

NORTH COUNTY NEWS

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From teaching to doing

By Abby Luby



“Dragonfly”

Retired Shrub Oak teacher embarks on artist’s career with local exhibit

When Shrub Oak resident Linda Weinbaum retired from teaching in July, her dream of being an artist became a reality. The former New York City teacher started out teaching art 27 years ago, but as art budgets tightened, she began teaching second grade and special education.

“I’ve always dabbled in the arts; I’m very passionate about making things,” Weinbaum said. Now, the fruits of her passion can now be seen on the walls of Club Fit in Jefferson Valley during the month of January.

Weinbaum’s collages and assemblages are intriguing and fun. Using text and appropriated images, such as the Mona Lisa, her canvases and shadow boxes are both lyrical and contemplative. In her work, “Thinking Man,” a young man’s head is adorned by pleated leaves for hair which transform him into a tree replete with a hovering bird. Beneath him his body morphs into a series of gears, circular frames holding a composite of words and images.



In "Classical Triptych," your eye moves from left to right over three rectangular canvases catching a classic Greek structure to a woman gazing up and then to a compilation of photos and news

text. All three canvases are thematically joined with simple but ornate swirls.

"Most of my collage has the image of the Mona Lisa," Weinbaum said. "To me, she is the image most connected to Leonard DaVinci who personifies the artist as a thinker. Mona Lisa is symbolic of that but also she is very mysterious."

In "Dragonfly," a delicately inked, giant black dragonfly dominates the frame, spreading from the cream colored center out to a thick orange border. Singular draftsman's lines and the number 45 contrast the organic wings and body of the insect. Tucked into the corner is a circle of staff music that sends the immediate message of the intrinsic connection between science and nature.



"Home" is chock-full of text and images within an elongated shape of a house. Dotted within the flatted structure are smaller pitched house roofs, an iconic columned door, a skeleton key and a small picture of Picasso. Centrally located is a quote: "The ornament of a house is the friends who frequent it."

"Most of my collages have something written on them and I use a lot of quotes," Weinbaum said. "I love the texture of combining specific text and images."

Weinbaum said that she is especially attracted to Asian images. She's been to China twice and has incorporated a keen sense of line and form of the Far East. In the assemblage entitled "Asia," a series of four small pieces encased in black reveal Oriental icons: a Kabuki master, a Geisha, the complex and beautiful Oriental text.

"It's called 'selective seeing,'" Weinbaum said. "That's what I use when



picking out objects for my work. I see things in the dollar store that I'm drawn to. There is potential art in almost anything."

A former bedroom of her adult son has become her art studio where Weinbaum says she is inundated with items destined to migrate into one of her a collage or assemblage. But some images end up on furniture as well, and photos of her hand-painted furniture are also on view at Club Fit.

"I paint on chairs I find that are being discarded," she said. "I sand and prime them and then put a famous painting on them." Weinbaum also enjoys decorating books, journals, cards and children's clothing.

Weinbaum's month-long show has already reaped the reaffirming benefits artists love. About four of her pieces sold in the first week.

"I'm really very new at this but also excited to be able to show my work," she said.

In a nutshell

What: "Assemblage and Collage," works by Linda Weinbaum

When: Month of January

Where: Club Fit Jefferson Valley 600 Bank Road