

Having a nice time here in Portlandia so far. Got to bed at 9:00 PST last night, so dang tired after having got up at 4:00 CST to get to the plane.

Lunch was [Pok Pok](#), a Thai (mostly) restaurant my brother recommended. James Beard nominated even. Had a fabulous bowl of *Kuaytiaw Reus* (Boat Noodles), which is a rich broth with stewed beef, poached beef, meatballs (little tiny, dense, things), spinach, chilies and bean sprouts, with noodles. Yum! Along side I had an order of their Vietnamese Fish Sauce Wings, which my brother said were to die for, and he was right. These are large wings, (willingly given up by their former, naturally raised owners) marinated in fish sauce and palm sugar, deep fried, and then tossed in caramelized Phu Quec fish sauce and garlic. Wow! Could only eat half the order, though. So much food.



*Vietnamese Fish Sauce Wings - Pok Pok*

Then off to [Portland Art Museum](#), which has a fairly rich collection. Many donations from the likes of the Broad Foundation, Paul Allen Foundation, some Ayers family trusts and foundations, etc. A lot of contemporary art, as well as the normal smattering of French schools, Impressionists, Abstract Expressionists, etc.

There was a lovely exhibition "[In The Studio: Reflections on Artistic Life](#)", on display through May 19th. This exhibit features multiple media representations of the artists life in his/her atelier, with models, materials, influences, mentors, gallerists, agents, etc. All aspects of what actually goes in to being an artist. I really loved all the Red Grooms pieces, of which there were many, including some of his 3D Lithography pieces.

Also, a very large collection of Asian arts. My favorite was the soon-to-close [exhibit on Noh](#), the ancient Japanese theatrical form of the Samurai. This exhibit featured masks, costumes and painted depictions of Noh, both modern and historic. A very nice 2 and a half hours of browsing after lunch.



*Jackson in Action - Red Grooms, 1997*



*Ayakashi (Vengeful Warrior) - Unknown Artist,*

*Japan, 17th century*

I then went in search of a new power screwdriver, to replace the DeWalt 12V electric screwdriver which was confiscated by TSA agents.

No, really. I didn't know you couldn't bring one in carry-on. To be perfectly honest, I didn't even really think about it. When I packed, I tried to consciously pack for either checking or carrying on my bag. When I saw how bad the weather was on the way to the airport, I decided to carry on, in case I ended up missing my (very tight) connecting flight in Denver. After standing in the longest security line I've ever experienced (at MKE or anywhere) I was told I could either give up the screw driver or go back and check my bag. Well, at that point I would have missed my flight (I ended up getting to the gate just as they made my boarding call) so I gave it up.

I started with a small, local, hardware store, but they didn't have that model. They sent me to the DeWalt store (yes, they have one here) or the "Home Depot", but thanked me for trying their small store first. I was headed to the DeWalt shop, but saw a Home Depot on the way, right next to my hotel, so stopped there, hopeful that they would still have one of last year's models, as I still have the batteries, charger and other accessories of the lost tool, I wanted to get the same kind.

In the process, I ended up driving from NE (airport) to SW (Pok Pok) to Downtown (Art Museum) to N Central (Hardware) to NE (Hotel) — pretty much making a circuit of the city, mostly on surface streets. That was a treat.

Dinner took me to a nearby hotel which has a nice-enough restaurant attached, Shilo, as I didn't want to drive after having a cocktail. It's not as though Portland has any want of bars, taverns, cocktail lounges, etc. The demon alcohol lays comfortably here. The prevailing impression I have of the city, based on what I've seen so far, is of a really big version of our own Riverwest community, with coops, coffee shops, bars, taverns, brewing clubs (coffee and beer), bicycle shops (and coops), skateboard and moto clubs and shops, etc. Lots of bungalows and ranch houses, all very low and surrounded by verdure.

Anyhow, had some crab cakes, which were okay, along with Happy Hour discounted coconut shrimp and a Caesar salad. That, along with a couple of Martinis made with the local The Rogue (hat tip to Sarah Pallin) sealed things nicely, for a manageable \$42 + tip.

One observation is that it is sometimes hard to tell the upright citizenry from the large homeless population — the preferred dress is strikingly similar. It's not unusual to see someone in a nice establishment who you would swear you recently saw pan-handling on the street. Maybe they are the same, who's to say...