

Gallery: Community support was the deciding element of their growth

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One of the drinks was named by a visitor describing its texture. “The first person to try it said that it felt like you were in a warm cabin and you’d just opened the door to the cold,” Trask said.

The drink is called The Cabin Door, served in a specialty hourglass cup, and begins with warm, bitter espresso, giving way to a cold milk base. It’s an experience meant for the gallery space itself, a unique blend delivered to Cambium from nearby Columbia River Coffee Roaster, paired with an ever changing rotation of regional art.

Portland artist Leah Kohlenberg, the first artist to secure representation from the gallery, crafted the centerpiece behind the coffee counter. “We wanted something that would represent our place in Astoria,” Long said of the piece, a lush, forested scene of fiddlehead ferns.

The piece also reflects an ethos Cambium seeks to uphold. “When we opened Cambium, we wanted to work with artists who were historically marginalized, and we wanted to make sure that we went by an older school gallery model of professional development, helping them



LEFT: Abstract artist and gallery co-owner Kirista Trask stands behind the coffee counter at Cambium Gallery. RIGHT: Audrey Long’s ceramic studio, which was the starting point for Cambium, sits adjacent to the coffee shop and gallery.



Photos by Lissa Brewer/The Astorian

outside of Cambium to be more successful,” Trask said.

Cambium is featuring a series of woodblock scenes from printmaker Karina Andrews, whose work focuses on the subtleties of land and seascapes. Next up, the gallery will feature three dimensional body focused works from ceramicist Elisabeth Walden. “She is an exceptional artist,” Trask said. “One of my favorite pieces was a woman who had a mastectomy, and so the form only had one breast, it had a scar where the other breast was and the person who bought

that, it was a very personal experience for them, that for the first time, their experience was represented in a piece of art.”

Trask’s own works are thoughtfully place based, rooted in a deep sense of the region. Describing her work as “a documentation process about being somewhere,” Trask, a seventh generation Oregonian, paints her connection with the state through abstract expression of tone and form. It’s a technique she’s delighted to share, hosting remote classes that make use of common household

objects. The next one, set for Sunday, will focus on abstract art journaling.

For Trask, creating a journal allows for a relationship with a handmade object. “When you make something, even if it’s imperfect, you are already connected to it,” she said. She’s hopeful that classes like these will inspire others to look at everyday objects as art making pieces. “I just hope it opens some doors for people,” she said, “then I feel like I’ve been successful.”

While Trask’s classes continue remotely, Long’s ceramic workshops, capped

CAMBIMUM GALLERY

1030 Duane St., Astoria
971-988-9054 or info@cambiumgallery.com
www.cambiumgallery.com

Wheel throwing with Audrey Long

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at five participants each, have returned to the studio. “I have students from (ages) 3 to 93,” said Long, who taught full-time before the pandemic.

Framing ceramic work through a beginner’s eye, her classes are lively and fun, allowing students to experience the meditative details of sculpting. It’s a return to Cambium’s origins, as the space began by housing Long’s ceramics studio. After participating in the building’s remodel alongside Glen Herman, whose lamps and planters now decorate the gallery, she began working in the studio space, which has continued to grow.

Now, both Trask and Long look forward to crafting new ways of building community connections, partnering with other local businesses and events.

Long crafts handmade vases for flower bouquets at the Astoria Sunday Mar-

ket, set to open for the season next week, and the pair plan to serve vendors at Cambium in the early morning.

“We will be open at 7:30 a.m. before Sunday Market,” Trask said. “That community is important to us and we’ll be open early while they’re setting up their booths, getting them some great coffee on the way in,” she added.

Both gallery owners emphasize that community support was the deciding element of their growth through the pandemic.

Now, blending virtual and studio connections, the gallery feels complete.

“Cambium tries to harness the positive parts of the internet and online experiences while also keeping people rooted in the real life experience of art, and now coffee,” Trask said. “And now coffee, which is a whole different art form,” Long added.

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UYQXCKK JXTITQQC BUF U
NXCSCXXCF DTRC, TQ DHGVF
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