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Monica Disare - Globe Correspondant | August 08, 2015

Constitution Beach transformed with sand art

Cate Maas called her sister, an artist in Utah, recently to brag that she could attend a world-renowned Andres Amador sand-drawing class about 10 minutes away, instead of across the country.

“I was going to fly to California to go to his workshops,” said Maas, 70, of Chelsea, who pulled a wad of postcards out of her purse with pictures of Amador’s work on beaches around the world. But instead, she traveled only as far as East Boston on Saturday to make her own large and intricate flower pattern, the “big one in the sand,” she said.

Constitution Beach was transformed Saturday into a patchwork of flower patterns, squiggles, and geometric shapes. Families, dedicated artists, and casual passersby picked up rakes and labored on individual patches of sand, instructed by Amador on how to properly draw circles and flower petals.

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, a nonprofit that works to protect Boston’s harbors and beaches, had invited Amador to Boston.

“To me, the ocean and the beach are a source of joy and respite,” said Bruce Berman, spokesman for Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, who hoped Saturday’s event helped a large group of people feel the same way.



Aliah Rogers of Marblehead incorporated sea shells into a sand design she was working on during Public Participation Day with Artist Andres Amador.



Amador relies on public help for his art, based on blueprints that he hands out.

Many of the participants were high school and college students part of the youth staff at Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. The students wore light blue shirts and threw footballs in between drawing patterns. Others, like

Madison White, 26, a nurse from Medford, said the artwork reminded her of her childhood.

“When I was a kid, I used to walk down to the beach, digging my foot in the sand,” White said.



Andres Amador, with his 14-month-old son Kavi, coached Kayla Koury of Boston and Maija Erickson of Stoneham.



Sand artist Andres Amador spoke with Eve Meyer and her father Cliff.



Eve Meyer, 13, and her dad Cliff worked on a sand art design Saturday at Constitution Beach in East Boston.



A design that could be as fleeting as it is intricate.

Bill Reyelt, 49, an urban planner from Brookline, brought his 9-year-old and his 11-year-old daughters. One of his daughters is an aspiring artist, Reyelt said, and both were impressed by pictures of Amador's work.

"They thought the pictures online were very cool," Reyelt said.

As Helena Cypriano lounged on the beach, she was slowly enveloped by the artwork. "It's beautiful," said Cypriano, 57, who lives in Medford but is originally from Brazil. Cypriano, who comes to the beach each week, alternated between sunbathing and poking her head up to gaze at the artwork. "I'm so very happy for the people coming here."

Beachgoers were particularly excited that the project beautified an urban beach. Constitution Beach is a 10-minute walk from the Orient Heights T stop. A pedestrian overpass separates the beach from a busy street lined with convenience stores and fast-food restaurants.

"City beaches get such a bad rap, but this is pretty cool," said Steve Gordon, 52, of Newton.

Amador, who has worked on beaches in Ireland, Brazil, and France, was treated as a celebrity

Saturday morning. He stopped to pose for photos with fans, answer questions, and hand out images of flower patterns to anyone interested in participating.

Originally from San Francisco, Amador began his career interested in geometry and architecture before stumbling on sand art, which he said is the perfect canvas for both.

"Now my life revolves around the tides," said Amador, whose artwork exists only for a few hours before the tide washes it away.

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