

Art is about the practice, not the Muse

Artists must be 'stubborn and persistent,' says Andrea Mace

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette



As director, she's mounted more than 80 shows and worked with thousands of artists from across the Pacific Northwest. This, she said, is the best part of her job and keeps her plugged in to the art world.

Mace's friendship, for example, with Hillsboro-based artist Carl Anala — whose paintings recently bedecked the gallery walls in a joint exhibition with Cannon Beach's Peter Greaver — gives her ongoing insights into the Portland-area arts scene.

"I've met some really fascinating people," she said.

Freelance writer

Mace, 42, grew up on Washington's Kitsap Peninsula, across the Puget Sound from Seattle. Following graduation from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, she moved to Oregon in 1993. After 22 years on the North Coast, "(I) definitely consider myself an Oregonian," she said.

She initially moved for a summer waitressing job but "fell in love with the area and have found myself here ever since," she said. Now a Cannon Beach resident, Mace has also lived in Arch Cape, Wheeler, Elsie and Manzanita.

Discovering the arts association (founded in 1986) and volunteering for gallery shifts as a docent became a "nice thing to have in (the) rhythm of my life — not being a total hermit/recluse-artist," she said, smiling.

Visual arts and fine crafts, like basketry and jewelry-making, tend to dominate Mace's body of work. She studied under the late Royal Nebeker when he chaired



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Andrea Mace

Andrea Mace, executive director of the Cannon Beach Arts Association. Mace works 20 hours a week at the gallery.

Clatsop Community College's art department.

Her "first passion," however, is writing, she said. For several years, she supplemented her income by freelancing for *The Daily Astorian*, *Coast Weekend*, *HIPFiSH Monthly* and other local publications.

Whatever her topic, it was important to her that she wrote regularly, which is good advice for virtually

any artist working in any field: "You have to have a practice. You have to do it every day, whether you feel it or not," she said. The Muse may be present, but "it's not about the Muse, it's about the practice ... having something you come to every day and build on."

Quality of life

Mace and her partner, Jonathan Tate, have

a 6-year-old son, Emelio. Last winter, the couple took over a local eco-friendly window-washing business, now called Tate's Window Services. When she isn't greeting patrons at the gallery, Mace often helps Tate scrub down commercial properties in downtown Cannon Beach.

"That's been really great for us. I think you have to find your niche in this area," she said. "You have to be creative in how you make a living and approach your lifestyle in this area if you're not already retired."

Mace's affinity for the natural environment has kept her on the North Coast. She takes advantage of the temperate climate, toiling away in her English cottage-style garden in front of her picturesque 1920s-era cabin on Harrison Street, she said.

"The quality of life is so great that, when you leave, you realize, wow, we really have it good on the North Oregon Coast," she said.

The gallery — which has occupied its current space for 20 years — might have

greater foot traffic if it operated in downtown, where, for commercial businesses, "I'm sure it's like ground zero; it's the spot to be," she said. "But I like being a little bit out of the craziness of downtown."

And with the gallery situated near Gower Street's public beach access, just a short walk from Haystack Rock, she spends a good deal of her life watching people from around the world enjoy the beach — from European families to Buddhist monks in full regalia.

As a Northwesterner, "the natural world really inhabits a big part of my character and my soul, but I take it for granted, too," she said. "And when people come here for the first time, the impact it makes on them is very noticeable and impressive."

She always hopes that visitors take their experience of Cannon Beach back to their urban or suburban lives, she said — and remember the feeling that "the natural world is full of wonder, and we should protect it and save it and relish it."



Andrea Mace, executive director of the Cannon Beach Arts Association, makes jewelry, like these necklaces, out of Czechoslovakian pressed glass. Her work is on display and for sale at the Cannon Beach Gallery.

ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

Trivia contest won't be trivial

For those who enjoy searching out trivia about Cannon Beach, the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum is offering a trivia contest from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 14.

Each competitor may purchase a single trivia card for \$2. Each card contains 10 questions that must be answered while the player is in the museum. No cellphone or Internet searches are allowed. All of the questions are contained within the museum's exhibits and displays.

"The event is a combination of scavenger hunt and trivia contest," said

Director Elaine Murdy-Trucke. "The answers to every single question are contained within the museum's exhibits, even the bonus questions."

Those who answer all 10 questions correctly will win a prize.

The museum will offer brain food in the form of Sleepy Monk coffee and a few light snacks. Writing materials and writing stations are provided throughout the museum. For more information visit www.cbhistory.org or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cannon-Beach-History-Center-and-Museum/105716359459384>



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