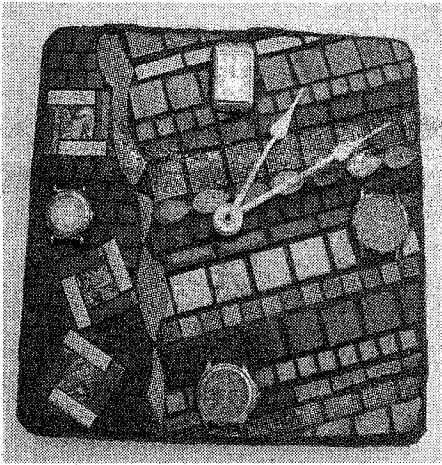


Little things that make a big difference

Newton artists focus on the green movement to make changes in the world around them

Right and center: Cecilia Kremer, of Newton Centre, uses jewelry, parts of old computers, tile and glass to create "Chromatile" figures and household objects. Kremer is one of several artists who will be featured at this year's eco-friendly themed Fine Art and Craft Show.



By Laura Paine
STAFF WRITER

Oak Hill resident Maria Mizrahi has used the nut from the Tagua palm to create whimsical, beaded jewelry and to help cut back on the cultivation of cocaine in Colombia.

For Oak Hill resident Maria Mizrahi, creating jewelry is about so much more than the end product.

The native of Colombia makes beaded Baloka jewelry from the Tagua nut, which grows on a palm in the South American rain forest. Each piece of Baloka Mizrahi sells supports the employment of 35 Colombian natives and helps to eliminate the cultivation of cocaine.

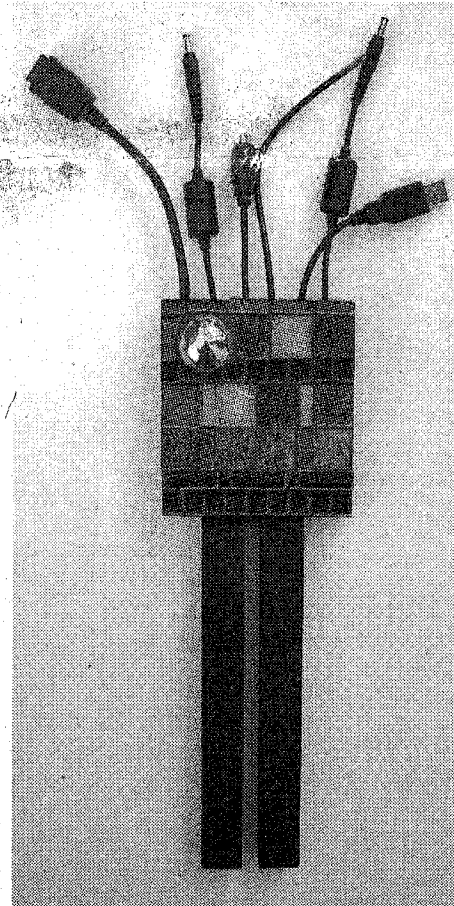
Mizrahi is one of several artists who will be featured at this year's eco-friendly themed Fine Art and Craft show at the Newton Cultural Center. Artists from the villages of Newton are using recycled materials to make colorful, vibrant pieces of art to help make a difference not just in their own communities, but in communities all over the world.

"The income received from the Tagua palm cultivation is a strong incentive for the native growers to maintain the tress, plan new ones and even replace illicit cultivation of crops like cocaine," she said. "Hopefully this will help stabilize not only the rain forest, but the country's political and social situation."

Linda Plaut, director of the mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, said artists are really responding to the environment and sustainability, and the city is always in support of green efforts.

"It's really reaching all levels of society," Plaut said. "One of our missions is to support the art community. Artists try to make their liv-

Oak Hill resident Maria Mizrahi makes Baloka jewelry using the nuts from the Tagua palms grown in the South American rain forest to help fund jobs for Colombian farmers.



ing through their artwork. It's beautiful to live with what they produce; it's hand made and has so much character."

