

Sunday, February 12th – Sunday, February 19th

Greetings from Jingdezhen, China! I'm hanging out while my fabulous artist of a wife is making molds, sculptures, and other crazy things. I'm (slowly) getting photos uploaded and sorted so I am going to try to get caught up on some posts in between exploring things here. Now back to your regularly (un)scheduled blog...

I returned for a second week in Tucson. This time I stayed closer to downtown in an Airbnb decorated from the leftovers of a chameleon themed art museum which the host had previously run (of course that's why I chose it!). At least one NSFW photo of a chameleon ahead. I live a strange life.



Barrio Viejo – I'm a fan of the many murals in this part of the world.

Monday afternoon I wandered a few blocks over to the colorful Barrio Historico (historic neighborhood) area. People have painted their houses all kinds of fabulous colors, so it's a fun area to explore (mural above is from that general area, too).

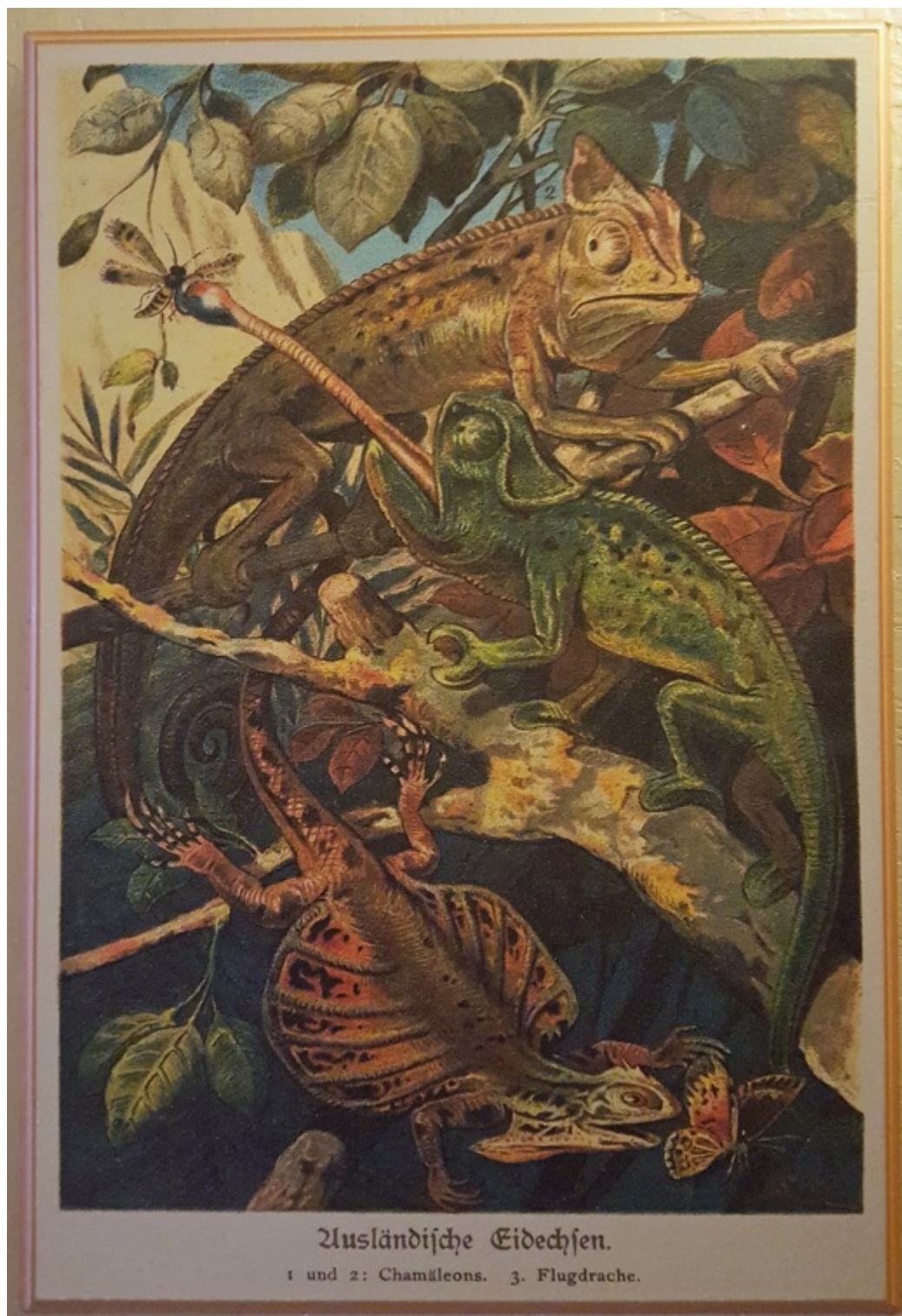


The Many Colors of the Barrio Historico

I also managed to snap a few photos of the not-as-historical house I was staying in, because I know you want pictures of random stuff featuring chameleons:



Kitchen Chameleon Guardian



Scientific prints of chameleons like to feature their crazy bug-catching tongue.



Chameleon themed masks!



I can go on like this for a while.



Ok, one last photo of some smaller trinkets. The museum had been located on an old colonial island of France, but when economic troubles reduced national funding for the arts, the museum had to fold.



Zorro!

Last picture from the place is Zorro, the house dog. He slept outside and was happy to keep me company whenever I was around and working during the day or lounging in the evening. I didn't check if there was a chameleon on his collar, but even the outside of the house had sculptures and signs up.

Tuesday I decided to do a small hike and check out Big "A" Mountain / Sentinel Peak. This is a hill you can see from downtown with a big white "A" on the side.



The Big "A" from above (downtown in the background). You can also see some desert rain.



Cactus Blooms on Sentinel Peak

It's called Sentinel Peak from when guards would sit atop it to keep an eye out and then run down to warn the town if trouble was approaching. There are some short trails at the top; easy hikes and neat views of Tucson sprawling all around. On the way home I stopped by El Tiradito!



