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broad base, from high school graduates to retirees. She said she hadn't seen many of the chosen artists before.

The idea for a virtual gallery was less of an opportunity for people to create art and more of a place to share it, Eskelin said. Plenty of pandemic-inspired art was already being created ahead of the exhibit, in turn creating a place to consolidate and display it.

Heather Hirschi, Anya Hamilton, Erika Olsen and Sid Deluca are among the many artists featured.

Hirschi, an Astoria resident, created "Medusa in Quarantine," a colored pencil and watercolor painting of Medusa with a collaged frame. She uses Medusa as a totem to symbolize the isolation of quarantine and the invisibility of the virus.

Deflated snakes surrounding the Greek goddess' head amplify "the idea that we have this unknown threat, a threat without a face. When you're in isolation, there's nobody coming at you," Hirschi said.

Hamilton's piece, "Mental Health Mantra," expresses a variety of emotions. Faces with teary eyes and anxious mouths are decorated with a scale of color that bleeds from one hue to the next. The top of the canvas reads "silence, stiffness, spaciousness."

Hamilton, of Clatskanie, uses art to cope



'Mental Health Mantra' by Anya Hamilton.

with transitioning into adulthood. It has also helped her find composure through a breakup rather than "sulk in lonesome behaviors," she said.

"I stepped out of my comfort zone without stepping out of the house, and somehow the world hasn't ended, contrary to what I would've believed months ago," she said.

Other works in the gallery feature portraits, nature and places familiar to those on the North Coast.

Olsen, an Astoria photographer, portrays the feeling of helplessness and sorrow in her image "Desperate Times" of a man kneeling in front of St. Mary, Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Astoria. When she saw the man

stop and kneel in the street, the feeling of desperation resonated with her own experience during the pandemic. "I don't know his story or who he is, and I don't know what he was asking for, but I hope he found it," Olsen said.

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