

KASS COPELAND

BIO

Kass Copeland has worked as an artist and designer in Chicago since 1995. Prior to earning her BFA in graphic design from The Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, Florida, she studied and apprenticed with her father, a theatrical and circus prop designer and craftsman. She collaborated with the former Redmoon Theater for over a decade and now enjoys working with Cabinet of Curiosities, The Chicago Children's Theater, NewMoon Chicago and other theater, event, and advertising clients.

STATEMENT

I find the puzzling together of previously unrelated objects and images very satisfying. Like joining words together to form a poem, my pieces reveal themselves to me as I form new associations with elements that already have separate histories. Humor is an important component in my work because it provides a universal means of communication.

In my most recent series I've created assemblages made from furniture found near dumpsters in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. My work is rooted in a narrative foundation because words have always evoked images for me. I often use favorite childhood stories, rhymes or songs as resources. By focusing on these texts, I hope to provide an alternative view of the past by placing these themes into contemporary, social, and sometimes political, context.

PROCESS

I rescue discarded furniture and household items from alleys and search junk shops for objects and old photos that have stories to tell. My studio wall is filled with shelves of labeled bins containing carefully sorted items. These objects play a fundamental role in my work and are combined with collage and painting. I create the architecture of the pieces by placing various found objects into dresser drawers. I continue to arrange the objects until, at some point, the elements start to look like they belong together. That's when the narrative begins to form in my mind. It can take several weeks or even a few months to complete each piece since I often have to wait until I find just the right elements. Once the composition is complete the assembly process can take another few weeks as each object must be glued separately using various construction grade glues and is then reinforced with screws and nails.