



A close-up of a sun disc created by Judith Niland.

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nity to do what I've always wanted to do, which is to be a stay-at-home artist."

She makes the flat, round discs by using a hard acrylic that she melts down in a small oven through a long, slow process. In the end, they look almost like glass but are more durable, enabling them to be used inside or outside.

The sun discs range in size, though most fall between 6 to 12 inches. Sometimes Niland will string two together with fishing line, or attach 12 discs to a tree branch or piece of driftwood, as can be seen in her work at Luminari Arts. She also designs smaller pieces that are lightweight and puffy — she calls them "fluffies."

"People like them because they look like they're floating through air," she said.

Developing a unique process

Niland has made the acrylic sun discs and fluffies for about five years, although not "as fully and intensely" as she currently is.

She was inspired to start creating the discs and fluffies by a gift she received for Christmas. One of Niland's friends, who works at a daycare, had her class make an art project that involved melting beads and stringing them on wire. Niland hung the artwork she received in her backyard.

"I started looking at them and thinking, 'What if you take that a little further?'" she said.

She put her own spin on idea, which resulted in the light-catching sun discs. Since she started, her process has evolved as a result of experimentation; the pieces are smoother and shinier. She was originally using permanent markers to color the discs, but now adds high-quality inks or uses plastics that already have pigmentation. Sometimes bubbles will form, or she will incorporate marbles as an effect. As a result, each piece looks unique.

'Comfort and meditation'

Niland works out of a ventilated studio set up in her garage. On nice days, she can open the door and interact with passersby, which she tends to see a lot of as her



A collection of sun discs Niland created.

house is situated on Exchange Street, near the "Goonies House." People can stop by her place and look at the sun discs she has hung up in her yard, while she is able to converse with them from a distance.

She also takes custom orders based on the colors people prefer and ships them. Most of her business is drummed up through word of mouth and her Facebook page, Art & Spirit Creations by Judith P Niland.

Niland is unsure what the future holds for this latest endeavor, especially once the pandemic subsides and the community fully reopens. She expects she won't see as many neighbors and other people out for

walks, which could mean less exposure — but she thinks having more tourists in town is likely to have a positive impact.

However, her goal was never to turn the art into a full-time business or main source of income. She sells enough of the sun discs to maintain her supplies.

"It was really about how much it helped my health and sanity," she said. "It's been a great source of comfort and meditation ... Anytime you practice creativity, you're putting a positive energy into the world."

Whether she continues with this artistic focus long-term or finds something new to try, as she is prone to do, for now, she said, "I just want to melt plastic in my garage."