

From functional to art-worthy

Dennos show elevates the utilitarian tool

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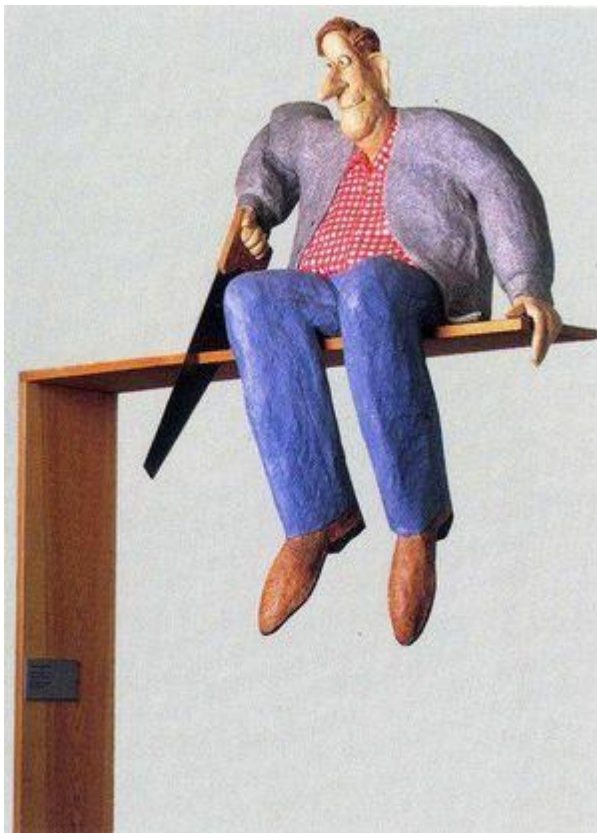


Photo courtesy of Joel Breger
Stephen Hansen's papier-mache "Man on a Limb," 1985

TRAVERSE CITY — A hammer is a hammer is a hammer. Or is it?

A new exhibit at the Dennos Museum Center sets out to show how the common tool also can be an object of beauty, an instrument of satire or illusion, or an extension of self.

"Re-tooled: Highlights from the Hechinger Collection" opens Jan. 25 and features more than 40 paintings, sculptures, works on paper and photographs with tools as their subject.

The show stems from Tools as Art: The Hechinger Collection, a collection of more than 375 tool-inspired works acquired by John Hechinger of Hechinger hardware store fame. He began amassing the art in the late 1970s to decorate new company headquarters in an efficient but sterile

space.

Now the collection's 20th century holdings include a glass hammer and nails frozen in

action and a lathe made entirely of wood, one of several witty works.

"A lathe is a metal machine used in carving wood, only they're actually using carved wood to make the lathe," said Jason Dake, Dennos curator of education. "There's a plug and everything."

Re-Tooled partner Habitat for Humanity-Grand Traverse Region will present three Saturday programs during the exhibit's run: Homes Filled with Hearts, Feb. 28, a drop-in crafts project and a display of art works by area habitat families, representing what home means to them; Upscale Art, March 28, an exhibit and auction of chairs salvaged from Habitat's Re-Stores and "revived" by area artists; and Net Zero Housing, April 18, a talk on Habitat's efforts at green building.

The show runs through May 17. Museum admission is free March 28, courtesy of sponsor Dan Brady Painting and Wood Restoration. Regular admission applies on other dates.

For more information, visit www.dennosmuseum.org.