

Olympics project up artist's alley

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Highland - When they began in Greece millennia ago, the Olympic games spoke a single language.

Today, with the International Olympics slated to begin next year in their home of Athens, Highland artist Elisa Pritzker is trying to return the games to a single language again - the language of art.

Pritzker will be part of an international art project on the Greek island of Naxos that hopes to make a point about recycling. She has been designated the official American artist for the next Olympics. While working with a group of artists drawn from each of the world's continents, she'll have something to say about the world's throw-away culture.

Culture and language are aspects of life that Pritzker is acutely tuned in to. She's been an artist all her life and has made art the focus of everything she does, everywhere she goes.

Pritzker was born and educated in Argentina and has lived in Spain. When she came to Highland, it took little time to realize the tiny hamlet was culture-free. That was the beginning of the Highland Cultural Center, a gallery with classroom space.

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She bristles at the idea it can be anything less and almost despairs at the lack of practical advice available to art students.

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Elisa Pritzker of Highland has been designated the official artist for the next Olympics. Here she shows off some of her work, from left: "City 2," 1995, "D The Origins," 1999, and "City 1," 1995.

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things about relating to people, living within the various systems that are out there, the gallery systems, the exhibition system," she said.

If a college or school could teach that, she said, then artists would have a better chance of breaking "out of the box"

in creating their work and being able to make a living at what they love to do.

Highland is only the smallest place in which Pritzker has exhibited - she's seen her work exhibited at galleries and museums all over the world. And, since much of her art has and is focused on

transforming ordinary materials (old tin can lids, washers, coins and lately, CDs) the reasons for her being invited to the Naxos project become clearer.

Wringing beauty from the ordinary is something she's always done, and done in ways that need no translation.