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Craft: She just wants to 'live simply'

Continued from Page 1
 nature for the source of their colors.

"In the past, the connection to color was very intimate," Sullivan said. "Basically, we've been doing fibers before we've been speaking."

Every major culture across the globe found a way to dye with indigo, she explains. These cultures had no contact with each other and developed similar processes to use the difficult dye on their own.

"Everyone had a form," she said. "They all figured out a way to make it work."

Now, natural dyeing is little more than a lost art form. Cheap and easy chemical dyes have made natural dyeing practically obsolete, breaking past ties to the environment.

"The focus in this art is to connect people to the natural world," she says. "A lot of people in the art school consider themselves environmentalists."

Sullivan will present a final project for her bachelor of fine arts degree. She is in her last year of the five-year program, and the project is almost finished.

"I'm canonizing endangered species," she says. "I'm trying to make a sacred space to evoke the spirits. It's a serious thing for me."

She is building altars for four saintly animals: coyote, bear, owl and salmon. Each species represents a region of America,

and each has attributes that make it important to the environment and to humans.

"I think there are many lessons we can learn from the natural world," she says. "I see the four saints as being significant because they are indicators that are talking about the peril of the biosphere."

Her ties to the environment do not end with natural dyeing and fabrics. She is a self-described environmentalist and makes this a guiding light in her life. She moved from Michigan to Oregon before she had even visited this state.

"I really love the mountains, and I wanted to be near the mountains and the oceans," she said. "I love it. I want to spend the rest of my life here. It's the most beautiful place."

Sullivan has practiced many arts in the architecture and allied arts department's fiber school, and it was weaving that originally got her interested in studying fibers. After taking a single class four years ago, she traded her biology major for a fine arts major.

"It was such a shining light for me," she said. "It just inspired me."

Her work has often been rewarded. She was commissioned to dye the costumes used in the 1994 University dance department performance, and received the 1994 Outstanding Environmental Citizen Award from the University. She has

also won two scholarships, both for materials.

Her passion for natural dyeing led her to the National Dye Conference last year. The conference focused on traditional trade dyes, and showed Sullivan that "there's a lot more interest in industry."

The conference also introduced her to Jenny, another natural dyer who lives on the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. They now trade samples of dyes via the mail, including a very special lichen that can be used to produce purple dye.

"We've embarked on this correspondence and I think that's a very exciting thing," Sullivan says.

Sullivan will graduate this spring. She has begun making soap, and might turn that skill into a cottage industry. She used to bake bread, and that could be another career possibility. She has taught nature day camps and might pursue a teaching career. Right now, the possibilities seem endless.

"I want to be living in a simple way," she said. "I don't want to go to New York and be a major force in the art world. The best thing for me is to live simply and impact the Earth as little as possible."

At this, she smiled warmly and pointed to an indigo scarf she had dyed herself.

"I'd like to always be weaving and always be dyeing."

POLICE BEAT

■ A University Inn resident reported \$450 worth of damage to her BMW on Feb. 2. A police report also indicated that \$1,280 worth of personal property was stolen. The automobile damages included a slashed convertible top, broken lock and lid, gashed interior side panels and a missing glove box. Items stolen from the car included a cellular phone, compact discs, a jacket and Gortex outerwear.

■ A Hamilton dormitory resident reported last week that his bike was stolen sometime between Feb. 4 and Feb. 6. Thieves cut the Kryptonite lock to get to the bike.

■ A 20-year-old University student reported a theft of his wallet on Feb. 7. The student lost his wallet around the 500 block of East 15th Ave. between Jan. 24 and Jan. 25. The

student searched the area but could not locate it. The value of the wallet was \$10, but the student later discovered that his Visa card was being used.

■ A University student told authorities on Feb. 7 that her compact disc player worth \$200 was taken from her car in the Bean parking lot. The suspect or suspects entered through an unlocked door and rummaged through the compact discs, but none were taken.

■ A 17-year-old juvenile was cited on Feb. 8 for possession of less than an ounce of marijuana and theft in the East 13th Avenue area.

■ A 30-year-old unemployed man was cited for unlawful delivery of a controlled substance and trespassing on Feb. 8. A further search of the man's backpack revealed four bags

of marijuana. Authorities caught the man yelling at a 17-year-old youth in an alleyway between East 13th and 14th avenues between Alder and Hilliard streets. The 17-year-old involved in the encounter was cited for theft and possession of less than an ounce of marijuana.

After interviewing the youth, police discovered he had allegedly stolen two bags of marijuana worth \$90 from the man during a suspected drug transaction. Police reports said the man started chasing the youth and his two friends after getting heated. The man said he was selling drugs to supplement his unemployment income.

The youth told police he had no intention of paying for the drugs and was in the area to steal marijuana from a dealer.

COLLOQUIUM Russian Universities in a Time of Rapid Change

Three visiting scholars from Russia, who are on sabbatical at the UO during the 1995-96 academic year, will present their views on the Changes in Russian Higher Education

Tuesday, February 13, 1996
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