

# Art meets environment

Earth and Ocean Arts Festival celebrates nature, raises climate awareness

BY KATHERINE LACAZE

“We’ve Made Our Bed” is the title of the interactive art installation ecological artist and educator Shelby Silver will unveil during the Cannon Beach Gallery Group’s inaugural Earth and Ocean Arts Festival running Friday through Sunday at various locations throughout Cannon Beach.

However, although several elements of the event will call attention to the global climate crisis, plastic marine debris proliferation and other ecological emergencies, the festival is more importantly a celebration of the natural wonders of the Oregon Coast and a catalyst for uniting artists, organizations and individuals through heightened environmental awareness.

“Art kind of amplifies that message,” marketing coordinator Alexis Jackson said.

The festival weekend is brimming with a variety of activities, many of which blend the ecological and artistic, including elements of the gallery group’s discontinued Plein Air Festival.

Five local nonprofits are also participating in the event, including Friends of Cape Falcon Marine Reserve, Friends of Haystack Rock, North Coast Land Conservancy, Sea Turtles Forever and Wildlife Center of the North Coast.

Of the three events put on by the gallery group, Jackson said, “this is by far the most heavily stacked event we’ve had thus far.”

## Spreading a message with dance

Hailing from New York City, the Artichoke Dance Company will be presenting two eco-focused pieces at the festival. The first, which takes places at 10 a.m., will start at the foot of Second Street near the dunes.

During the beach performance, the audience “will take a journey with us,” said artistic director Lynn Neuman, an accomplished choreographer and activist who has spent years merging art and environmentalism to create change.

While starting at the street level, the group of dancers will then transition onto the sand and move toward the water.

“The performance will progress over a geographic location,” Neuman said, adding the audience can take off their shoes



Stephen de las Heras

The New York-based Artichoke Dance Company will perform two eco-centric works during the Cannon Beach Gallery Group’s inaugural Earth and Ocean Arts Festival this weekend. Their first performance Saturday morning will travel from the base of Second Street through the sand and into the ocean.

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**Artichoke Dance Company Artistic Director Lynn Neuman**, speaking on the merging of art and environmentalism to create change.

and travel with the progression or stay and observe from street level.

“With site specific and adaptive work, it’s about also experiencing the site yourself.”

Because the dancers will be performing on sand, which is malleable, the work illustrates the challenges for humans operating in a shifting environment and the ways in which they can move with the change.

“I’m using the creative process as a lens to dig deeper into how we need to work

and be as a society,” Neuman said. “People need to see a different way of being in the world than they are being right now, and the arts allow us to have a paradigm shift and see something we hadn’t considered before.”

Dance is able to provide a powerful narrative and equally important image for advocating change, and it does so in a way that’s more accessible and less didactic and top-down heavy, Neuman said.

When it comes to climate change and

other environmental crises, “people get frozen and dance is about movement, so it’s also metaphorical,” Neuman said. “You can take one step, and then you can take another step.”

## Looking with love not fear

Artichoke Dance Company’s second performance will follow a panel discussion, to be held at 10 a.m. at the Coaster Theatre Playhouse.

Neuman and Silver, along with several members of the environmental community, will engage in a conversation that explores the intersection of art, creativity, nature and conservation.

“Even within the environmental community, there is division about how to move forward,” said Neuman, who is a proponent of systems theory, studying models of inter-

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