

From Trash to Treasure

Katy artist Kathleen Wedemeyer makes it her business to turn other people's trash into treasure and inspires with her messages of hope and faith

Written by Tassie Hewitt | Select photography by Country Park Portraits

What started as a hobby 25 years ago for crafty Katy resident, Kathleen Wedemeyer, turned into her livelihood and passion, as demand for her handmade antique vintage creations took her artwork out of local craft shows and into homes across the country. She dutifully named her brand, Hope and Glory.

Hope and Glory

The artist, who makes an art out of turning junk into gems, admits to being creative from a young age. "I remember going through trash cans at the house and wondering what I could make out of stuff," she says. She once sold Christmas ornaments made out of dried okra to supplement her family income. "I can almost pick up a stick off the ground and make something out of it."

Wedemeyer, who has a background in commercial art, scavenges thrift stores for old silver and jewelry for use in her work. The frugal artist, who professes to being cheap at heart, transforms antique ceiling tile and discarded bead board into the collection of crosses, architectural angels, collages, and frames, for which she is so well known.

"I love metal," she says. Wedemeyer studied welding so she could expand the scope of her work. "I love rusty metal that tells a story because it's been through the process of time."

Where the Heart Is

Katy became home to Wedemeyer after her business grew and her old neighborhood's deed restrictions stifled her creativity. She needed space to spread out and allow storage for her growing collection of materials. "I bought a big trailer full of ceiling tin one time, and I was thinking, 'How am I going to get that home?'" she says. "So then, I just bought the trailer, too."

The artist, whose one-acre backyard in Old Katy is home to chickens and dogs, vintage bikes, and a '70s travel trailer, grew up in southeast Houston, but does not regret her move to Katy 15 years ago. "Old Katy still feels like a small town," she says. "I love this house. It has character."

Wedemeyer's 2,000 square-foot workshop, located behind her historic home, is crammed with bits and scraps and pieces of her finds. The workshop was built by her architect husband, Ron. It's where she spends at least three days a week creating the artwork she hopes will inspire purchasers. It is also where her husband taught her to use power tools, a skill that launched her business in a whole new direction.

Finding Inspiration

Wedemeyer finds inspiration for her work everywhere. "There are times I will hear a message at church and that



What started as a creative outlet, has now grown into her own business, Hope and Glory



Wedemeyer learned to use power tools and took a welding class at a local high school in order to improve her artwork

“I remember going through trash cans at the house and wondering what I could make out of stuff. I can almost pick up a stick off the ground and make something out of it.”

- Kathleen Wedemeyer

Local artist Kathleen Wedemeyer is passionate about sharing her creative gifts through her pieces and by teaching others

will become a banner one of my angels is holding," she says. "There are dark things in life, and people need hope."

In 2011, the owners of Creative Co-OP discovered Wedemeyer's artwork and asked permission to reproduce some of her more popular pieces. As a result, Hope and Glory licensed creations can be found in stores throughout the country, as well as online. "I even have little crosses at Buc-ee's, now," Wedemeyer laughs. "It was a nice opportunity to take some things off my plate so I could go on to create new things." Despite her accomplishments, Wedemeyer says it is important not to judge success in purely economic terms. "There have been many shows I went to and didn't make a penny, and yet I met a new best friend," she says. Her artwork is more about the message than the money. "I love the power of words to inspire people. I hope to glorify God in what I do. He is the master artist, and we're all His masterpieces."

Giving Back

When she is not creating or selling her artwork, Wedemeyer finds time to share her enthusiasm for art with the community. She teaches Power Tools 101 in her workshop where she empowers women with the courage and skills to

master the sander, drill press, and nail gun. She hosts art workshops and retreats and belongs to the Rowdy Art Sisters art club where members meet to trade techniques and stir up each other's creativity. She has a passion for mentoring other artistic women. Above all, Wedemeyer cherishes the one-of-a-kind in art and in life and has the ability to find beauty in anything. "I think every person you meet has a treasure inside," she says. "I love mining for treasure." **KM**

TASSIE HEWITT is a freelance writer who believes in angels and the power of words.

Kathleen's Shop Spots

- Goodwill Thrift Store
- Family Thrift Center
 - Multiplicity
 - Garage Sales

Wedemeyer is a co-op artist which means her creations can be found at several local boutiques



Wedemeyer uses various metal components and architectural antiques to create her pieces



Wedemeyer hosts art workshops and teaches art projects at women's retreats

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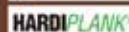


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