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Luminous NATURE Taming the wild

BY AMY KEPFERLE

DENISE SNYDER grew up in a family that was constantly on the move. As a child who never found herself in one place for long, she'd head to forests and "wild places" for solace from her transitory life, and continues to do so to this day.

"As an adult, I continue to seek out such places. The world of nature offers a peace that is there for all of us to take in," Snyder writes in a biography explaining how her "Luminous Nature" art show currently on display at Mindport Exhibits came to be.

Snyder uses wood branches, raffia, metal and cast glass objects to tame the wild, which, under her able hands are transformed into sculptures that remind the viewer that the turbulent forces of nature and the creative forces of art are not so far apart.

The pieces in "Luminous Nature" are simple yet complex, and require careful viewing. In one example, raffia swirls converge on top of a rich red background and make one think of a wild, sensual storm. In another, a collection of branches spanning the length of the tall wall is lit from above in such a way that the shadows created on the mustard-yellow background are as much a part of the artistic intent as the careful placement of

SEE IT

WHAT: Luminous Nature
WHEN: Through Jan. 28, 2007
WHERE: Mindport Exhibits, 210 W. Holly St.
COST: Free for gallery, \$2 for interactive exhibit
INFO: 647-5614 or mindport.org



the naked, curly pieces of wood. Chandeliers of wood and cast glass branches might be found at a tea party in the middle of the forest, and spears of glass, wood and beadwork may well have been created by fierce wood nymphs preparing for battle.

It's no surprise to find out that Snyder started her artistic career as a tapestry weaver, for the images she creates by layering wood and raffia and glass are indeed a form of intertwining found more often in fabric than in the great outdoors.

"I gradually moved away from weaving images of trees and grasses to using the trees and grasses themselves," Snyder explains.

When you've had your visual fill of "Luminous Nature," be sure to wander around Mindport's interactive art space next to the gallery. The exhibits are designed to be touched and manually manipulated, and feature such wonders as a magnetic turntable, a mini tornado, an aquatic ecosystem and much more.

Mindport's mission statement further explains that, "Fine art does something to or for you internally, but you don't get to do something back to it. Interactive art, on the other hand, asks that you do something to it externally, and when you do, it gives you a physical reaction in return.

"Mindport presents a mix of science and art, technique and expression, blending physical and spiritual modes of understanding the world. Whether you just want to look, or would rather get physically involved, Mindport has something to offer you." ©

LISTINGS

EVENTS

WED., DEC. 20

CALL FOR ART: Artists and designers are invited to create a City of Bellingham logo for an exhibit at Blue Horse Gallery in early February. The public will be encouraged to vote for their favorites. For more info: 671-2305.

CALL FOR MODELS: Oak Harbor artist Betty Bastai is seeking models for an upcoming mixed-media installation at Mindport Gallery. The deadline is Dec. 31. For more info: (360) 675-7746 or bettybastai@hotmail.com.

DEC. 20 - 24

FESTIVAL OF ART: Allied Arts holds its 27th annual Festival of the Arts from 10am-7pm at the Whatcom Center, 1310 Cornwall Ave. For more info: 676-8548 or alliedarts.com.

SEASONAL CELEBRATION: Handmade soap, beeswax candles, primitive lamps, wreaths and more can be found at "Celebrate the Seasons" starting at 10am at the Candle Baker Homestead, 716 E. Pole Rd., Lynden. For more info: 318-1597.

DEC. 22 - 24

HOLIDAY MARKET: The 9th annual Pacific Arts Holiday Market happens from 10am-6pm Fri.-Sat. and from 10am-3pm Sun. at 216 Grand Ave. For more info: 738-6442.

DEC. 23 - 24

OPEN STUDIO: Painter Ben Mann will host a Holiday Open Studio featuring works spotlighting his recent trip to Hawaii from 12-6pm Sat. and 12-3pm Sun. at 1000 Harris Ave., Studio #18. For more info: mann-alive.com.

EXHIBITS

ALLIED ARTS: Photographers Bonnie Lebesch and Dimitri Katsaros will have their work on display through December at Allied Arts, 1418 Cornwall Ave. For more info: 676-8548.

BELLINGHAM RAILWAY MUSEUM: The museum is open to the public from noon-5pm Tues. and Thurs.-Sat. at 1320 Commercial St. For more info: 393-7540.

BLUE HORSE GALLERY: Painters Gary Bennett, Steve Mayo, and Dave Nichols are among

the artists being shown through December at the Blue Horse Gallery, 301 W. Holly St. For more info: 671-2305.

FRAMEWORKS: Canvas and acrylic works by Shawn Pagels can be seen through Jan. 6 at FrameWorks Gallery, 1426 Cornwall Ave. For more info: 650-1001.

HANDPRINT ARTS: See the multi-artist "Fresh Paint II" through January at Handprint Arts, 1611 N. State St. For more info: 647-9087 or handprintarts.org.

IMPORT IT: "The Best of 2006" art show can be seen through December at Import 12, 2711 Meridian St. For more info: 752-3233.

INSIGHTS GALLERY: "Petite Pieces" features more than 60 small works through Dec. 23 at Insights Gallery, 516 Commercial Ave., Anacortes. For more info: (360) 588-8044 or insightsgallery.com.

LUCIA DOUGLAS: The multi-artist "Poetry of the Night Sky" shows through Dec. 23 at Lucia Douglas Gallery, 1415 13th St. For more info: 733-5361 or luciadouglas.com.

MINDPORT EXHIBITS: "Luminous Nature," a show of sculptures by Denise Snyder, shows through Jan. 28 at Mindport Exhibits, 210 W. Holly St. For more info: 647-5614.

MONA: See Lanny Bergner's "Entering Ether" installation through Jan. 7 at La Conner's Museum of Northwest Art, 121 S. First St. For more info: (360) 466-4446 or museumofnwart.org.

RADIO MUSEUM: "The Dawn of the Electrical Age" exhibit is currently being featured at the American Museum of Radio & Electricity, 1312 Bay St. For more info: 738-3886 or amre.us.

WHATCOM CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: "By the Bay: Working on the Waterfront" is open from 10am-5pm Thurs.-Sat. and 12-5pm Sundays at the Whatcom Children's Museum, 227 Prospect St. Admission is typically \$3.50, but is free for the rest of December. For more info: 733-8769.

WHATCOM MUSEUM: "Building Tradition: Contemporary Northwest Art from the Tacoma Art Museum" and "Bert Huntoon and the Mount Baker Lodge" are currently on display at the Whatcom Museum, 121 Prospect St. For more info: 676-6981 or whatcom-museum.org.