

BEAD BOXING

Gayle H. Seely's creations on display during Seaside Art Walk kick-off March 3

By **EVE MARX**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

"I love seeing people become so involved in my boxes," Gayle H. Seely said. The artist's unique creations will be on display at Fairweather House & Gallery's Seaside Art Walk kick-off at the "Fresh Greens" opening reception 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, March 3.

Her ancient methods of mosaic and beading combined with fresh, modern energy and emotions create intricate, colorful boxes.

Seely, an Oregon native, moved to the North Coast from Trinidad, California, in 1984. She became familiar with the area after her parents moved to Gearhart in 1980.

On a sleepy Monday morning at the Pacific Way Bakery in Gearhart, Seely said that as a child she spent a lot of time examining and studying the natural mosaic of river rock in Fall River. After graduating from the University of Oregon with a degree in fine art, she moved to San Francisco to take a job in an architectural design firm.

"It was the late '70s. I lived in the Marina," Seely said. "I fed my interest in fine art going to galleries and museums. I walked all over the city, I read Ayn Rand, I took day trips to Santa Cruz," she laughed. To offset the artistic constrictions of her day job, she enrolled at Humboldt State College as a post-baccalaureate "unclassified," which meant she could take any art class she liked.

"There was a senior-year seminar where I was thrown in with the messy artists, and I realized I wanted to feel that," Seely said.

Boxes and beads

She decided to pay off her school loan and car loan, and eventually quit her job in San Francisco to move to Trinidad and make art. To support herself, she took a job waiting tables at a place called The Eatery.

"When I wasn't working, I drew. I was drawn to seascapes," Seely said. "I've always loved the beach."



EVE MARX PHOTO

Artist Gayle H. Seely



COURTESY DENISE FAIRWEATHER GALLERY
"Artist Habitat" by Gayle H. Seely

One day she came across the work of Zemula Fleming, a painter, sculpture and mixed-media artist who works in beaded mosaic.

"She was an inspiration to me," Seely said. "I bought nine of her pieces."

All along she had been collecting wooden boxes and colored beads for which she now had a purpose.

"A lady in Newport showed me some techniques on adhering the beads to the boxes," she said. "I visited Alaska, where I



COURTESY FAIRWEATHER HOUSE AND GALLERY
"Welcome," a beaded work-in-progress by Gayle H. Seely

learned how to weave cedar baskets. I began doing things with wire and beads."

Not long after, Seely had an epiphany: She wanted to focus exclusively on bead boxes, a direction she's taken for several years.

"The boxes are surprisingly durable," Seely said. "I test them out on my 3-year-old niece." All the same, she said, people tend not to keep things in them as much as collect them and regard them as talismans.

"I use a lot of the color green," Seely said. "I like colors found in nature."

Seely has been represented by the Fairweather Gallery since 2015. She and her husband live in Seaside, where she also has a studio. When she isn't working, she enjoys walking and spending time with her beautiful dog, Liberty Belle.

"She is a trained pheasant hunter," Seely said. It's easy to imagine one day how feathers may find their way into Seely's enchanting, imaginative work.

Fairweather House & Gallery is located at 612 Broadway St. in Seaside. 