



Nancy McCarthy

ABOVE: A wall hanging, created from 'ghost' ropes sewn together, depict the North Pacific Gyre. The center represents the area in the ocean covered with debris. **RIGHT:** Emily Miller stitches 'ghost' net bowls from abandoned fishing net and rope.

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"You just have to let it do what it wants to do," Miller said. "Sometimes I have a shape for a basket in mind that I want to make, and this piece of rope is just not having it. This piece of rope is supposed to be for a different basket."

Denise Fairweather, owner of Fairweather House and Gallery, has displayed Miller's artwork for five years. Fairweather said she appreciates Miller's mission to raise ocean awareness through art and lectures.

"(She has an) unbridled optimism about caring for the coast as well as its



critters — a giant vision, a sophisticated sense of purpose, patience and a determination to do things right and well," Fairweather said.

A portion of proceeds from Miller's pieces goes toward ocean conservation.

"I'm always going to want to pull things out of the ocean," Miller said. "I'm always going to want people to join me. I'm always going to want to respond to conservation issues."

Over the past year, Miller's gallery exhibits have evolved into collaborations with other artists and local communities. She calls these events "Ghost Net Landscape interactive installations."

It's a way to show people the potential of something that can be reclaimed and not thrown away after its outlived its original use, Miller said.

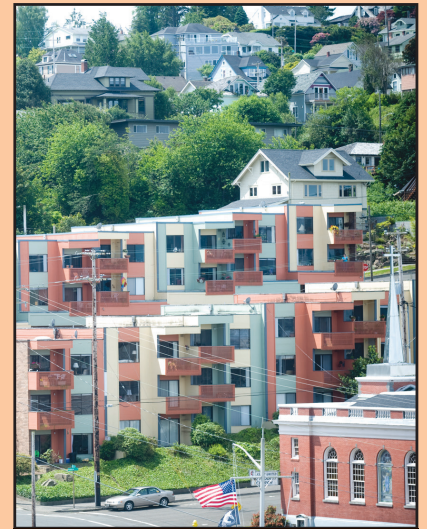
When she has an exhibit, Miller brings a large pile of ropes and nets with her to the gallery. She invites those attending to make their own creations. This month, at Portland's Crema Coffee & Bakery, Miller, in collaboration with artists Shelby Silver and Shere Coleman, is asking people to take some rope home, make a puppet, write a sea story about the puppet and transformation. The stories will be recorded and streamed online.

"I'm giving people the opportunity to tell a story that might be cathartic," Miller said. "For a lot of reasons, they may feel like they need a voice."

Miller expects to be transforming abandoned fishing gear into artwork that tells stories for a long time.

"I love doing this. I think this is really fun," Miller said. "I love going and getting the stuff at the beach. I love meeting the fishermen and seeing what they have that would have gone into the landfill otherwise."

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