

HiiH: Their lights illuminate places from Portland to New York

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“We usually beat it for about an hour,” said Quàng, who sends the sheets through a Hollander beater used to turn the fiber into paper pulp.

After mixing the abaca and cotton pulp, he places the mixture on a mold and deckle, the frame used to form pulp into paper sheets.

The wet sheets of newly made paper are carefully removed from the mold and deckle and placed between nylon couching (pronounced “cooshing”) sheets to dry. Quàng also uses an 8-ton press to compress the fibers of the sheets.

Meanwhile, he makes armatures of wire and bamboo that represent the skeleton of HiiH Lights’ sconces, ceiling fixtures, table lamps, standing lamps, pendants, chandeliers and large lighting installation pieces. Using no glue, he carefully applies sheets of damp paper to the armatures, using a soft brush to fold the sheets around the frame and back around each other to bond the fibers.

Gates then takes over the decoration of the light fixtures, using acrylic airbrush paint, walnut dye, indigo dye and other paints to decorate the pieces.

Quàng finally covers the light fixture in a thin layer of damar resin and beeswax.

“It adds another layer of strength and makes the lamps translucent,” said Quàng, who finishes by installing the electrical components of the pieces.

Nationally known

“The form allows us to create pieces that really come out of our client’s imaginations,” said Gates of HiiH (pronounced “hi hi”) Lights, which gets more than half its daily business through commissions.

The armature for the lights can be any form, shape or size. Often inspiration comes from flowers, sea creatures, insects or an Asian aesthetic.

“Sometimes people don’t have a clear idea,” added Gates, “and we go into their space and help figure out what works well.”

Their lights illuminate



Lâm Quàng stands near his work bench in the HiiH Lights barn studio Tuesday.

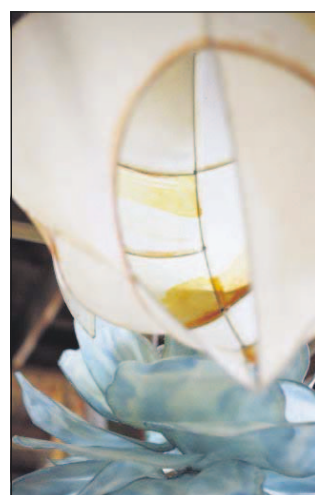


JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Lâm Quàng lays a piece of cloth over paper pulp before pressing it into a paper sheet with an 8-ton press. More photos online at www.dailyastorian.com

restaurants, bars, offices, studios, spas and private homes throughout Portland and as far away as the Nobu Japanese Restaurant inside Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. They’re found in galleries from Seattle and Portland to Berkeley, Calif., and Reno, Nev. They’ve even done set pieces for the revamp of “Madame Butterfly” by the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.

Locally, HiiH Lights has been commissioned to create lighting fixtures for The Blue Scorcher Bakery Cafe and Clemente’s new location at the 14th Street Pilot Station. Their pieces are shown at the RiverSea Gallery, and they’re readying lights for Fort George Brewery’s Festival of the Dark Arts on Valentine’s Day, a week before their own grand opening.



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Lights hang in the HiiH Lights barn studio Dec. 30.

got burned out with office work. He moved to Portland with a friend and worked in the restaurant industry, until he saw someone making some crude paper.

“I had no goals other than wanting to experiment with it,” said Quàng, who quickly found a space in the Alberta Arts District and quit his restaurant job four months into his new career track.

Gates said she and Quàng met at a New Year’s Eve Party in 2004. “He asked me if I wanted to make lamps.”

The two had been looking toward the country life for some time. They liked the natural beauty of the North Coast, along with the close-knit community.

The Lewis and Clark property included a barn, rebuilt on its original footing seven years ago, the right work and living space for Quàng, Gates and their two children, Xanh, 7, and Mai Linh, 3.

Many big events in their lives center on the new year, be it their 2004 meeting or the opening of the original HiiH Gallery in Portland a day after the Lunar New Year in 1998. Opening the barn in Astoria Feb. 21, two days after the coming Lunar New Year, fits the cycle.

