

NEWS

Elizabeth Laul Healey has huge hometown return with ‘Dream Big’ sculpture



Elizabeth Laul Healey stands near her “Dream Big,” dog mosaic, with a team of close friends from Laguna Beach High, during a public art dedication at Laguna Beach City Hall on Thursday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)



By Andrew Turner

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Elizabeth Laul Healey was showered with the kind of support she could only dream of Thursday when the hometown product's work was recognized in front of Laguna Beach City Hall.

Dozens of old friends and art enthusiasts made it to the dedication ceremony for her latest and greatest creation — a 9-foot tall, 400-pound dog sculpture she has titled “Dream Big.”

Healey said people from San Diego to Santa Barbara attended the event, many of them former classmates.

“This is what it's all about,” said Healey, a 1986 graduate of Laguna Beach High. “This is community. This is love. This is people showing support for the arts, which I appreciate. We all get to have a little reunion.”



Elizabeth Laul Healey stands with her "Dream Big," dog mosaic sculpture at Laguna Beach City Hall. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

Apart from its sheer size, a prominent feature of the piece is the abundance of circles adorning the body of the dog. The inner portion of the circles have various designs identifying with nature, including the likenesses of leaves and stones. Others resemble rainbows.

"Twenty years ago, when our daughter was born, my mom was simultaneously dying of cancer, so all I could think about was the circle of life," Healey said. "I did dozens and dozens of paintings of just circles because that's all I could think about.

"Of course, 20 years later, they've made their way onto my sculptures, and so it's all about community and love and treasuring the ones that are here now and the ones who have passed."

Where the collar would be around the dog's neck, a circle with a clock tells another story. The clock reads 11:11, a meaningful time of day for the creative.

“They’re all watch dogs, so my life-sized ones have watches all over them, naturally,” Healey added. “This one has a big watch that’s set at 11:11. It’s a time of oneness — 11:11. I used to do it all the time with my mom, and we would say our prayers and send wishes to people all over the world who are hurting, or maybe selfishly whatever you wanted for yourself, but just to spread positivity.”



The top portion of “Dream Big,” the new public art installation at Laguna Beach City Hall that was dedicated Thursday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

Healey now splits her time between California and North Carolina, where she has a gallery, Iconostar Art. She has created more than 300 life-sized dog sculptures since 2007, but the one stationed on the lawn at City Hall is the largest.

“Dream Big,” which will be on display through May, incorporates fiberglass, ceramic tiles, amethyst and quartz among its materials.

When Healey was in high school, she began working at the Sawdust Art Festival, where she last exhibited in 2000.



Mayor Sue Kempf, right, introduces artist Elizabeth Laul Healey at the dedication of her dog mosaic sculpture outside Laguna Beach City Hall on Thursday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

The new public art project was funded by the local lodging establishments and the city of Laguna Beach.

“‘Dream Big’ is already a hit with the community,” said Donna Ballard, the chair of the Laguna Beach Arts Commission. “People come by every day, all the time, they’re taking photos [and] selfies.”



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