Mizrahi was able to connect her love for her native country, Colombia, to her jewelry design training. She makes the beaded Baloka jewelry from the Tagua nut, which grows on a palm in the South American rain forest.

"Cocaine cultivation in Colombia was very bad 10 years ago," Mizrahi said. "It has been getting better because they are finding ways to replace the cocaine crop with another profitable crop. The people in the jungle are thinking about growing something else that is not cocaine. It is saving a whole generation of Colombians."

The Tagua is also used to make buttons and carved objects, such as piano keys and chess pieces. When the objects are finished, they have the sheen and feel of ivory. Mizrahi said a yearly harvest of one tree is the equivalent of ivory from one female elephant.

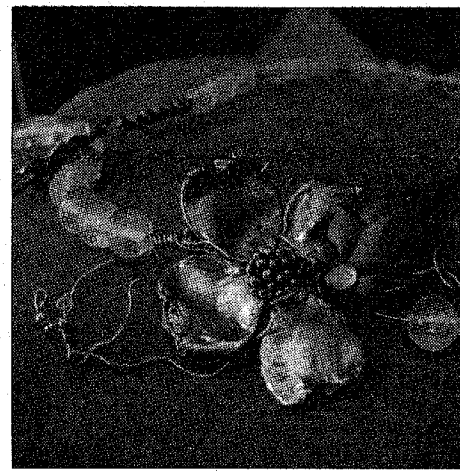
Newton Lower Falls artist June Lion said she thinks the theme of the fair is timely and if everyone does one little thing, it will make a huge difference.

"The people are really interested in the little bit that they can do, because we can't do much," she said. "We can't change the world. We can't change things we don't like in the government, but we can each do our little bit to make the world a better place."

Lion works with old pieces of jewelry that people no longer wear, but choose to hold on to because of the sentimental value attached to it. She then takes the piece and uses supplies like copper and pearlescent beads to create a more modern accessory.

"Jewelry is a very personal expression of combining nature and human beings," Lion said. "It's a language all of its own. Everybody is looking at the things they throw away and discard to make something beautiful out of it or pass it on in some way. It's really cool because it's another way we can all be connected."

Cecilia Kremer, a Newton Centre resident,



creates contemporary mosaic sculptures, called "Chromatiles," using jewelry and parts of old computers. She combines them with glass and ceramic tiles to make mosaic sculptures that look like people with disproportionate features.

"One has only one eye. Another one has a tiny nose disproportionate to its face," Kremer said. "I like that they are all different and kind of give me the idea that I am celebrating human differences this way, that we are not all the same. They are kind of unconventional and out of the norm."

She said she got the idea after her husband, an engineer, took apart her son's iPod Mini to try to fix it. When he was unsuccessful, she took a round electric circuit from inside the device and used it to make the mouth of her first mosaic sculpture.

"I think we can create out of shattered and useless pieces and find beauty behind the otherwise broken objects," Kremer said. "I feel like my mosaic shows how every little tile, as every little person, holds on to its own individuality. It can maintain a special interconnectedness and dependence to the pieces around it."

Jeannie Smith, associate director of the mayor's Office Of Cultural Affairs, said the show has been very popular in the past, and she is excited to combine Newton's green initiative with this kind of show.

"To be able to take that element into something like a craft show or at a holiday gift shopping show is really amazing," Smith said. "The items are not obviously eco-friendly. They don't have the look of the typical recycled material. They still look beautiful. I love the idea that everything is used and used beautifully."

Left: Newton Lower Falls resident June Lion uses old pieces of jewelry with sentimental value to make a new, modern piece of jewelry using various beads and copper. Lion's work will be shown at this year's eco-friendly themed Fine Art and Craft Show.

Where and when:

The Fine Art and Craft Show will be held at the Newton Cultural Center, 225 Nevada St., Newtonville, on Nov. 20 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Nov. 21 from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. The eco-friendly themed show is free of charge.

Below is another example of Cecilia Kremer's work.

