

Maine Home

January/February 2009

+DESIGN

Sleep In Ski Out

Sugarloaf and Sunday River
slope side getaways

The Colorfully Creative Maine Cottage founder Carol Bass

Mountain Man
Warren Cook
leads Saddleback Ski Area

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The Art of Assemblage

Ten Maine artists explore the bricolage of found objects

CRAFT OF MAINE

by Candace Karu

Photography Scott Dorrance



*"When you put together things that other people have thrown out,
you're really bringing them to life—a spiritual life that surpasses
the life for which they were originally created."*

Louise Berliawsky Nevelson

CRAFT OF MAINE

Michael Branca

The Last Supper (after Leonardo), 2001
Pencil on paper, switchplate
2.75" x 4.5"

Micro Mona, 2003
Pencil on paper, typewriter part
2" x 3.5"



Harvey Peterson

Shiner/Boxer, 2008
Wood, old fabric tape measures, fabric,
found boxing gloves, with polychrome
46" x 14" x 9"

Artists have been making assemblages for centuries, using the materials and objects around them as vehicles of expression. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, artists such as Edgar Degas, Marcel Duchamp, Louise Nevelson, and Pablo Picasso worked with *objets trouvés*, or found objects, regularly experimenting with scavenged pieces to give new voice to materials that had long been silenced.

The French artist Jean Dubuffet often incorporated dirt, stones, discarded papers, and other organic materials onto his canvases. In 1953, he created a series of compositions using butterfly wings, which inspired him to coin the term *assemblages d'empreintes* (assemblages of fingerprints). Taking the concept of collage from two dimensions to three, Dubuffet's work used banal materials and man-made objects to create art that was both immediate and sculptural. In describing this technique, he said: "Art should be born from the materials and, spiritually, should

Mark Kelly

Series, *Between Breaths*, 2006-ongoing
Found materials
9" x 7.5" each



Anastasia Weigle

Sleight of Hand, 2008
Found objects
14" x 4" x 6"

CRAFT OF MAINE

Mike Libby

Orthoptera: Tropidacris, 2008
Grasshopper with copper and
brass antique watch parts,
gears, springs
6" x 6" x 6"



borrow its language from it. Each material has its own language so there is no need to make it serve a language."

In 1961, responding to a world and culture in transition, the Museum of Modern Art in New York launched a daring exhibition called *The Art of Assemblage*, to wide public and critical acclaim. As the first major show of assemblage art, it included more than 140 European and American artists, including Picasso and Dubuffet, as well as Joseph Cornell, Georges Braque, Man Ray, and Robert Rauschenberg.

Assemblage art reflects and amplifies the ephemeral nature of the material from which it is created, reimagining the intent and purpose of the discarded original. The juxtaposition of components explores relationships, often awkward and frequently complicated, bringing fresh intent through evocative composition.

We have invited ten Maine artists to share their work on these pages, using the vocabulary of bricolage to give each of their assemblages a rich and varied resonance.

Edward Mackenzie

Clean Green and Orange, 1999
Fuel additive syringes, wine casks, wooden frames
each letter 14" x 10" x 11"





Jill Dalton

Celestial Communicator, 2007
Vintage lightning rod, found steel and copper
48" x 16" x 40"

Poppitt, 2007 (opening page)
Metal, glass, paper
6" x 4"



Mildred Johnson

Counterpoint, 2008
Assemblage
16" x 8" x 3"





Wesley Reddick

Mammological Artifact, 2008
Antique hemlock barnboard, hammered
wire, leather, cut nails
18" x 10" x 4"

Robin McCarthy

Organic Object with Chain, 2008
Monoprint with metal
10" x 9" x .5"

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