

Arts & Music

A look at the local art scene in SLV

Artwork For Change

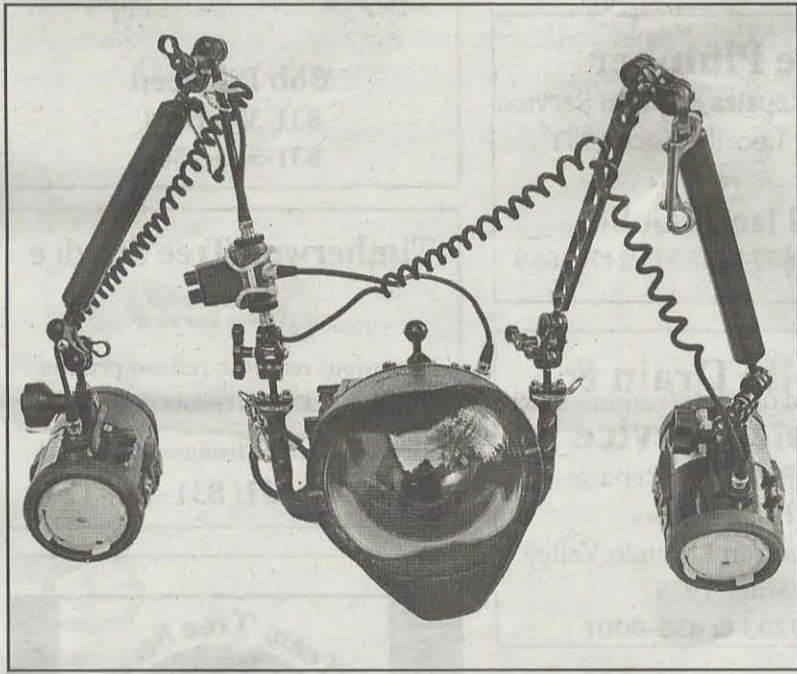
by Rachel Wooster

Open Studios is a way for the public to get a glimpse into the diverse world of the artists that live among us, and this year is no exception. The San Lorenzo Valley has 22 artists participating this year in Open Studios Art Tour sponsored by the Santa Cruz Art League. For a full list of these artists visit www.BoulderCreekInsider.com.

For me one artist stood out from the rest, Marc Shargel. He shows us how art-work can make positive change in the world. He is a photographer and conservationist based in Felton. He has been here for 30 years, been diving for 36 years, and been a professional underwater photographer for 26 years. In that time he has seen progressive change in the oceans and volunteered countless hours to protect them. His focus has been the California coast which has had marine reserves since 1973. In 2000 he started his conservation endeavors helping to form two marine conservation organizations. From 2004 to 2006 he served on a state panel that was charged with creating a network for marine reserves along our entire coast. These marine reserves are like small refuges in the oceans where marine life can breed and grow old. Some marine life such as rockfish have to reach 40 to 50 years old before they are in their breeding prime, thus making these marine reserves very important for diverse and healthy ecosystems.

He did not stop there though, with the marine reserves now in place scientists needed to study them to see if they were effective. Not all of the marine reserves

were implemented as advised, so he turned to art once again and started writing books to communicate to decision makers and the general public their importance. To date he has four books published, three in the *Wonders of*



Top: Shargel's Underwater Camera. Bottom: Photo by Marc Shargel



Marc Shargel in the field - Photo by Steve Salika

the Sea series, and his most recent *Yesterday's Ocean* which is a history of marine life on California's central coast. All of his books do a wonderful job of combining his underwater photography with historical images and easy to understand factual information to inform the reader and show them what is at stake.

Scientists now feel that the marine reserves from Mendocino county to Santa Barbara have been successful. In the rest of our coast however, (from Mendocino county to Oregon and Santa Barbara to Mexico) the marine reserves are spaced too far apart and are too small to be effective.

Marc is now expanding the focus of his art beyond politics to the public. He wants to communicate the amazing beauty of our coast to as many as he can. As the person who has seen the changes in our oceans for almost four decades he now wants to share that more intimately with the general public. He is having his first ever underwater photography class in February, to show people hands on what he has seen and learned. He also is continuing with his books, canvas prints, and postcards to get the word out there. To see his artwork, register for his upcoming class, purchase his books or other artwork please visit www.LivingSeaImages.com.



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