El Tiradito



"This is the only shrine in the United States dedicated to the soul of a sinner buried in unconsecrated ground. It is affectionately called "El Tiradito" - the castaway. The

many legends about its origin all involve a tragic love affair in the early 1870s. The mysterious powers of “El Tiradito” are still an important part of local Mexican lore and culture. This site is on the National Register of Historic Places.”



Mural near El Tiradito

On Wednesday I headed downtown to walk the Turquoise Trail. This is a neat, 2.5 mile path painted on the sidewalks and guides you through many of the historical spots downtown. It's one of my favorite guides to a city I've seen.



The trail starts at the historic presidio, a reconstruction (on the original grounds) and small museum discussing the fortification setup of the early town. It's nestled among the taller, modern buildings of downtown Tucson.

There are signs discussing the ramifications of Mexico's war of independence from Spain. This helped Tucson originally as local control increased but then funding for frontier forts went away and the Spanish policy of providing rations to the Apache in exchange for peace stopped. Many Apache returned to raiding, devastating much of the European frontier. Tucson's combination of presidio walls and the fact that the local Apaches (Apache Monso) remained as allies and defenders made it one of the only cities in the area. By the 1830's it was just over half Apache, the peaceful combination of cultures is one of the fascinating parts of Tucson's history.



These guys again! I keep stumbling upon evidence of the Mormon Battalion; this a statue erected to commemorate their stop at Tucson. Tucson was part of Mexico at

the time, so residents were wary, but the Mormons were mostly interested in trading for food and everyone apparently came away happy.



"Soldado de Cuera" subtitled: "Leather-jacketed Presidio Soldier" by Buck McCain, 1987.



Wander is Wonder



I do my explorations in the evenings, which makes trying to take a western-facing shot of Big "A" Mountain a difficult task. The hill on the left is Sentinel Peak.

Thursday I wandered back downtown after dark, trying to catch a flamenco guitarist. I caught him setting up for 45 minutes with the only end in sight being my cocktail, so I wandered off to explore on my own.



