

# Art Down on the Farm

*Maryhill exhibit results from artist-farmer exchange*

*By Jeanie Senior*

Art and agriculture come together in “Sustaining Change on the American Farm: An Artist-Farmer Exchange,” an exhibit at Maryhill Museum of Art through July 30.

On display is a sampling of the works produced by 12 artists from Washington, Oregon and Idaho, each of whom was paired with an award-winning farm in the three states.

The artists spent much of 2005 learning about the challenges farmers face.

The paintings, sculptures and mixed media works are only a frac-

tion of those resulting from the alliance.

The artists learned “about the ways sustainable agricultural practices have been employed in order to survive and thrive,” says Lee Musgrave, curator of contemporary art exhibits at the museum.

The artist-farmer exchange was put together by The American Farmland Trust, which works to stop the loss of productive farmland and promote environmentally friendly farming practices.

Sponsors include the Institute of Museum and Library Services, West Coast Wealth Advisors and New Seasons Market.

The trust worked with local conservation districts to select the participating farms.

Each farm or ranch featured “is known and respected both for its farming and for its environmental stewardship,” according to Pacific Northwest Field Director Don Stuart.

Although Maryhill is an art museum, its 6,000-acre holdings include a considerable amount of farmland, in an area

where agriculture, tourism and urban expansion “continually interact,” Lee says.

“The museum is interested in new ways of understanding and responding to these changes,” Museum Director Colleen Schafroth says, making the exhibit a natural fit.

In many cases, the alliances were a revelation for both farmers and artists, who abandoned preconceived notions and got to know and respect one another, Lee says.

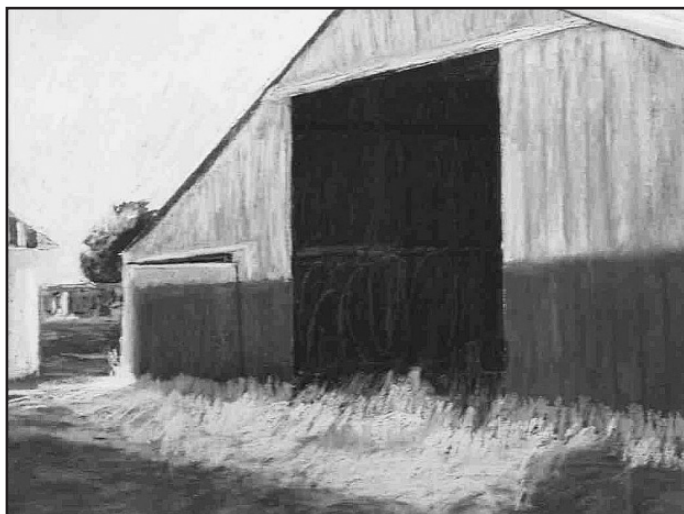
One of the most appealing exhibits is inside a Plexiglas display cube, because it looks so touchable, Lee says.

Done by Potlatch, Idaho, artist Nancy Taylor, it is a mixed-media piece called *The Stand*, inspired by her visits to Delay Farms—a tree farm in Idaho.

It features a pair of worn logging boots, decorated with moss, bark, grass and sawdust, seemingly one with the environment, which includes pine cones, fir boughs, lichen and an ax head.

Four of the farms in the exhibit are in Washington. The farm closest to Klickitat County is Orchard View Farms in The Dalles, Oregon.

From his visits there, artist Robert Dozono of Milwaukie, Oregon, produced paintings that depict the Bailey family’s sweet cherry orchards. In one, workers are visible in the orchard behind an applied lattice made of cherry tree prunings. ■



Artist Cheryl Williams-Cosner, *top*, painted the pastel above, “Morning on the Red Barn,” which is one of many works inspired by the American Farmland Trust’s artist-farmer exchange. Cheryl’s Klickitat County farm scenes occupy a second-floor gallery all to themselves at the Maryhill museum exhibition.