

Naturalist exhibition arrives at Nightingale Gallery

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LA GRANDE — The Nightingale Gallery at Eastern Oregon University hosts “Deep Woods,” an exhibition by Portland-based sculptors — and husband and wife artist team — Crystal Schenk and Shelby Davis.

Schenk and Davis each have their own art practices and have been working together since 2009 creating large-scale sculptures, installations, and public artworks. They have completed 10 projects together, including “From Which All Things Start” recently installed in front of Loso Hall on EOU’s main campus.

Davis and Schenk will present a public talk about their work at noon on Friday, Nov. 12 in Hoke Union Building, Room 339. “Deep Woods” opens with a reception for the artists from 5-7 p.m. that evening in the gallery. The exhibition runs through Dec. 10.

According to a press release from EOU, Schenk and Davis have a deep sense of belonging to the Northwest ecosystem.



Eastern Oregon University/Contributed image
Crystal Schenk and Shelby Davis, who completed this installation “From Which All Things Start” for the EOU campus, are the featured artists at EOU’s Nightingale Gallery.

Their artwork explores notions of wilderness, geology, environment and home. Both consider the landscape a boundless resource materially and in inspiration. However, this year and a half of isolation and anxiety has made the artist team appreciate the landscape in new and sometimes unexpected ways.

“Part of our shift in focus is driven by the ability to watch our surroundings change in a real

way in real time,” Schenk said. “Climate change, forest fires, resource management, and political shifts have all impacted the west in a dramatic way within our lifetimes. It is scary and fascinating in a way that makes it difficult to look away.”

Gallery Director Cory Peeke learned of Schenk and Davis when they were chosen to create “From Which All Things Start.”

“I was intrigued by their thoughtful use of landscape, as well as their sophisticated material explorations and wanted to share a larger body of their work with our community,” Peeke said.

Schenk is a native Oregonian who spent much of her later childhood in the foothills of Mount Hood and is intimately familiar with the area. She considers the mountains and forest as her shrine, and her work draws

its meaning and strength from natural phenomena, memory, and familial history.

Davis grew up in Six Mile, South Carolina, in the Blue Ridge foothills. His parents were both artists and he grew up traveling to craft shows around the country, surrounded by artists who cared deeply about their craft and well-made objects. While he tried to find a different path by studying geology in college, it was almost inevitable that he would be drawn back into a life of making things.

The gallery, located in Loso Hall, is open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Face masks are required of all campus visitors and social distancing is encouraged.

For more information, visit eou.edu/art or follow the Nightingale Gallery on Facebook and Instagram.

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