Cowboy

Some neon out back of Hotel Congress.



Cowgirl



"Forget Me Not"

I ended up dining and sampling a locally brewery, hanging out with some locals and watching one of the Universities of Arizona basketball teams beat up on the competition. On Friday I took the scooter up nearby Mt. Lemmon!



Heading up and around.

Return to Tucson





It was a fun and scenic ride.

Return to Tucson





High Up Hoodoos



After a while it started to get very cold.



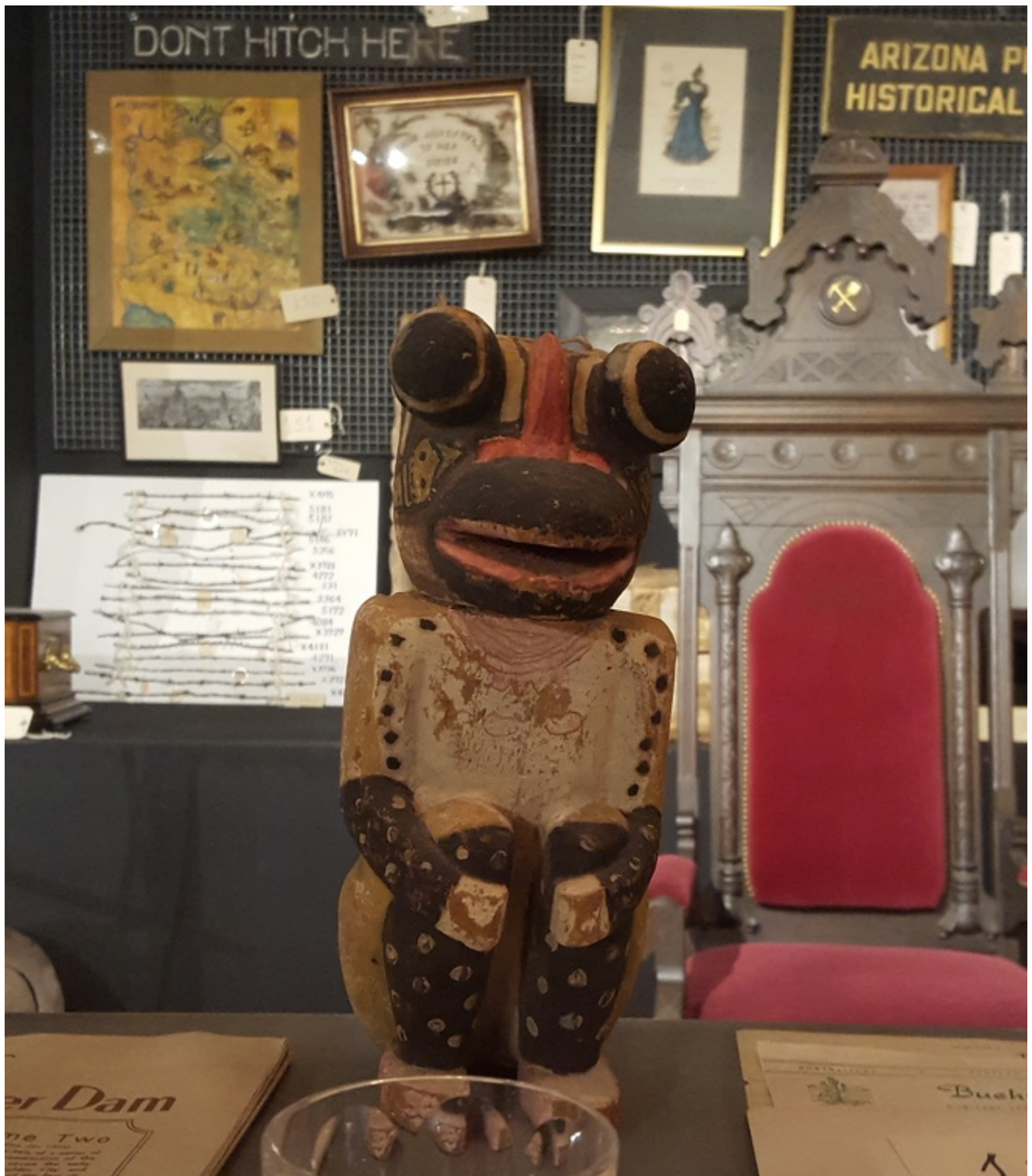
Lower down, on the way back out.

