

September 11, 2020: What's Out There – Virtual Wooden Boat and Film Festivals.

Hello. This is Diane Urbani de la Paz with What's Out There, ways to connect with art and culture while staying close to home, for the weekend of Sept. 11th, 2020.

We've arrived at a historic moment in Port Townsend and Salish Sea history: a second weekend in September during which there are not 30,000 people downtown for the Wooden Boat Festival. Yes, the festival is happening online, at VirtualWBF.org. You will find abundant activities there — but I think it is also noteworthy that you can wander the town, soaking in the tranquility of 2020.

One of my favorite places to wander in peace is Fort Worden State Park, especially the batteries, also known as the bunkers, up on the bluff. A new art and history installation awaits you there. Artist Aaron Asis has listened to oral histories — recollections by people who lived at the fort during the past century — and he's chosen 23 quotations from them. He has stenciled these words onto the walls, in strategic places. So you can walk — around, over and under the batteries, where you will serendipitously find these messages. You'll see people's memories of the 1918 flu pandemic, of the lush natural environment at the fort, and various moments in local and world history. This installation is called "Fort Words," and it is slated to stay up through the end of October. Asis considers the stenciled quotations to be stand-alone passages, to ponder and talk about with your companions. But if you'd like to join a discussion of them, the Port Townsend School of the Arts and Northwind Arts Center will host a public art salon, online, this coming Wednesday, September 16th. Asis will be there along with a small cadre of local history and art people. The salon will start at 7 o'clock that evening and go for an hour. You can sign up at NorthwindArts.org.

And here's a big deal happening Saturday. The Port Townsend Film Festival doesn't hit full swing until September 24th, but its signature public event will be live-streamed at 4 o'clock this very Saturday afternoon. It's called the "Feeling Through Experience," and it features two short documentaries and a behind-the-scenes conversation with the people in the films. First up is the movie titled "Feeling Through." It's about a chance meeting between a regular guy and a deaf-blind man, on the city streets in the wee hours of the morning. Then you'll watch "Connecting the Dots," with "Feeling Through" director Doug Roland showing what he was aiming to say with his film. Roland will also moderate a discussion of the movies, and of human connection. To sign up and watch all of this on Saturday, the Port Townsend Film Festival's website is PTFilmFest.com.

And the local dining landscape, with its fabulous variety, beckoned to me again. For this week's takeout adventure, I went to land's end, also called Finistere. This uptown bistro is, in fact, a three-minute walk from my front door. So, I strolled down to admire the blackboard filled with the local farmers whose produce, wine and cider are served there. I ordered the polenta, the roasted beet salad and, for my carnivorous companion, the pork and ricotta meatballs. Now polenta and beets are two foods I did not care for as a child. Boy has that changed. Finistere prepares them both with such grace. The salad pairs sweet and tangy beets with smoky grilled onions, goat cheese, and spinach that refreshes. The polenta is a smooth, sun-yellow treat. And the meatballs, it was reported, are delicate, with a sophisticated herbal seasoning. All of this was brought to us with great cheer and speed by the Finistere crew.

That is the story for this week's What's Out There. I'm Diane Urbani de la Paz, here for you on KPTZ. Thanks for listening.