



ART that inspires action

Artists Work to Save Nature's Beauty

by Avery Mack

Eco-art creatively highlights environmental sustainability issues and sparks possible solutions.

Mounts Botanical Garden, in Palm Beach County, Florida, hosted *Washed Ashore: Art to Save the Sea*, a thought-provoking traveling exhibit featuring giant sea creatures made entirely of marine debris from beaches. “It graphically illustrates the amount of plastic pollution in our oceans and waterways,” says Curator and Director Rochelle Wolberg. The exhibit included Grace the Humpback Whale Tail, the Marine Debris Anemone, Priscilla the Parrot Fish, Flash the Marlin, Water Bottle Jelly, Sebastian James the Puffin, Lidia the Seal, Hugo the Humpback Whale Tail, American Sea Star and Musical Seaweed. Take a look at some of them and check for current exhibit locations at WashedAshore.org.

In Mechanicsville, Maryland, ex-iron and steel worker Steve Glorius repurposes scrap metal into natural world and fantasy art sculptures of ocean creatures that also inform about endangered wildlife. His works have adorned museums, restaurants, galleries and gift shops.

Debbie and Mike Schramer, owners of Fairy House Vintage Antiques and Art,

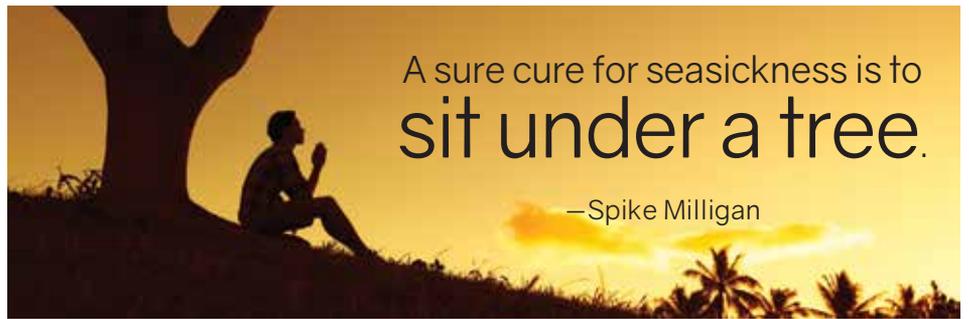
in Provo, Utah, create fairy houses made from twigs, mosses, bark and other natural elements. “Instead of paint and paper, we use nature itself,” says Mike, who encourages others to follow suit. “People enjoy time outdoors more intricately as they look for small items.” Although fairy houses are trendy now, the Schramers started building their fantasy worlds in 1987. They’ve authored three books to spark the imagination, *Fairy House: How to Make Amazing Fairy Furniture, Miniatures, and More from Natural Materials*, *Fairy Village* and *F is For Fairy: A Forest Friends Alphabet Primer* board book.

At 14, Canadian Evan Sharma, of Kingston, Ontario, is already an active entrepreneur—his artwork now appears on sneakers and clothes. He calls his company RBLB for Right Brain/Left Brain, saying, “To be a whole person, you have to use both the creative side and the analytical side of your brain.” His passion for the environment is particularly expressed in a painting he donated to support the Olympic team. Painted at an elevation of 7,000 feet on Sun Peaks, in British Columbia, he finished with snow for authenticity and texture. This year, he spoke on creativity at the 6 Under 16 program, in Montreal.

“Eco-art makes an impact on the world,” says John Sabraw, professor of art and chair of painting + drawing at Ohio University, in Athens. “Right now, my paintings are round. People say they see a long view of the planet or what’s seen through a microscope. Every painting evokes a different emotional response from the viewer.” All Sabraw’s paintings use pigments processed out of polluted streams, often mixed with other standard artist colors.

Sabraw has helped develop several ways for artists to adopt sustainable practices. See his TedxTalk at Tinyurl.com/SustainableArtist. He points out that whatever form eco-art takes, its purpose is to show a problem, provoke a response and ask the viewer, “What if...?”

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A sure cure for seasickness is to
sit under a tree.

— Spike Milligan