At some point I decided I was cold enough so pulled onto the shoulder, avoided more ice (there was a fair amount of snow up there) and headed back to the warmer valley. I was near the observatory, one of the reasons that Tucson keeps itself relatively dark.

The next day was Saturday so I had time to do some exploring during the day. I spent a fair amount of time getting ready for my upcoming trip to China, and in the afternoon I wanted to get out of the house and check out the Arizona History Museum on the University of Arizona's campus. As I neared the parking garage something odd started to happen.



The locals were clearly attempting to be pleased about the rain and not just annoyed at how soaked we all were.



Hopi Kachina Doll probably created to be sold to tourists.



I am a fan of whomever designed the fun games for children.

Local Legend Strangled Bobcat



Goldie Tracy, who moved to the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation in 1926 with her husband Marion, saved her spouse's life by strangling an attacking bobcat. The couple trapped small mammals to supplement their trading post income, walking an eight mile trap line daily. When a bobcat jumped onto Marion's back and began to "claw and chaw him", Goldie who, at six feet, towered above him, squeezed the bobcat's neck. Both were badly injured; Marion needed two weeks to recover. Goldie's home remedy of vinegar and salt poultices helped. They didn't sell this cat's pelt, but displayed it in the store.



Bobcat pelt donated by Neil Sutherland



Photos courtesy of Carolyn O'Bagy Davis

Legendary Bobcat Strangler

They had some great quilts up, here are a couple squares:



Saguaro Blooms



Oopsie



Mining is Risky Work!

There is also a big room on mining, but the museum was closing by this point so I had to get out. Fortunately the University of Arizona Museum of Art was just a few blocks away and open for another hour!



"Sketch for the Monument for du Luth I", 1963.



"Chasma Boreale" by Jamie Molaro (paper) - this was part of an exhibit on data driven art



"Las Bras" by Pablo Picasso, 1959 - I really like the fingernails.



"The City" by Edward Hopper, 1927 (Oil on canvas). My mother had recently given me a book of short stories each based on a painting by Hopper so this was fun to see.



"Red Canna" by Georgia O'Keeffe, 1925-1928 (Oil on canvas mounted on masonite).



"Zwei Reiter vor Rot" by Wassily Kandinsky, 1911 (woodcut). Part of an exhibit of art deemed monstrous by Nazi Germany.



"Rape of Europa" by Jacques Lipchitz, 1969 (Marble) & "Blue Geisha" Jerry Peart, 1985 (Aluminum with Paint). The museum notes how "Blue Geisha" is a "perfect

representation of the University of Arizona colors.” And chooses to juxtapose it with “Rape of Europa”.



"Standing Woman with Hands on Her Face" by Francisco Zuniga, 1976.

On Sunday I headed out, across the desert to an old home: San Diego. Christy and I lived there for a handful of years and I was looking forward to being back. It had been my original goal to get there around Christmas, but then I decided to scooter instead of fly back to Ohio and turned around when I hit LA.

The rainstorms were solid all morning, and continued through most of my drive, the clouds eventually dispersing as I entered California.



Cloud break.

I thankfully shed my rain gear and some of my warm clothes and basked in the relative heat as the clouds became fewer and fewer. Until I hit the mountains. Then I spent two very long hours riding in the chilly mist, with visibility dropping and my teeth chattering. I had forgotten how long it takes to get through the mountain range, and arrived in San Diego

chilled, tired and open to a cold which I'd spend most of the next week getting over. I was relieved to have made it home.