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she said. “We didn’t have much money growing up, but necessity is the mother of invention.”

Rooted at the heart of Silver’s work are overarching themes of marine conservation and upcycling. Each of her pieces convey the importance of protecting oceans and the ecosystems within them.

In her painting “The Sacred,” Silver uses vibrant hues of blue and green acrylic paint. An outline of a person can be seen in juxtaposition with a towering tree as birds soar overhead in the background, illustrating the interconnected relationship between humans and nature. She sewed in pieces of plastic marine debris and then tamped them down with a heavy gel medium, further adding texture and impact to her work. Her painting was featured in SouthWest Art Magazine in June 2019.

Silver also creates sculptures and installations that make heavy use of recovered fish netting and retired marine rope. She partners with the Kauai chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to marine conservation and activism. The foundation recovers roughly 10,000 pounds of marine rope off of beaches every month. The foundation sends Silver boxes of the reclaimed items. She also works closely with Westport Marina to claim the retired mounds of marine rope and fishnets.

One of Silver’s installations, “We’ve Made Our Bed,” used the remnants of more than 1,000 pounds of marine rope and netting. The base of the piece is an old brass bed frame that she had been using as a guest bed. Always thinking on how items can be reused, Silver transformed the frame into a themed work of art, intricately decorated with reclaimed ropes and nets. The installation was featured in the Earth & Ocean Arts Festival at Cannon Beach in 2019.

The installation was crafted in collaboration with Silver’s partner, Christopher Carsner, who is as a master diver. The pair met in 2015. When they were working on the piece, Carsner thought back to an exploratory diving trip he took around the San Juan Islands. At one point in the trip, he stumbled upon a house-sized fishing net that got caught on an underwater pinnacle, waving like a flag in the water. As he looked down into the net, Carsner saw fish, crabs and other creatures stuck in the netting. He cut out and freed those he could.

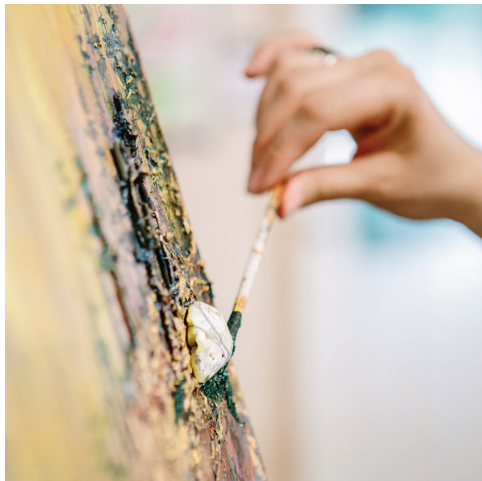
“Entanglement, entrapment of our marine species and animals. It kind of hits home for me,” Carsner said. “Working on the bed was definitely a reminder that all this stuff is out there in the ocean. It’s floating around, it’s trapping marine life.”

Last September, Silver received her gen-



Photos by Michelle Bauer

ABOVE: Silver works on a new piece. **BELOW LEFT:** Silver uses a wood knitting needle as a paintbrush.



eral studies associate degree from Portland Community College. Now, she is a full-time student working toward a second degree and majoring in gerontology, a study of aging in all its forms. Drawing parallels between humankind and the Earth, Silver hopes to one day become an ecological psychologist and gain a more comprehensive understanding in the cycles of life.

“I will continue creating and will bring my work as an ecological artist forward,” Silver said.



Shelby Silver

Christopher Carsner works on his and Silver’s art installation.