The couple is available by appointment and online at <http://hiih-lights.myshopify.com>



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Kestrel Gates, right, paints a light in the barn studio. Gates met Lâm Quàng New Year’s Eve 2004 and joined HiiH Lights in 2005.

Paper lights work for such a diverse clientele, said Quàng, because they can be customized for any space, event or bit of imagination. And through its Internet presence, Gates added, their physical location isn’t as important.

Back to the light

Although the lights he creates remind him of the

Moon Festivals of his native Vietnam, Quàng had a roundabout journey to the art.

He left South Vietnam on a plane with his mother and two siblings in 1975, as the Vietnam War was winding down, to live with his American stepfather in Michigan. Out of high school, he studied computers, eventually traveling to Texas, where he

Uniontown: ‘Right now we’re still looking at what this will be’

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how important and iconic the bridge is to the community. Obstructing views, he said, is like going out on the Staten Island Ferry in New York and finding fried dough stands surrounding the Statue of Liberty.

Jan Mitchell, a retired city planner, spoke of the potential for Astoria to become like Carmel or Newport Beach, Calif., pricey enclaves for the wealthy and tourists.

Others, however, urged against an emotional overreaction to what is essentially an attempt by the city to improve land use along the river. The first phase of the four-leg Riverfront Vision Plan — the Civic Greenway, which runs roughly from 16th Street to 39th Street — was approved by the City Council in October and includes restrictions on development over the water that were sought by preservationists.

Jon Englund, the president of Englund Marine & Indus-



Daily Astorian file

The Astoria Bridge seen at night in mid-October 2012. Residents voiced concerns about impeding the views in the Uniontown area.

trial Supply, warned against “crying wolf” when no specific development projects have been proposed.

The city’s preliminary concepts for the Bridge Vista phase presume some greater development over the river near the bridge, but several developers — including Robert “Jake” Jacob, who designed the Cannery Pier Hotel in Uniontown — said high land costs and government regulatory hurdles

make building on the water prohibitively expensive.

Dave Pearson, the deputy director of the Columbia River Maritime Museum, who serves on the Planning Commission, said afterward that he thought the town hall was productive.

“Right now we’re still looking at what this will be,” he said. “The City Council approved the Riverfront Vision, now we need to build what it’s going to look like.”

Scouts: ‘We wanted it to be kid art’

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fifth-grade Cub Scouts could to the project with little help from the adult leaders.

“We went with swags, because they’re a little easier, because I wanted a lot of the work to be done by the boys to get them involved and give them a sense of ownership in the project,” she said.

Pack leader Jason Schermerhorn provided boughs of hemlock for the swags, which were tied with wire and adorned with red felt ribbons.

Although some Scouts initially had difficulty constructing the swags and tying the bows, they seemed to enjoy the project, and Kautz said she’d like to make it an annual event. The

Scout leaders let the Scouts practice creativity and freedom when making the swags.

“We wanted it to be something the boys did, and not something the adults did just so they could say the boys did it,” Kautz said, adding, “We wanted it to be kid art.”

She likes to pick service projects with a local emphasis so the Scouts can see the results of what they’ve done. When the projects involve honoring veterans or active service members, they provide an opportunity for the Scouts to learn about good citizenship, one of Scouting’s cornerstones.

Kautz organizes as many service projects as possible so Cub Scouts with busy schedules have numerous opportunities to participate when they can. The

pack has 19 members, and about 12 participated in the holiday project in some way.

Hunter Kautz, a third-grade Cub Scout and Kautz’s son, said making the holiday swags was one of his favorite service projects so far. He especially enjoyed taking the ornaments to the cemetery and placing them at the gravesites.

When asked why he thinks it’s important to honor veterans, he replied, “So their families don’t think they didn’t do a good job.”

The swags remained at the headstones for about two weeks before Schermerhorn collected them in time for the boughs to be contributed to Troop 642 and the Necanicum Watershed Council’s annual tree recycling event Jan. 4 and 5.



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