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Art

Mary Tapogna's mosaics and
YWCA's Smart Choices photography

Mary Tapogna's mosaic entitled "Lady with Books" will be featured along with her sculptures at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center from April 6 until April 29.

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

During April, the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center (IFCC) presents exhibits featuring the mosaics of Mary Tapogna and black and white photography from the YWCA's Smart Choices program. These works are on view in the IFCC galleries April 6-29.

A free, public opening reception will be held on first Thursday, April 6th from 5-7:30 pm. Live entertainment will be provided by the groups MTV and the Tony Green Orchestra and refreshments will be served. The IFCC is located at 5340 N. Interstate Avenue, between Alberta and Killingsworth. Mary Tapogna: Common By-Products

The main gallery features Mary Tapogna's mosaic portraits and sculptures.

The pieces are rendered from the infinite variety of discarded consumer objects collected by the artist such as tile, ceramics, metal, glass, plastics, rocks, and bottle caps. Tapogna boldly strikes to "make constructive use of the product generated by our 'throw

away' society.

The works are a direct result of Tapogna's own photographic images and drawings. Professionally trained as a photographer, she first began combining mosaic frames with her photographic images. This combining process eventually led to the current manifestation of the photo image being transformed into a mosaic. The layering process from which the works derive literally gives the initial photo image new dimension by converting it into a textural medium.

"The photographs that I choose for mosaic subjects are usually ordinary people, mostly women, with a certain intensity which is caught by the camera lens," explains Tapogna. "This transformation—from one medium to another—allows me to spend more time with a cherished image."

YWCA Smart Choices Program: "How I See Myself/How Others See Me"

The YWCA Smart Choices exhibition features eighteen black and white photographic diptychs,

each a self portrait by 4th and 5th grade girls which reflect how they see themselves and how they believe other see them. The Smart Choices program seeks to provide a setting to support the successful transition of girls into adolescence and adulthood through experiential learning based on the girls' strengths and interests.

During the Spring of 1999, documentary and fine arts photographer Julie Keefe served as artist-in-residence with participants at Applegate and Woodlawn Schools in North Portland. Keefe

led 8-week workshops with each group of girls on basic techniques of photography and artistic vision. YWCA Smart Choices and the IFCC hope to use the exhibitions as a forum to stimulate thinking, conversation and action around how the community can better understand and support girls as they enter this critical stage in their lives. The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, now celebrating its eighteenth anniversary, is a non-profit performing and visual arts center dedicated to diversity a cultural expression.

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