

SCRATCHPAD

CCC art students enhance nature trail with public art

By **JONATHAN WILLIAMS**
COAST WEEKEND EDITOR

On a recent morning run, I stumbled across something quite remarkable and worth stopping to for.

I was running the steep half mile trail that connects the Astoria Column to the Clatsop Community College campus.

As I'm descending the narrow, slick trail I noticed what looked like a purple umbrella dangling in the distance.

I then saw two painted masks and a painted flower near it, too.

I realized this is student art from the college's Basic Design art class. The theme this year is "Shinrin-Yoku," which is a form of healing gained from walking a trail or spending time in nature.

It is a grand exhibit of public art in a natural setting. The damp, cool air and early-morning bird songs made the experience all the more rich, therapeutic and enlightening.

The work, too, is inspir-

ing, layered with passion and clear artistic intent.

Many of the pieces are accompanied by an artist's statement.

The relationship between the environment, humans, animals and trash are explored in many of the pieces.

There is a jellyfish made out of plastic grocery bags to draw attention to the increasing amount of trash in the ocean. The bags came from a single home over the course of two months.

There's also a "Weeping

Waste" tree made from plastic and other waste items.

There are handcrafted flies, wire sculpted birds and cats artistically placed, as well as eagle, elephant and human painted face masks.

Spiritual, thoughtful messages are also present, like a quote by Tara Brach dangling from a string attached to the umbrella: "How you live today is how you live your life."

There are also nature-infused poems:

"Have you felt the roar of the sea? / It molds the bones within me/ I know the pulse of the ebb and flow/ The maw of the matron is ever large/ We should respect her, lest she get hun-



Jonathan Williams

A plastic jellyfish on the "Shinrin-Yoku" themed art trail at Clatsop Community College.


gry some day."

As I neared the base of the trail, this poetic note also stuck out to me:

"One of my favorite things about living in the Pacific Northwest is listening to the natural symphony of sounds around us. The chirping of the birds, the sound of the gentle breeze as it passes through the vast variety of foliage, waves crashing against the shore, but my favorite sound has

always been the chorus of frogs in the evenings."

This vital display of public art does exactly what it is supposed to: promote a conversation about art and the environment, create awareness of an issue and ultimately explore how we live and coexist with nature in a coastal community.

Whether you walk this trail starting from the college or the column, it is time well spent. 

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ON THE COVER

The 38th Annual Northwest Garlic Festival runs June 15-16 in Nahcotta, Wash.

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New items for publication consideration must be submitted by 10 a.m. Tuesday, one week and two days before publication.

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