



Teaching artist Margie McDonald and Port Townsend High School art teacher Michele Soderstrom worked with students on art panels to be posted through May around Uptown and downtown Port Townsend. The panels are part of the Art Wave! exhibition, which raises awareness and funds for arts education in Port Townsend schools. (Diane Urbani de la Paz/Peninsula Daily News)

Young artists' creations grace windows

Panels depicting emotions, wild face masks on view

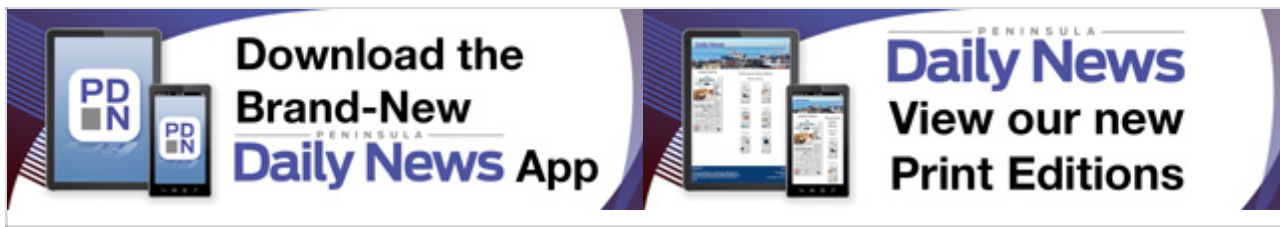
By Diane Urbani de la Paz

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PORT TOWNSEND — Margie McDonald has seen — and created — a lot when it comes to art.

A sculptor, a builder of outfits for past Port Townsend Wearable Art Shows and a teaching artist, she's wowed by this year's crop from area students.

Now, as the month of May begins, McDonald and her art teacher compatriots are seeing those youngsters' work fill the windows of businesses around town.



PT Artscape, the education program is in its 23rd year involving kindergartners through high-schoolers, and the teachers are bringing students' homemade creations out into the open.

Dozens of panels are being posted in the historic districts of uptown and downtown Port Townsend in what's called Art Wave!, turning storefronts into a progressive art gallery.

Business people signed up in recent weeks to display the work via the Main Street Program (PTMainstreet.org).

In each panel, Salish Coast Elementary, Blue Heron Middle School and Port Townsend High School students have created a kind of montage, expressing thoughts and feelings about the school year.

On one panel, images of a cellphone, wildflowers and the Zoom symbol share space with the words "lonely," "bored," "doubtful," "passion" and "FaceTime."

Then there's the "beyond the edge of the mask" project.

McDonald, along with Port Townsend High School art teacher Michele Soderstrom, provided materials for students to fashion face coverings that are unlike anything seen on the streets these days.

The collection of masks, in all their full-color glory, are set to be installed today in the window of Olympic Art and Office, 220 Taylor St., to stay through May.

McDonald and Soderstrom marveled at the creations that came in: a green, leafy salad of a mask by Jesse Kithcart; a porcine face by A.J. Small; a fluffy white cat visage by Finn Waibel; a flaming-blue sculpture from Taylor Sue Germeau and a black-and-red mask studded with playing cards by Britany Bivian-Santos.

While a state Arts Commission grant originally funded PT Artscape, the ongoing program needs local support, so select businesses have set out donation jars.

Throughout May, people can use them to contribute to arts education in Port Townsend schools.

“We’ve been real big on buying supplies,” said McDonald, adding that students received markers, colored pencils, construction paper and other materials to use at home this past winter.

Yet another at-home art activity is available to people of all ages, she said: PT Artscape has posted a series of videos online featuring well-known painter and local resident Jesse Joshua Watson.

Titled “Acrylic with Jesse,” the short lessons can be found by searching Vimeo.com for “PT Artscape.”

