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Art has woman tied up in knots

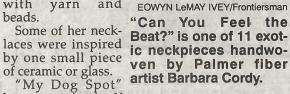
By EOWYN LeMAY IVEY

Frontiersman reporter

The rich colors and exotic beads whisper of other places, a collage of texture and culture. Glass beads from Africa, American Fibo beads, commercially spun wool, hand spun yarn, metal, wood, bone — all interwoven into moods and themes. In an exhibit called "Threads and Beads," Valley artist Barbara Cordy transforms handwoven necklaces into works of art.

"It intrigued me," Cordy said. "I love beads ... I've collected them for years." The Palmer artist and grandmother said she has piles of colorful beads at home from around the world. And each of her 11 pieces of art featured at Wasilla's Dorothy Museum demonstrate Cordy's fascination with yarn and beads.

began weaving itself



in Cordy's imagination when she discovered several round beads painted with the head of a panting canine.

Another piece in her exhibit, titled "Thanks to Denise & Clara Jo," was triggered by a friend's homespun yarn. Cordy said her friend was planning on throwing out the lavender swirled yarn so she snatched it up. And so began another artistic endeavor.

In other necklaces, Cordy said she was trying to create a mood. With a particular goal in mind, she searched through her home to find the right strips of color and fragments of texture. The five years she and her husband ran an antique shop in Palmer provided an endless and diverse source of beads.

"I have a lot of yarns at home, and a lot of

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beads," Cordy said.

With sunset hues of red and purple, "Come ... Dance With Me," is one of Cordy's most brilliant neck pieces. Several of the beads are South American. Others dazzle a '50s shade of red.

"The color says that," she said of the 40-year old beads.

She said the mood she meant to create with the bright neck piece was the exotic air of a Middle Eastern belly dancer.

However, the themes occasionally do not play themselves out on the woven pieces of art the way Cordy intends.

"Can You Feel the Beat," began with a small lizard charm Cordy received from her hus-

band as a gift.

"When I was done, though, it was obvious the lizard didn't belong on it," the artist said. Instead, she used a round bead with a face painted onto it.

"They really take on a life of their own," Cordy explained.

The process begins by drawing an outline of the neck piece and the placement of beads on graph paper. Using pins, Cordy weaves the yarn around the drawn outline. She said the technique is very similar to tapestry weaving.

The neckpieces are merely the



EOWYN LeMAY IVEY/Frontiersman

Palmer artist Barbara Cordy displays her creativity in unique, handwoven neckpieces such as "And They Swam Over the Dam." An array of yarns and beads, including these tiny fish beads, provide a colorful medium for her skills.

latest endeavor in her years of experimenting with fiber arts. Although she worked as a corrections officer in the Valley for many years, her interests have often drawn her into the fine arts. As a little girl, she learned how to crochet from her grandmother.

"It really got me interested in working with fiber," Cordy said. "It seems like it was always there." Since then, she has worked in many mediums, including watercolor and ink, but working with yarn and beads has always fascinated her.

"I think it goes back to my grandmother. She grew up in poverty ... and crocheting didn't cost very much," Cordy explained. "It's about using common materials to make beautiful things."

In 1988, Cordy took her first weaving class. But it was workshop in necklace weavin last year that really inspire her.

"Weaving can be a rigi medium," Cordy said. "Yo have to plan it in advance an you have little room to devia ... It's not like that with the neck pieces."

She said the necklaces allo her creativity to become mo fluid. The only aspect of the a pieces she has to plan ahead the structural outline. And sl can even add to that later, if sl desires.

"Each one has its own personality. I don't seem to contribute," she said. "It provides spontaneity I haven't found loom weaving." She said to creative freedom allows the apieces to develop from her internal emotions.

And the 50-something Coris continuing to expand hartistic versatility. Later the year, she will attend a worshop on tapestry weaving. Sis also interested in making tistically designed clothing Eventually, she would like move into the medium of the dimensional fiber sculptures.

Her exhibit of handwov neckpieces will contin through Dec. 6 at the Dorot Page Museum in Wasilla.