

Port Townsend artist gets Tacoma show



Stranded Vessel is a 2012 oil on canvass from the series Watershed.

PHOTO COURTESY KAREN HACKENBERG

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The Tacoma Art Museum announced a new exhibition featuring the art of Karen Hackenberg.

“Sea Change,” the museum’s marketing chief Rachel Ervin states, is Hackenberg’s ongoing series of paintings and drawings that address the critical issue of ocean degradation with a blend of humor and critique.

“Karen Hackenberg’s art features a playful yet thought-provoking taxonomy of imagined post-consumer sea creatures. Using traditional mediums such as oil and gouache, she meticulously transforms beach trash into captivating visual narratives. Her work creates a striking juxtaposition between form and idea, encouraging viewers to reflect on the environmental impact of human activity,” Ervin wrote.

Hackenberg focuses on manufactured bits of detritus – plastic bottles, cans, toys – that she finds on the beaches near her home in Port Townsend, in this one-person exhibition of approximately 40 works. Images of flotsam are included in her detailed compositions and the resulting artworks often portray beach trash as monumental within the seascape, serving as powerful metaphors for the vast scale of marine pollution.

In addition to her solo exhibition, Hackenberg’s work has been featured in Tacoma Art Museum’s Northwest Art Now, Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, the U.S. traveling Environmental Impact show, Neo-Naturalist at Museum of Northwest Art, Stilleven: Contemporary Still Life at Hallie Ford Museum of Art, and Beneath the Surface: Rediscovering a World Worth Conserving at A.A.A.S. headquarters in Washington, DC.

Programming for Sea Change is motivated by Hackenberg’s work and community partners using art as a conduit for climate action.