



STRETCHING across three walls and, like the river itself, bending in places, the mural fills the CCA gallery. Below, Jane Pagliarulo and (at right) Sorcha Meek, make final cuts before steamroller printing day on Aug. 24. Also below, Pagliarulo's native fisher, in 13-Mile Point to Rowena panel, meets Molly Gaston Johnson's swirling section, which uses Columbia High students' words in close-up, right.

By **KIRBY NEUMANN-REA**
NEWS EDITOR

The Exquisite Gorge Project, designed to connect artists and communities via a single 66-foot steamrolled print, is now in Hood River. Columbia Center for the Arts (CCA) is displaying the work, created in July and August 2019.

There's an irony in the fact that curators placed the work in view of the gallery's large windows on Cascade Avenue.

The irony is that it is now the only way to see Exquisite Gorge: Through those windows.

CCA is closed until further notice due to COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings.

Hood River News presents photos of the project on this page and B10, as a virtual visit to Exquisite Gorge, which is on loan from Maryhill Museum in Washington state.

Artists worked with community groups along the river, including Columbia High School students who first met with Portland artist Jane Pagliarulo in May.

"The kids (had) grown up on the river and they have excellent ideas about what it was that formed their experiences on the river, so that for me was the journey, going up to White Salmon totally blind and not knowing what I was going to come up with, and it evolved, from the images the kids and Kelsey (Lemon) created," said Pagliarulo, a former Hood River artist who reconnected with Lemon, a former colleague now teaching at White Salmon.

In the case of The Exquisite Gorge Project, the river became the "body" that unifies the collaboration between artists and communities, revealing a flowing work that tells 10 conceptual stories of the Columbia River and its people,

according to Maryhill Curator of Education Louise Palermo.

Artists worked with community members from their assigned stretch of river and carve images on 4-by-6 foot wood panels. Each completed panel was connected end-to-end and printed using a steamroller, on Aug. 24 in the east parking lot of Maryhill.

Partners involved are: Maryhill Museum of Art, Lewis & Clark College, Arts in Education of the Gorge, The Dalles-Wasco County Library, The Gorge Veterans Museum, The Dalles Art Center, Goldendale-Fort Vancouver Library System, Whitman College, and White Salmon Arts Council.

"The Columbia River weaves lives together in the most amazing ways," Palermo said. "The Exquisite Gorge Project brings communities together with artists to share their experience of home in the form of a woodblock print, metaphorically as big as the river itself."

At a March 7 presentation at CCA, Palermo recognized Maryhill executive director Colleen Schafroth for her support, and the creative guidance of Artistic Director Dylan McManus.

Story Gorge of Hood River screened four-minute documentary on the project, and Palermo and McManus spoke, along with several of the artists.

McManus said, "It was an absolutely amazing experience that took about nine months, and hopefully it will be a legacy of the Gorge, I can see these events in the future. Artists all over the world are asking us to do it again."

"My goal is to have a print exhibition in the Gorge every two years. We'll be focused on print-making for the foreseeable future."

Palermo added, "Be ready

for Exquisite Gorge project, part two, fiber. More about that in the future."

McManus said the idea started when someone asked, "Steamroller print — can you do it?"

He said, "That was pretty much the extent of the planning and we sat down and started figuring it out. I am really happy Maryhill was willing to take a huge risk, on people coming from around the coun-

try with very little idea of how it would happen. Often times people aren't willing to take these kind of risks. There were times it felt like it wasn't going to work, there were so many factors.

"It would not have happened if there weren't so many people every step of the way willing to give their advice and feedback, their thoughts, their criticism, insight, knowledge, their expertise, and it was always, 'What if we do it this way? Can that make it work more efficiently?' and by that willingness to see what would happen, it turned into what's on the wall now."

Exquisite Gorge part one participating artists, selected through a national call for artists, and respective sections of the Columbia River, and partners, are as follows:

- Greg Archuleta, The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Section One (Willamette River to River Mile 110), students of Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
- Michael Namkung/Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Section Two (River Mile 110 to McGowans Light), Lewis and Clark College
- Molly Gaston Johnson, Lake Cuomo, N.J., Section Three (McGowans Light to 13 Mile Point), Arts in Education of the Gorge
- Jane Pagliarulo, Portland, Section Four (13 Mile Point to Rowena), Arts in Education
- Neal Harrington, Russellville, Ark., Section Five (Rowena to Browns Island), The Dalles Arts Center
- Steven Muñoz, Washington, D.C., Section Six (Browns Island to Miller Island), White Salmon Arts Council
- Roger Peet, Portland, Section Seven (Miller Island to John Day River), Goldendale Community Library
- Mike McGovern, Portland, Section Eight (John Day River to Roosevelt), Little Bear Hill gallery
- Combat Paper/Drew F.

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