

Assemblage artist finds new paths for older objects

- [By Kristopher Radder, Vermont News & Media](#) Sep 4, 2024

WESTMINSTER — In a larger, more complex version of collaging, Kathy Kemp looks around her home studio for different objects that might fit well together. She creates assemblage art.

Assemblage art is produced by incorporating everyday objects into the composition. Although each non-art object, such as a piece of rope or newspaper, acquires aesthetic or symbolic meanings within the context of the whole work, it may retain something of its original identity.

Kemp was inspired to pursue assemblage art after attending a workshop at HatchSpace in Brattleboro taught by Larry Simons. She thought it was an interesting form of artistic expression. “I was just blown away,” said Kemp. “I started scavenging and designing things.”

With a studio filled with different parts of old pianos, chairs, frames and other great treasures, Kemp said one of the best things about assemblage is looking for that right piece of that thing you are making.

“It can be anywhere. It can just be walking down the road or in the woods, or watching what people put out on the side of the road, going to the Swap Shop in Brattleboro,” said Kemp. “I enjoy that a lot. I enjoy the design and pushing things around.”

“I’ll just see a connection between things, whether it be color or shape or texture, and then it just sort of builds from there,” said Kemp. “The initial part that I start with, when it’s all said and done, it may not be there at all, they’re just a catalyst for what happens.”

She draws a connection from her art life to her professional life as a Geriatric Care Manager. She often works with people in their later years of life.

“They're imperfect and often quite weathered. There's something I really enjoy about working with older people who have a history and stories, and it shows in their eyes, their skin, their hands,” said Kemp. “Appreciating and recognizing the beauty and history in older things that have been maybe cast off or aren't used anymore and can take on a new life in a different way.”

Her art is currently on display at the Harmony Collective in Brattleboro and will also be apart of Vermont Cultural Council's open studio tour on Oct. 5 and 6.