

SOQS founder is 45th anniversary featured artist

By Jodi Schneider
Correspondent

Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show (SOQS), the world's largest outdoor quilt show in the world will be reinvented into a virtual experience in light of the COVID-19 restrictions. There will also be fiber arts on display in the Clearwater Gallery honoring Jean Wells Keenan's work as the Featured Gallery Artist for the 45th SOQS anniversary.

Clearwater Gallery in Sisters showcases a brilliant display of regional and local artists whose works represent a variety of artistic mediums.

Local artist Dan Rickards, co-owner of Clearwater Gallery, said that the one thing that stands out about Jean is that she is exceptionally forward-thinking.

"She's been doing the quilt show for 45 years and she still continues to push the edge of creative art from a quilting perspective," he said. "Jean gets inspired over something and she finds a way to bring that into fabric, design, and art. She loves quilting and the thread of that is always there, but she will find ways to introduce

new original ideas, and more importantly as an artist, she keeps herself inspired."

Besides Keenan's colorful "Metolius" fish quilted artwork that will be presented in Clearwater Gallery, the gallery will also have a few of Keenan's framed individual stone pieces "Of The Earth" using textured fabric embellished with stitching, all done by hand.

Keenan has collected rocks and has been fascinated by stone configurations her whole life.

"Growing up in Central Oregon, I used to find a lot of interesting rocks. I took those ideas for my work and created abstract designs," she explained.

"Since I was a child I always liked to explore, and I was always picking up rocks. I used to flag for my dad when he was crop dusting, and I would pick up petrified wood over by Madras and kept a collection of those petrified wood-like rocks. I started making quilts that were about stone. I really enjoy seeing the patterning in stone and if you look closely you can see the different colors next to each other."

Most of the work you'll



"I really enjoy the process when I am working and not knowing the end result."
— Jean Wells Keenan

PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER

see of Keenan's has to do with nature, Central Oregon, and just the joy she feels living in the area.

Keenan received a special honor in 2019. She won The Best of Contemporary Quilts from Quilt National presented by The Dairy Barn Arts Center. She entered a

large rock quilt, "No Stone Unturned."

She noted, "I started playing around with rock shapes and stitching and then when I was traveling, I wanted hand work that I could do. So, by the time I got home from a trip, I had about 21 little rock blocks and then

added more rock shapes. I really enjoy the process when I am working and not knowing the end result. I like to have ideas present themselves while I am working. I did quite a bit of hand stitching on that quilt and eventually pieced the rock blocks together."



To Our Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show,

We're excited to view your virtual show, and look forward to seeing you back in person next year!

Let's all shop local and support our Sisters businesses. Thank you!



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