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the first 10 years or so of her journey into needle-weaving — when she was mostly “product-testing” her work — Olivares notes that they are more stylistically rudimentary than her current creations. Her evolution as an artist has involved making each piece more elegant and refined, and finding techniques that enhance durability.

Over the past few years, she has gained recognition for her style of jewelry-making, resulting in more frequent requests for commissioned work. Often, custom orders involve taking the client’s prized antique beads or aging pieces of jewelry, then fashioning them into something new that preserves and showcases the valuable materials in a beautiful and durable way.

For example, one of her past projects involved crafting a piece of jewelry for a woman who possessed some old trade beads, sourced near the Columbia River. Another piece of custom work she’s doing for a couple in Manzanita will incorporate their vintage African trade beads made from amber.

Olivares views it as a privilege to be entrusted with these antiques and made steward of the stories they tell.

“That is very gratifying, making sure people’s treasures and old beads can continue being loved and become kind of a new heirloom piece that will carry on,” she said.

### Finding a home for her work

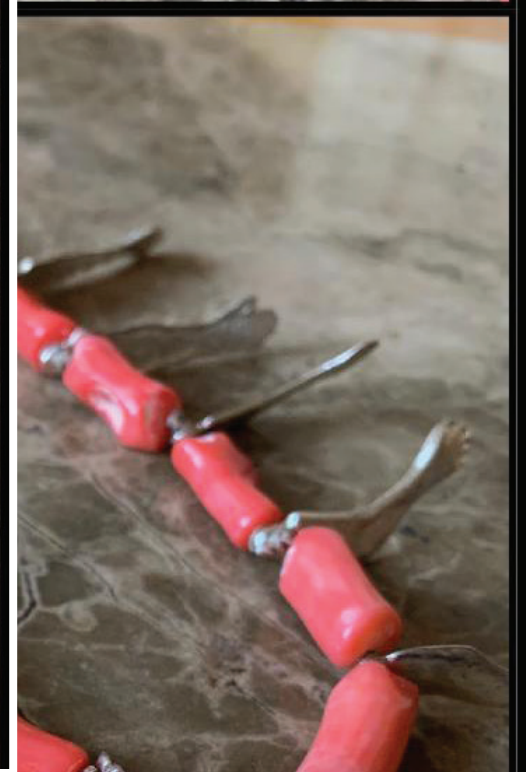
Olivares moved to Astoria five years ago with her twin sister, Estelle. The two are well-known dance instructors at the Astoria Arts and Movement Center.

As an artist, the local area possesses a few important sources of motivation for Olivares, from its wealth of other creators and craftspeople to the natural landscape that encompasses both ocean and mountains.

“Living in Astoria, among such creative force — that’s inspiring to me,” she said. “Without that, I don’t think I’d stop making. But at this point, I just feel really bolstered by that.”

Olivares found the perfect home for her jewelry at Imogen Gallery. Her connection to the establishment started in early 2019, when owner Teri Sund invited her to bring in work and take part in a show that winter. Olivares recently participated in the gallery’s group invitational exhibition, titled “Hook, Pulp and Weave,” in December, but she also has work displayed there year-round.

“It feels good to be in such a small gallery, because the work (Sund) selects is eclectic but beautiful,” Olivares said. “This is exactly what I want to be doing and how I want the work to be represented.”



**ABOVE:** Inspired by a piece in the Museo Frida Kahlo in Mexico, this piece by Celeste Olivares features vintage coral, metal milagros and a Mother of Pearl clasp. **INSET:** A piece of jewelry designed by Celeste Olivares that includes vintage crystal, agate, lavender jade and an antique coin clasp.