



TODD COOPER

Eugene has its fair share of hippie-fueled amazingness, from The Kiva to the Oregon Country Fair – and now BRING Recycling Center's Chapel of Second Chances, which might be the most cohesively "Eugene" thing of all.

The chapel, which was erected in BRING's Garden of Earthly Delights between September 2009 and last summer, is the long-lasting project of local artist Jud Turner. Turner's use of recycled and

found objects in his sculptures caught the attention of BRING directors, who initially recruited him to appropriate commissions. However, Turner soon expressed his desire to sculpt for the Garden. He found himself with the task of constructing a backdrop sculpture for the chapel and took to it with found materials from BRING's market.

Turner's sculpture draws on many important aspects of modern society. Religious solidarity, sustainability and

personal relationship are all themes integrated as part of the whole. The chapel, which has been designated exclusively for vow renewal or "recycling," sits in the middle of a recycling center. Not a regular venue for events of this type, sure, but there's more to it. The environmental narrative serves as a motif for renewal and rebirth – concepts that mesh with reaffirming one's values and love for another.

"This is the Chapel of Second Chances," says Turner. "It's not just that you're renewing your wedding vows; it's that recycling is really the second chance of humanity to avoid catastrophic damage to the Earth."

The chapel, which won't be open to the public until late spring or early summer, has already hosted vow renewals for a few close friends of BRING. Turner's parents were one of those couples. After Anne Turner lost her wedding band, she and her husband, Jack, used the chapel, which they had been viewing since its groundbreaking, to reaffirm their vows after 42 years of marriage. For them, their son's ecumenical integration of multiple world religious symbols into the sculpture lent a welcoming, inclusive feel to the ceremony.

"I'm not a Catholic, so if I go into a Catholic church, I feel like a stranger there and cannot be included in all things Catholic," says Jack. "That's true for pretty much any religion. Unless you join them, you're not really one of them. One of the things Jud was trying to do with the art on the wall was to be inclusive. So you belong there whether you're an atheist or whatever the other extreme is. And it works!"

The sculptural backdrop of the chapel, which is harnessed to a concrete supporting wall, displays the imagery of at least 12 different world religions and symbols of atheists and pagans. Turner wanted to

toy with the idea that a chapel has a very implied Western religious connotation, and he also wanted to expand that meaning to a broader range of spiritual practices. Finally, the artist wanted to incorporate the fact that almost every religious tradition holds to some aspect of environmental conservation.

"Yes, there is this catastrophic situation that we have all created through our different modes of consumption and selfishness," Turner says, "and we have this limited chance to rally together and do something about it – and one way we can do that is by just embracing our different faith traditions and the element that says 'Take care of the Earth.'"

Tita and Mark Evans-Santini, who are also close with the BRING family, "recycled" their vows after 30 years of marriage in Eugene. Just as a found object's identity is re-appropriated or a glass bottle is reconstituted as sand then new glass, they found recycling vows at BRING to be like rediscovering and reaffirming each other's values and individual development. Mark, a recycling junkie, says, "We renewed [our vows] or we recycled them in the sense that we've gone through a certain cycle of our vows and we're going to recycle, go back to the early stages and renew those."

Traveling around the world has garnered them a realistic perspective of the world's environmental crisis and lack of consciousness. "It's recycling utopia in a way," Tita says of Eugene and Oregon, "and we forget that the majority of the world is not that way."

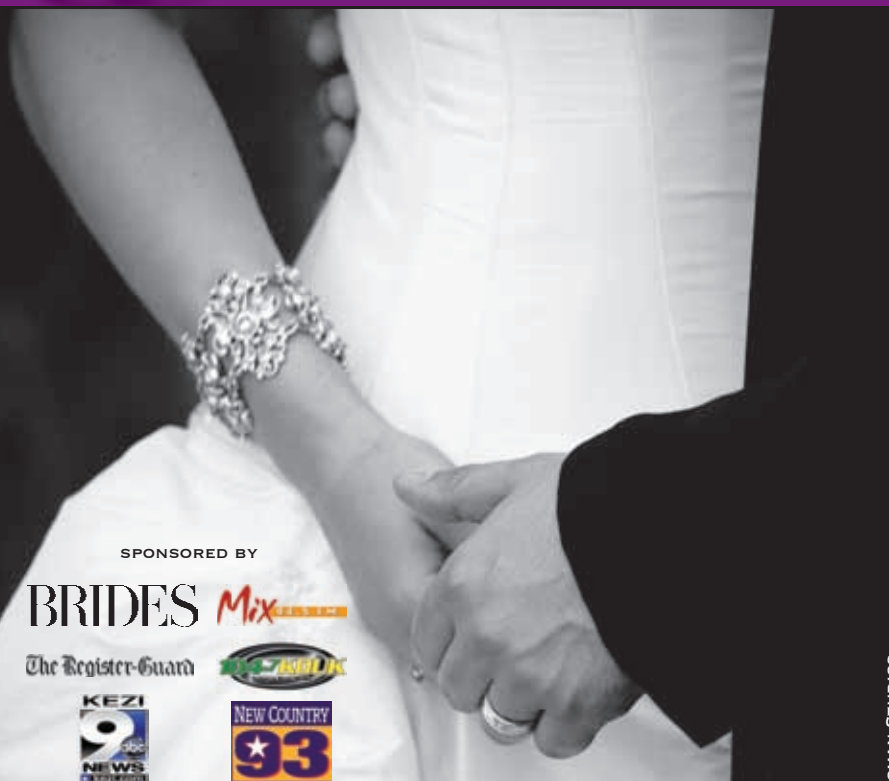
Turner's art expresses a message that might be better placed in an industrial complex or a decapitated rainforest. But here it serves as a testament to our ethos, our inclusion and our amazing local artists.

For more on the Chapel of Second Chances, contact BRING at 746-3023 or www.bringrecycling.org



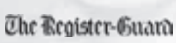
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