

THE ARTS

Visual arts, literature,
theater, music & more

Experience *art in* the forest

*Lewis and Clark National Historical
Park becomes a stage, art gallery*

By DWIGHT CASWELL

Sunday in the Park with Art, the inspiration of Astoria luminary and bon vivant Marco Davis, took place for the first time last September, and an even bigger and better version takes place from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, May 15. The National Park Service is celebrating its centennial this year, and Sunday in the Park with Art is being put on in partnership with Lewis and Clark National Historic Park, where this interactive back-to-the-forest art/hike experience takes place.

This community stroll through the woods is fun and family friendly, with trails suited to all ages. “You see art in a way you might not otherwise,” says Davis. “There is some interactive art, but mostly it’s to walk and experience and take it all in.” The hike takes an hour and a half and Davis says, “It’s a great way to spend an afternoon.”

The route has been changed somewhat this year to make it more accessible. Beginning at the Fort Clatsop Visitor Center Picnic Area, event goers can choose between a shorter 1.5-mile walk near the center or the full 3-mile hike with a volunteer guide on the Kwis Kwis Trail loop.

Last year, 20 artists participated, creating music, dance, visual arts, and installations for the 100 or so people who came for the experience. Visitors would hike along the trail and suddenly there would be a paper mâché unicorn, or a gnome village, or someone singing or dancing. Artist Renia Fick created a large mushroom and installed it above the trail. Strings representing the mushroom mycelium ran into the forest; when a string was plucked a distant bell would ring.

This year, 40 artists have been invited, and some of the presentations will be larger. There will be a 30-voice choir from Astoria High School, under the direction of instructor Matt Pierce, and Kristin Shauck’s design students at CCC will be creating installations. There will be tango dancers, and Jessamyn Grace will belly dance. Visual artists who will be participating include Rebecca Rubens, Darren Orange, Becky Tonkin, Jesse Jones, Roger Hayes, Sally Lackaff, Miranda Rinks and Gabriela Helesicova.

Visitor participation in some of the art will be invited. Last year a lot of people came in costume. In addition to people in their hiking gear there were fairies, a raven, and a boy who came as Batman.

“It’s like an improv score, in a way,” Davis says. “I really like



PHOTO BY DWIGHT CASWELL

Astoria performance artist and collaborator Marco Davis originated the idea for Sunday in the Park with Art after he was inspired by the beauty of the forest on the Kwis Kwis Trail in Lewis and Clark National Historical Park.

collaboration and improvisation. I like bringing people together who have different views about life and art, in the same area, experiencing art. Last year I was moved to tears half a dozen times. It was a powerful experience.”

Davis is quick to point out that Sunday in the Park with Art is completely ephemeral. “The artists have to pack everything in on their backs. They set up in the morning, do the experience for three hours, and then leave

without a trace.”

You can see views of last year’s event on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/IT8oW7OOeZM>), and hear Davis speak about the process that led him to propose the idea to two park employees at the Voodoo Room. He says, “A lot of my drive in doing this was getting people into nature, and feeling the experience of the power of the forest and how it can bring us into our own life force.”



SUBMITTED PHOTO

During September’s art-hike experience, dance instructor Trixie Gunn, left, performed along the trail with three of her students.

SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH ART

2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, May 15
Fort Clatsop Visitor Center
92343 Fort Clatsop Road,
Astoria
503-861-2471

Dress for the weather, and
come prepared for a moder-
ate hike

Takes place rain or shine;
dogs are welcome on leashes

Participants will be let onto
the trail every 15 minutes.
Last tour starts at 4 p.m.

All ages and family friendly
Free with admission to the
park



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A curious installation by Kim Waits at last fall’s Sunday in the Park with Art event.