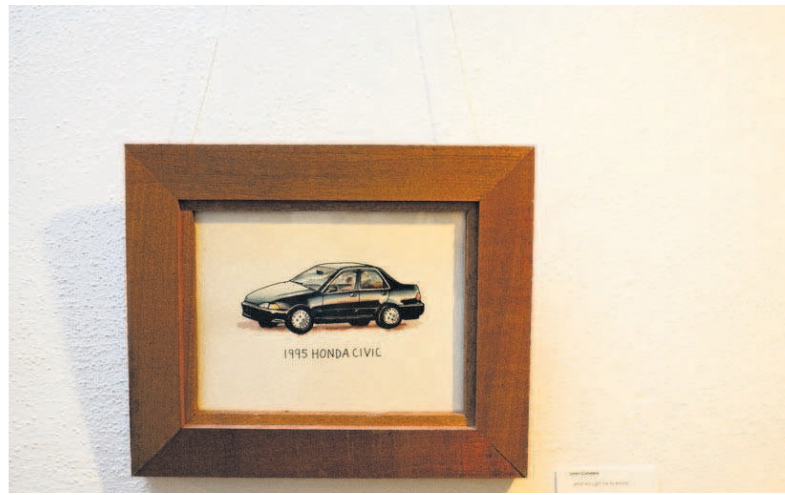




Photos by Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian  
A piece by Gabriela Helesicova on display at the Norblad Hotel and Hostel.



"... What brought me to Astoria," by Loren Candela hanging up at the Norblad Hotel and Hostel.

## Art scene: Community supports the artists

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In this unconventional boom of makers and musters we see many handmade aesthetic marks in many avenues, storefronts, and businesses both in forms of art and craft built for utility and simply for "art's sake."

### Ingredients

A number of community organizations are strengthening key components vital to a working artist:

- Recognition, via grants, and awards from established and newer sources;
- Exhibition and performance opportunities, creative workspace.

• Sales and financial compensation. Not all artists do it for the money, but all artists need to buy materials and pay for continuing opportunities and expenses.

The recently formed Art Council of Clatsop County is conducting a broad study to determine the economic impact of the arts on our communities. I'm optimistic that the data will confirm the significance of our contributions and assist in efforts to secure funding from private and public sources so that we can expand our arts and tourism based economy.

Earlier this year Astoria's oldest non-profit arts group, Astoria Visual Arts, overhauled its board of directors. The Fiber Arts Academy went its separate way and the new board put in place a strong strategic plan of supporting the full range of creative mediums and disciplines, including literary and performing arts. The focus remains support for artists and projects in the greater Astoria area, but Astoria Visual Arts is also the fiscal



Gabriela Helesicova stands by her custom-designed wall at the Norblad Hotel and Hostel.

sponsor for the international humanitarian effort by the OBON Society to assist American and Allied veterans in returning "good luck flags" to their families in Japan.

The group's competitive artist-in-residence program, AVA a-i-r, has been expanded to two three-month programs for local artists, including free studio space. Contributions to the program from local businesses provide vouchers for supplies and food. This year, AVA a-i-r will partner with Recology to provide space for object artists,

gleaners and sculptors. A national residency program is also on the horizon.

### Networking

ArtinAstoria.com provides a networking tool. It is an active website directory of artists from all media and disciplines, along with gallery and business owners, civic leaders, and supporters of the arts in the greater Astoria area, including Clatsop, Pacific, and Wahkiakum counties. The aim is to strengthen and promote the arts by means of communication and cooper-

ation. A public bulletin board for networking, professional development opportunities, dialogue, and engagement among professionals in the arts and culture community may also be found on the Art in Astoria Facebook page.

The recent Hostel Takeover exhibition was produced and curated by Paul Caruana, Gabriela Helesicova, and Marco Davis.

The idea of the exhibition was to host up-and-coming artists with exhibition space. In its nontraditional venue, I believe it to be one of the most important exhibitions in Astoria this year. The casual less assuming delivery forged new foundation to a cultural and generational gap within the patronage of the North Coast arts.

### 'Getting after it'

As the North Coast continues to be a catch of artists looking for opportunities both in root and in commercial gallery representation, I think we need to take note. We are fortunate our community is the rare exception of generous support for the arts. So many people and member based non-profits "getting after it," like the newest kid on the block the Astoria Arts and Movement Center, which continues to expand opportunities for performers and dancers.

And the community gem the Liberty Theater — in which I look forward to serving as a member of the new board of directors — raising the potential for expanded programming and opportunities for local performers.

Creatives are complex and unique individuals, like wild animals they need our support, resources, and space to grow.

*Darren Orange is a painter in Astoria.*



Annie Eskelin uses cardboard to create broad strokes in her paintings.



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