

Nonprofit arts organization dedicated to emerging artists holds found object art contest

Sand City embraces new fine art base

By **LISA CRAWFORD WATSON**

Herald Correspondent

The place is known for making something out of nothing. Or something out of what was, but is no more. Of repurposing what remains to give it new life, new perspective, new purpose.

It used to be a place you didn't want to go after dark. As night fell, cyclone fences were gated and warehouse doors rolled shut, converting a place of industry into a warren of black alleys where little more than fear and a junkyard dog roamed the empty streets.

Over time, the shadows of night crept into the daylight, reducing the place to a contemporary ghost town blighted by apathy and abandonment. But to an artist, it was a ready canvas, waiting for creative expression.

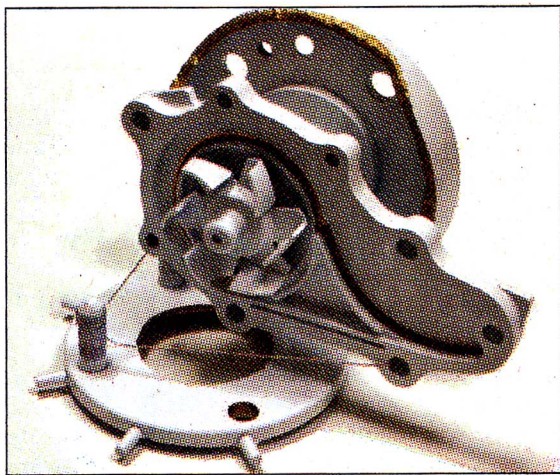
As part of a continuing effort to transform Sand City into a thriving community, local artists have taken advantage of mixed-use rezoning to create their studios, their art, their community in abandoned or converted warehouses in what is now "Sand City Soho" on the West End of town.

When artists Elizabeth O'Malley and David Wilkinson came to town six months ago, they strolled the streets and slipped into studios, looked at the ocean and hung out at the Ol' Factory Café, and they got it.

If you go

- **What:** Found Object Art Contest
- **Where:** fine art base, 652 Redwood Ave., Sand City
- **When:** Deadline Aug. 16; Awards Aug. 22 at West End Celebration
- **Cost:** Entry \$15 for students and members; \$20 for nonmembers
- **Contact:** www.fineartbase.org

Got the energy among the artists, the sense of community and the idea to create "fine art base," a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to emerging artists.



Kris Cowen was selected to create a sculpture for the Found Object Art Exhibition.

The name is always written in lower-case letters but always a little bigger and bolder. It seems to give a more grassroots vibe to this home base, base camp, training base, artist-based place that has landed mere inches away from a former military base.

"fine art base," said O'Malley, "is about creating a certain location where emerging artists can work and learn and exhibit their art, a place that contributes

Please see Art page B7

Art

From page B1

to and connects to a larger network of artists. David and I wanted to do this in a beautiful, inspired place, with a strong history of art, and a current community of artists who are bringing that legacy along. The Monterey Peninsula is a perfect place for fine art base; it is utterly gorgeous, and there are so many wonderful artists here, who have given us such support."

Two key supporters of the project, among many, are established artists Fred Slautterback and Carol Chapman, whose Sand City space, Slautterback Chapman Fine Art studio and gallery, now houses fine art base. A warren of spaces already dedicated to training, production and exhibition, the studio proved a perfect "repurposing" for fine art

If you go

- **What:** Eighth annual West End Celebration
- **Where:** Sand City, in the maze of streets that begins at Catalina and continues down Ortiz to Holly
- **When:** Saturday, Aug. 22 from noon to 6 p.m.
- **Cost:** free; \$10 donation for wine tasting
- **Contact:** 915-0833 or www.sandcity.org

base.

"We are big fans and supporters of Elizabeth and David, and are excited about the new art direction of our previous space," said Chapman who, with Slautterback, has studios in Monterey and Carmel. "It is a first for the art community in Monterey County to have a nonprofit that will provide studio space for emerging artists, and also sponsor workshops and exhibits for these artists. Sand City and this particular space are a perfect fit to make this work. This young, dynamic duo is

truly creating a gift to the community."

Born and raised in Seattle, O'Malley earned a bachelor's degree in English Literature from Swarthmore College, yet pursued a career as artist-designer-creative director in film, fashion and special events in Los Angeles and New York City. She augmented her education in art and design and Parsons, Pratt, Otis College of Art and Design, UCLA and The School of Visual Concepts.

Born and raised in Denver, Wilkinson received a bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Metropolitan State College of Denver before pursuing photography-based fine art in Los Angeles, Paris, New York City and the West Coast.

Although the pair have already established significant membership in fine art base, have already hosted workshops with established artists, have already held art exhibitions,



Another found art sculpture from artist Kris Cowen.

their still-new organization is hosting its inaugural fundraising affair. Open to artists of all ages and abilities, the event is called "Found Object Art Contest." Perhaps a nod to a community established through rezoning, repurposing and reinventing itself.

"The purpose of the contest," said O'Malley, "is to promote ecologically based creative ideas, inspiring conservation and sustainability through the fine

arts. The challenge for participants is to create art that defies the defined use of the objects.

"In this, our first of what we expect will be an annual event, we are pleased to partner with the Monterey Regional Waste Management District, with support from Monterey County Board of Supervisors, Fractured Atlas, and Esmeralda Distillery to introduce this contest for Sand City's West End Celebration. Awards will include \$100 prizes, a big high-five and a cup of coffee, each, for the contest winners. Deadline for submissions is Aug. 16."

In celebration of the event, emerging artist Kris Cowen was selected to create a unique sculpture for the Found Object Art Exhibition and the Monterey Regional Waste Management District.

"My sculptures are whimsical second-looks at found materials," said Cowen, of Pacific Grove. "I like to

gather objects and scraps from my daily experiences and create abstract sculptures that celebrate the materials for their inherent beauty. These works are a soft-spoken testament to the redemptive value of creating beauty from the forgotten and the discarded.

"I am interested in getting people to interact with each other and their environment. My concept for the fine art base/Monterey Regional Waste Management District found object sculpture is to create a work that acts as a catalyst for conversations."

On Saturday, Aug. 22, Sand City and the Sand City Arts Committee will host the eighth annual West End Celebration. Titled "City in Motion" the street fair is an expansive studio tour, art and wine festival designed to showcase a successful marriage of industry and artistry. It is here, during the event, that fine art base will reveal the winners of the Found Object Art Contest.