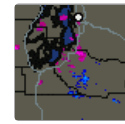


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### From sublime to ridiculous

You don't often see people sitting inside the Woolworth Windows making tiny little objects.

**ROSEMARY PONNEKANTI; STAFF WRITER**

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You don't often see people sitting inside the Woolworth Windows making tiny little objects.

But at the First Night celebrations on New Year's Eve that's exactly what made up one of the window art installations: artists Adam and Rosalynn Rothstein, wearing factory masks at a little table inside the display window and patiently making vaguely industrial-looking objects.

As performance art, it was about as interesting as watching the clock tick round to midnight. Luckily, the other windows were full of multimedia sculpture that offered a lot more depth.

So what, exactly, were the Rothsteins making? Disks about the size and shape of a restaurant buzzer with symmetrical cogs. They created a statement about our relationship to daily objects that took a smartphone scan to their website ([5000.org](http://5000.org)) to find out. At that point, you get treated to a waffling blurb about how much work is needed to justify artists' work as "work." Instead of pondering how design, marketing and functionality interact, you begin to wonder why the city of Tacoma – which runs the Spaceworks program that includes the Woolworth Windows art – can't find artists who have a bit more to say both verbally and visually. After the Rothsteins leave the window for the night, all that's left are a few boring posters "marketing" their objects and the phone bar code. Hardly worth standing out in the bitter cold for.

But the next two windows along Broadway definitely are. In the longest middle window is a light sculpture by RSVR Visual Research that's a kind of riff on Dan Flavin with some Home Depot thrown in. Six yellow fluorescent tubes march diagonally across the window space, their golden light blotted with white-painted 2-by-4 boards hung edge-on to the window like a huge slat blind turned sideways. During the day, this is just puzzling, but the drama increases at night, particularly from a distance. However, the whole thing doesn't begin to match the beauty of RSVR's sweeping purple-emerald Woolworth installation last year.



Adele Eustis' installation can be viewed in the Woolworth Windows in downtown Tacoma. (ROSEMARY PONNEKANTI/STAFF WRITER)

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The pick of the Broadway bunch is Adele Eustis. In a fascinating process, the artist has created what looks like cocoons made of wax paper. In reality, these are pages of a 1930s Webster's dictionary, outmoded words over which she has painted wax and sumi ink, heating until the words blur into each other front to back and the whole thing becomes a translucent, organic white. The thin pages are then fused to rice paper and sculpted into 4-foot-high shapes, lit from within by bulbs diffused by more dictionary pages and gently wrapped around with strappings of twigs. Suspended from the ceiling and backed by loosely woven rope nets, these five cocoons fill the window with soft, delicate light, speaking of Japanese fishing villages and esoteric lantern rituals and swaying, organic things. Day and night, it's a marvel to look at.

Down on the Commerce Street window, Jennifer Robbins has filled her space with a leafless forest of bare trunks, mossy tangles and branches. They're treated with paraffin, wax and papier-mché. The look is quite natural, with the same oddly sanitized homage to nature that Mark Dion achieves with his nurse log at the Olympic Sculpture Park – though much less detailed. It's a little bit of winter forest tucked inside a barren city corner like a memory or a hope.

Woolworth Windows installations

**When:** Viewable 24/7 through Feb. 28

**Where:** Broadway and 11th streets, Tacoma











**Cost:** Free

**Information:** spaceworkstacoma. [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com)

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SIMILAR STORIES

First Night festivities: The party's just starting

The Mayan calendar would have allegedly seen the world end more than a week ago, but for First Night, the only effect is to inspire enormous serpent puppets and smoke-breathing temple boats. The arts-based, family-friendly, alcohol-free New Year's Eve celebration has rocked Tacoma's theater district for the past six years after a rebirth in 2007.

'Big Catch' sculpture another step closer to reality

A full-sized oil-red clay model of the "Big Catch" sculpture that will one day be part of the Gig Harbor's new Maritime Pier was unveiled last week at 2 Ravens Studio in Tacoma.

Painting in full bloom: Olympia garden is creative oasis for artists

The Olympia garden of artist Kathy Gore-Fuss sprouted a different kind of bloom last week.

Spaceworks fills voids for art, business

What began as a program to use vacant downtown storefronts as showcases for Tacoma's vibrant artists has started to focus on business incubation, and it's working. In the past few months, three groups that found free space in commercial buildings through Spaceworks Tacoma have made the leap into the marketplace.

South Thurston County is the place for autumn

Features writer Craig Sailor takes you on a day trip through the farms, small towns, art spaces and natural areas of South Thurston County that are so peaceful, you might not want to return home.

SOUTH SOUND

- Concern grows that no-draft society creating warrior class
Click, Fisher in stalemate over programming contract
Prosecutors say woman left baby with teen son who shook child while mom smoked cocaine
Graham horse owner pleads not guilty to 10 counts of animal cruelty
Callaghan: Famous-in-Tacoma figurines hitting the market
LaRue: Partnership promotes early reading

SPORTS

- Chris Clemons' long, winding career has finally hit stride as a pass rusher for Seahawks
Huskies start Pac-12 healthy, without Austin Seferian-Jenkins
Looks like Sounders' Fredy Montero is going to Colombia
Put SPSL on notice: Young Titans legit
Manziel, Texas A&M beat Oklahoma 41-13 in Cotton
Boling: Preaching consistency has led young Seahawks to this moment
McGrath: The deal is, Shanahan and Carroll are friends, mutual admirers

BLOGS

- Lights & Sirens: Tacoma man gets 35 years for attempting to kill wife in front of kids
Political Buzz: House committees: Denny Heck to Financial Services, Derek Kilmer to Science, Space & Technology
Seahawks Insider: Report: Philadelphia Eagles granted permission to interview Seattle Seahawks defensive coordinator Gus Bradley
Mariners Insider: D.J. Mitchell clears waivers, outrighted to Tacoma
Preps: Round one of city crashers? Lincoln, Foss ready to battle
TNT Diner: New Year's Eve 2012: Tacoma restaurants and bars hosting parties

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