut last year, I bet even more 'hookers' and 'druggies' would be in there...



What am I going to find today?!?
I don't wanna open the door.



GASPI!



Los Angeles Times
LAPD SUCCESSFUL CRACKDOWN
ON DRUGS AND PROSTITUTION

3:00 PM



Hey! I'm Lane. Thanks for keeping the lake clean so I can enjoy and catch lunch!



Hey! I'm Mark. Looks like you have a lot to eat!



Bathrooms are done. Now time to check out the lake.



Will be delicious! Thanks again for your hard work!



Happy to do it! Love seeing people enjoying the park.



**"BIG SERG" SAYS WATER IS DIRTY BUT FISHES ANYWAY
CAN'T EAT FISH FROM WATER**
L.A. 101

I just wish it could be cleaner.



GAG!



Can't do much until the city puts in the new pump. Time for trash I guess...

4:00 PM

I just love how CLEAN this place is! Brings tears of joy to my eyes.

COME ON! THERE'S A TRASHCAN RIGHT THERE!

SIGH

This park is pretty nice! I wonder how many people it takes to maintain? I've only seen him.

Trash is done. Well, I think that's it for the day. Am I forgetting anything?

HOW'S THERE ALWAYS MORE!?!?

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

On May 25, 2019, city officials and volunteers cleaned up MacArthur Park for National Public Works Week.

Are you okay?

I guess, I'm just done with my shift and there's still a lot left messy.

Oh... Well, I guess I could throw my stuff in the trash next time.

That would be a big help! It's everyone's job to keep the park clean.

You're right! Everyone and every day, not just once a year or you alone.



5:00 PM

Four hours really isn't enough to take care of this place. Hopefully everyone can still enjoy it and see for themselves what this park is.



Why Parks & Rec are Essential Public Services

-Parks are the places that people go to get healthy and stay fit.

-Parks and recreation programs and services contribute to the health of children, youth, adults, and seniors.

-Parks and protected public lands are proven to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, produce habitat for wildlife, and provide a place for children and families to connect with nature and recreate outdoors together.

-Parks are a tangible reflection of the quality of life in a community. They provide identity for citizens and are a major factor in the perception of quality of life in a given community.

(source: National Recreation and Parks Assn)





Team "Fab 5"

Wesley Wei-Shih Lin, Roya Chagnon, Cristina Vázquez, Clayton McKee,
and Suzanne Cafilisch

This fotonovela follows Mark, a sanitation worker in MacArthur Park whose typical workday includes cleaning public restrooms, checking lake water quality, and collecting trash and litter across various park spaces. By following Mark through his daily routine, the reader gains a window into the extant park spaces and sanitation infrastructure of MacArthur Park: bathrooms, trash cans, and resources from the lake. In addition to providing a lens on various physical spaces within the park, Mark also asserts his own agency upon the landscape. Through spoken remarks, embodied thoughts, and body language, Mark's character expresses a view of MacArthur Park as an unsanitary, unclean place. Expanding from Mary Douglas's theory of "dirt as matter out of place", one understands these critiques as intertwined with moral judgement levied against park users, including marginalized groups like unhoused persons, immigrants, low income community members, and sex workers.

As Mark moves through MacArthur's physical space, however, his encounters with park patrons expose counter-narratives that complicate the dominant discourse on MacArthur Park as a site of filth. Walking along a row of park benches Mark passes Tiranny, an unhoused person who proclaims the lake to be a space of rejuvenation and health. While passing by the lake Mark encounters Lane, a fisherman who frequents the park to catch fish for his daily lunch. Elements of magical realism further augment and satirize the hysterical 'park as site of filth' narrative. To Mark's horror, just-emptied trash cans suddenly groan under the weight of garbage overflow. A pile of needles tumbles out of a bathroom stall, eliciting his shock and disgust. Then again, the fantasy only stretches so far: Mark's encounter with a floating dismembered fish reminds the reader of unaddressed sanitation issues in MacArthur Park that require no embellishment.

Ultimately, the interplay of uncensored reality and altered image exposes the dynamic and sometimes radically conflicting views of the park: MacArthur as a site of filth and MacArthur as a site of community. These realities coexist and endure in the imaginations and narratives of park users and workers. Their collision within the pages of the fotonovela prompts an interrogation of "sanitation" as a subjective construct. By exposing various diverging narratives on cleanliness and sanitation in MacArthur Park, the fotonovela problematizes a singular conception of sanitation and allows the reader to reenvision the park as a space of community, while also contemplating future utilities improvements.

All personal statements (in green), media headlines (in red), and official records (in yellow) are direct quotes gathered during research and fieldwork.