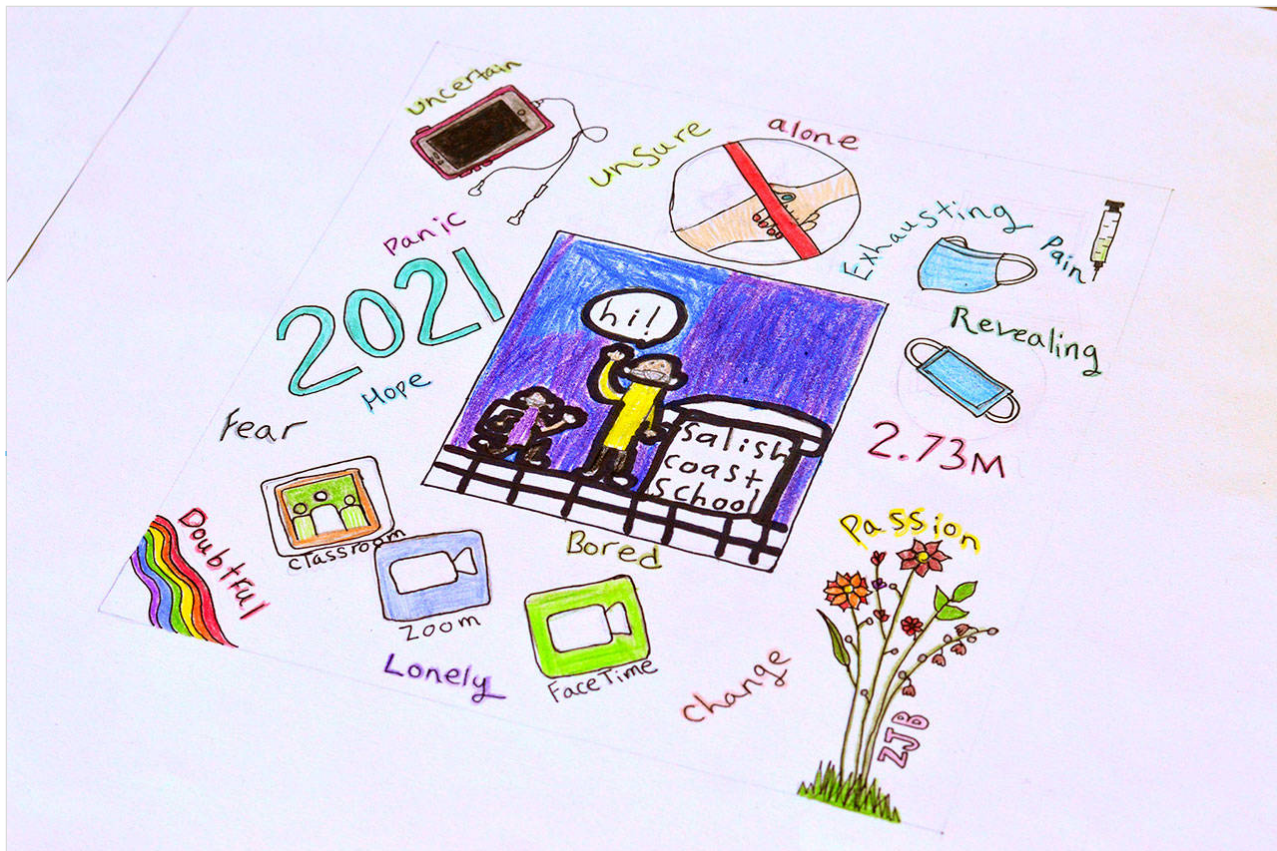
“Anybody can watch,” McDonald said, while Watson adds that simple supplies — a paper plate, a few brushes and acrylic colors — work just fine for home projects.

For more about the program and its history, see PTArtscape.com.

Jefferson County senior reporter Diane Urbani de la Paz can be reached at 360-417-3509 or urbanidelapaz@peninsuladailynews.com.



Port Townsend High School art teacher Michele Soderstrom, left, and teaching artist Margie McDonald admire a few examples of students' "beyond the edge of the mask" creations. The full collection of masks will go on display through May at Port Townsend's Olympic Art and Office. (Diane Urbani de la Paz/Peninsula Daily News)



An Art Wave! panel, featuring images by Salish Coast Elementary and Blue Heron Middle School students, awaits another layer from Port Townsend High School artists. (Diane Urbani de la Paz/Peninsula Daily News)

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