



Five Port Townsend high school students collaborated to create "Depths of the Ocean," a wearable art piece. The creative expression includes a boat, fish caught on fishing line and netting. Artists include, from left, Mark Anderson, ninth grade; Matthew McColl, 11th grade; model Owen Smith, 10th grade; Maximus Villagran, 10th grade; and Chris Lott, ninth grade. The students plan to be part of the Port Townsend Wearable Art Student Show on Nov. 3 at Key City Public Theatre. (Jeannie McMacken/Peninsula Daily News)

Port Townsend students make wearable art

By Jeannie McMacken

Sunday, October 21, 2018 1:04pm | [NEWS](#) [JEFFERSON COUNTY](#)

PORT TOWNSEND — The portable art classroom at Port Townsend High School was abuzz with activity as students put finishing touches on their wearable art class projects.

Students on Thursday perfected the work they began three weeks ago.

Michele Soderstrom, art teacher for the high school, said the creative experience has been widely accepted by the students this year.

"The theme is 'Maritime,'" Soderstrom said.

“That could mean anything from a jellyfish that lives in the water to a steering wheel of a boat, to a wave — or an octopus. Anything water-based,” she said. “It’s also part of the Port Townsend School District’s place-based learning. We like to mix in the maritime component.”

Helping to teach the idea of wearable art is Margie McDonald, artist-in-residence for the Port Townsend schools. McDonald has been working with students for eight years as a mentor through a sponsorship by PT Artscape.

“This is our sixth time doing wearable art in the classroom,” MacDonald said. “This year, one of the big differences I see is that everyone is willing to make wearable art. No one is balking at it saying, ‘it’s fashion and I don’t want to do fashion.’

“They see it as sculpture for the body.”

McDonald said students always came in and got right to work on their creations.

“The fact is that no one is hesitant in building a piece. A lot of them want to participate in the show at Key City,” she said.

The Port Townsend Wearable Art Student Show is set for Saturday, Nov. 3, with shows at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. at Key City Public Theatre, 419 Washington St.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at the theater’s website at www.keycitypublictheater.org or at the door if space is available.

Proceeds from the show, which is sponsored by Sunrise Coffee Co., will be split between Key City Public Theater and the Jefferson County Community Foundation Fund for Women & Girls.

Prize money for the students is sponsored by Waste Not Want Not. First prize is \$100, second is \$50 and third is \$25.

Soderstrom said the students are mostly working in teams of two to five members.

“Before they started making their wearable art, they drew a picture of what they wanted it to look like in the end,” Soderstrom said. “Some of them have changed that original concept and it morphed into something else.”

Most of the materials for the artworks are gathered by MacDonald throughout the year. Donations of fabrics and recycled materials are used for the projects. This year, a large roll of cardboard was donated by PT Artscape and scraps of material were donated by Haase & Company Port Townsend Sails.

Creations are being engineered with cardboard, paper, wire, fabric, paper mache, bubble wrap, plastic, a life vest, yarn, foam and paint.

Soderstrom said students self-grade their work and then provide input as to their experiences.

Kim Nunes, program coordinator for PT Artscape said this project is part of the art education the group funds for kindergarten-through-12th-grade students.

“We bring Margie and Jesse Watson in the classroom and put on ArtWave,” said Nunes, referring to the student art display found in store fronts uptown and downtown during May.

”Funding for the past 20 years has been through the Washington State Arts Commission. We also do some of our own fundraising. The funds pay for the instructors and coordinators.”

Mary Rothschild, a member of the Fund for Women & Girls, said her grandson, junior Matt McColl, has passions that run to boat building and marine engineering.

“He grumbled a bit that he even had to take an art class this year,” Rothschild said. “We assured him that art not only is fun, but that creative expression will continue to be essential to his career pursuits.

“He reports that he has loved trying to come up with wearable art and now sees the connections between crafting a vessel that can float and assembling a costume that will hold together down a runway. He’s loved the class.”

Jefferson County Editor/Reporter Jeannie McMacken can be reached at 360-385-2335 or at jmcmacken@peninsuladailynews.com.



© 2018, Peninsula Daily News and Sound Publishing, Inc.

[Subscribe](#) | [Sign-Up for Peninsula Daily News Newsletters](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#)