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McLean will reveal his latest work at Northwest by Northwest Gallery in Cannon Beach from 1 to 3 p.m. on May 7. McLean plans to display abstract pieces sculpted from white Georgia marble, red-wood and basalt rock. While the Portland sculptor has demonstrated his welding technique, a skill learned from working on ranches near his childhood home in Point Reyes Station, California, McLean soon found that his audience flinched at flying sparks. "Almost everything I do makes noise, and you need eye covering," McLean said.

Despite the lack of an active demonstration, his new works "promise to be intriguing as usual," Northwest by Northwest Gallery owner Joyce Lincoln said. Lincoln, who owns the gallery with her husband, Bob Necker, is a great admirer. "When you see something he has made, it's already in our shared pool of consciousness. It's really good, distinct, consistent and authentic. Basically, just like him," Lincoln said.

"Sculpture is his language," Lincoln said. "Everything is mesmerizing. People engage with it, it's like it's an extension of the natural world. It really appeals to people," she added.

While some of McLean's flowing sculptures evoke wings or waves, he is best known for his giant spheres. Stainless steel pieces are welded together in a sphere and form a weaving, transparent and often colorful pattern. When installed on water, they seem to skim the surface. In a field, they resemble colorful tumbleweeds.

McLean first started creating spheres while building furniture, using scraps and forming spheres. "People really loved it, and there is something so cool that you can have them in any environment," McLean said. "You can have them in the woods or in a formal garden or even in the house," he added.

Spheres are a symbol of nature, a full circle effect. "There's something about a sphere that is elemental to people. All the planets are circular, our cells are circular. To have a perfect sphere, there's something indefinable about it."



Photo by Nancy McCarthy

**ABOVE: 'Re-Invention' by Ivan McLean, a sculpture seen in many private collections ranging in size up to 20 feet, on display in Cannon Beach. RIGHT: A dragon sculpture by McLean has a fire breathing feature.**

McLean's techniques began with skills learned from his father, a carpenter and contractor, however his welding experience began at the suggestion of his brother. Finding joy in welding while in college, McLean repaired and welded gates on the 9,000 acre campus of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, his alma mater. "You make a mistake in wood and it's all over. In metal, you cut it, weld it, grind it, it's all good. I like that quite a bit," McLean said.

For several years, he and his brother created chairs, candlesticks and racks for wine and CDs, but 15 years ago, McLean narrowed his work to sculpture. His expansive workshop now sits in a former shipyard under the St. Johns Bridge in Portland. "Now I do a lot work in metal, also stone, wood carving, glass. Whatever the job needs, I'll give it a go," McLean said.

Art "makes for interesting people," he added. While he often works with devel-



opers or building owners, his passion lies in creating sculptures for individuals. "It's really kind of a magical thing to be part of somebody else's vision," he said.

And McLean's work has now come full circle, with many sculpture pieces on dis-

play at his alma mater. His other pieces, including a metal fish and fire breathing dragon, have appeared at events up and down the Pacific coast and beyond, integrating themselves into the whole of the landscape wherever they appear.

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