

Today's  
weather



Sunny

Low 47° High 78°



Poly skipper has  
impacted countless  
lives in 25-year career

IN SPORTS, 12

Fun fashions  
for your feet

IN SPOTLIGHT, 7



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Mustang Daily  
Tuesday Profile

## Local artist gets 'sassy' with shoes

By Cassie Gaeto

A new craft craze started in San Luis Obispo is proving that women can paint their shoes and wear them too. Do-it yourself designer Margot Silk Forrest was walking through a Bass Shoes Outlet recently when she found a pair of sandals. The five-strap sandals were extremely plain but only cost \$12. Forrest decided to buy several pairs of the sandals and turn them into something all her own.

"It started as one of those 'why-not-just-try-it' moments, but the results were astounding. The shoes were totally transformed," Forrest said. "I am fearless about making mistakes, I mean, what the hell, try it."

And try she did, Forrest has now completed over 50 pairs of hand crafted shoes using beading, glue, paint, stitching and accessories to revamp and personalize boring boots, flats and heels.

The wearable artwork will all be included in Forrest's next project, a four book series with instructional information on do-it-yourself shoe design. The first book in the series is titled "Sassy Feet!" and will be released next spring; the follow-up book will be "Sexy Feet."

After her first few pairs of successful design-it-yourself footwear, Forrest continued and added bridal shoes to her collection. On one particular pair entitled "Wedding Vows," Forrest used letter beads to sew on different words that represent promises the bride would be making to her husband on their wedding day, like "trust," "honesty" and "patience." Forrest wants all of her designed shoes to be beautiful but also to mean something.

"What we do with our feet is so symbolic. It is all about moving forward and stepping into the next phase of your life," Forrest said.

Along with her book deal, Forrest is starting up a shoe design class that she plans to run two Saturdays every month out of her home in Morro Bay. She encourages anyone and everyone to come out and try it.

"If you can thread a needle and hold a glue gun you can take this class," Forrest said.

Forrest currently has a large amount of her design work on display at the San Luis Obispo City-County Library. The display began on April 4 and will continue through May 5.

"They are cute and fun. People really seem to be enjoying them," said Heidi LoCascio, San Luis Obispo City-County Library employee.

Part of Forrest's display is a case called the "black flat challenge." Forrest took multiple pairs of plain, black flats and turned them into incredibly different and stylish footwear. All of the shoes in the challenge were the same pair of \$10 shoes from Payless Shoe- Source.

Before her days as a connoisseur in foot couture, Forrest was no stranger to the arts, writing a book in 2003 called "A Short Course in Kindness: A Little Book on the Importance of Love and the Relative Unimportance of Just About Everything Else." The book caught the attention of several publications and became a book of the year finalist by both the Independent Publisher's Book Association and ForeWord magazine.

Forrest has been involved in several journalism jobs at The Philadelphia Bulletin and the San Jose Mercury News. She even started her own self-help newsletter for women who have been the victims of childhood abuse called The Healing Woman, which now has a circulation of 17,000.

During her time in the Bay Area, Forrest joined the Peninsula Wearable Arts Group, an organization that brings together artists who specialize in all types of clothing design to share ideas.

Forrest even walked the catwalk in one of her beloved sweatshirt designs during one of the groups wearable-art fashion shows.

"I was never into shoes before, but something about this just bit me. I have been involved in a number of crafts before but this is the most fun that I have ever had," Forrest said. "More people should be doing this."

Working jobs all over the country Forrest settled down in the San Luis Obispo area in 2001 and has stayed around ever since.

"People in this area take time for art, they take the time to do it and to look at it," Forrest said. "It is slower here, when you slow down you notice things, if you don't slow down you miss your inspiration."