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Madisonian: Maggie Sasso -- She's a woodworker and an expert in "found stuff"

STORY DISCUSSION

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By GEORGE HESSELBERG | ghesselberg@madison.com | Posted: Saturday, October 31, 2009 6:00 pm | No Comments Posted



Maggie Sasso, 26, has expertise in woodworking art, in which she is a graduate student at UW-Madison. She also excels in "found stuff." Those skills have been on rolling exhibit through an experimental art project, the Mobile Museum of Material Culture, a hand-crafted wooden trailer attached to a tandem bicycle created by Sasso and fellow artist Kara Ginther.

You're a woodworker and Kara is a leather worker. How did you decide to work on this project together?

Maggie Sasso shows pieces of an old sewing machine in a wooden box, examples of the 'found objects' that she turns into art.

George Hesselberg -- State Journal

I am not a woodworker who oogles and ogles over the grain. The wood is a way to build structures for me from what is available. Kara and I both collect old stuff. We had a full show of material culture and we decided we couldn't stop. We got a grant (for \$1,500) and we had just found a tandem bike my husband fixed up. So using mostly found stuff we made the trailer. Everything is in old boxes.

What's your favorite thing in the museum?

It's in an old card catalogue box, with the title: 'Found on the streets of Paris, France.' It's a little book, a handwritten journal, found by a friend in Paris. People are fascinated by it, they spend a lot of time looking at it.

How does someone become an expert on 'found objects' art?

When you work with found objects for a while, you get a sense for it. At first you just get a bunch of stuff you don't need, but after a while you get the good stuff. (She pulls out an old telescoping golf ball scoop, a prime find.)

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How are you at adventures?

I'm always up for an adventure. Ben (my husband and a mechanical engineering graduate student) and I drove to northern Saskatchewan for the Emma Collaborative art project where 100 artists with tools make stuff for a week. You get a big pile of found objects, really good stuff. And at any point someone can steal your project and you have to go and steal someone else's.

Your favorite secret place in Madison to find things?

The Bethesda House of Thrift. It's great.

- Interview by George Hesselberg

For a look at Maggie Sasso and Kara Ginther's Mobile Museum of Material Culture, go to www.museumofmaterialculture.com. The traveling museum's next public appearance will be listed there. Bethesda's is at 201 Cottage Grove Road.

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