

# BONNY GORSUCH ELEVATES 'JUNK'

Self-taught artist salvages throw-away objects for new exhibition

By PATTY HARDIN  
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Local artist Bonny Gorsuch is preparing artwork for a joint project between Recology Western Oregon and Astoria Visual Arts.

Gorsuch plans to have 15 pieces ready for an exhibition that begins Saturday, Oct. 14, at Astoria Vintage Hardware.

For the show, Gorsuch went to the Recology transfer center station at least 30 times over a three-month period, picking out objects she could use.

Over the next few weeks, Gorsuch began her work in earnest, laying out pieces of her found treasures until things began to click into place, and gave new life to discarded objects.

"Bonny spent months elbow and knee deep at the Recology transfer center, followed by sorting, riveting, soldering and painting her finds at Recology's on-site studio," Lisa Smith, board president of Astoria Visual Arts, wrote. "She has elevated cast-offs, debris, rubbish and assorted detritus — whatever you want to call it — into eminently collectible pieces of art," Smith continued. "Thus, the title of her show: 'Junk, Elevated.'"

## Leaving the comfort zone

Gorsuch said it was a "natural fit" to have the showing at Astoria Vintage Hardware.

"I already sell my Wearable Art there and have a great relationship with owner Becky Johnson," she said.



Bonny Gorsuch

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

## MORE INFO

**What:** Artist's Reception and Exhibition

**When:** 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 14, with artist-led gallery walk-through at 6 p.m.

**The show** will be kept up indefinitely. Additional Viewing Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday; noon to 4 p.m. Sunday

**Where:** Vintage Hardware (1162 Marine Drive, Astoria)

**Admission is free** and open to the public

"They 'elevate junk' just as I have done for the upcoming exhibit."

But unlike the items of clothing Gorsuch makes — items that can be used only by people who fit them — everybody can use the art in "Junk, Elevated," she said.

The project has totally pulled Gorsuch out of her comfort zone. "I usually design garments," she said.

"My husband paints; our sons paint. Me? I feel very uncomfortable painting, so I do just enough painting to add color to these pieces."

Gorsuch gestured to her

works in progress, such as "Trusting Heart," which has just enough red to make the piece pop. She really likes the figurative (i.e., life):

people, animals, birds.

Material gathered at a transfer station is most often in need of cleaning, but Gorsuch said she did a minimal amount, "just enough to remove surface dirt. I don't want to ruin the patina," she said.

If this patina, in the form of dull brass or copper, for example, is polished away, the whole character of the piece in question can change. In some cases, cleaning a piece of art can actually have a negative effect.



A Bonny Gorsuch creation

## The 'real deal'

Gorsuch is a self-taught artist. "This is quite typical of a folk artist, which I consider myself," she said. "Also typical of such an artist: My materials are found easily and readily at hand."

She likes to tell a story. Twenty-five years ago her house in Eugene was being re-roofed. She picked some of the old discarded shingles and added various bits and pieces to them. The tiles became art materials.

"This was the first time I did 'serious' art," she said. "People paid \$5 each for these shingles, so I guess that made me an artist."

"Bonny Gorsuch is the real deal, a true artist," Smith said. "She has a fabulous eye, an exceptional wit, and an indefatigable

spirit — and all that comes through in her work."

Gorsuch and her husband, Richard, live in Cannon Beach. They have two sons, Colour and Stirling. **CW**

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