

The Art of the Repurposed Past

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Bruce Rosenbaum, reimagineer and owner of ModVic, LLC, said the air at Snow Farm, the New England Craft Program located in Williamsburg, MA, is usually filled with the scent of sawdust or the glow of a kiln. but recently, it hummed with a different kind of energy—mechanical, historical and re-imaginative. Under Rosenbaum's guidance, a group of 10 skilled artists and makers showed that when it comes to art, they certainly know how to 'shuttle' in a new era of creativity.

Rosenbaum said steampunk is more than just gears and goggles; it is a philosophy of "creative reimagining." Rosenbaum brought his signature blend of history and whimsy to the hills of Western Massachusetts for the Steampunkinetics workshop. The centerpiece of this year's workshop was the textile loom flying shuttle. Once a hardworking component of the textile industry, these wooden and metal artifacts served as the "spine" for the students' sculptures.

"The assignment was to turn the flying shuttle into some type of Steampunk vehicle," Rosenbaum explained. "So, for example someone sculpted a Steampunk-type car, a boat, a rocket, an airplane, and in some cases, they would be multi use, for example a vehicle that could fly and then dive underwater."

There must always be a good story behind Steampunk art. By centering the projects on a uniform historical object, the workshop challenged crafters to see the infinite possibilities within a single form.

"The assortment of found objects that Bruce brought with him helped everyone create an imaginative project that they can be very proud of," said Alex M., a 2026 student of the workshop. "He and his assistant Joe Sommers were able to assist those students whose experience with tools was a new challenge. This was my third time at Snow Farm and it was my most memorable."

The workshop format involved two full days plus additional evening work sessions, creating an intense, hands-on learning environment. The participants all created amazing projects, with some finishing early and working on additional designs.

"Snow Farm is an ideal setting with quality tools, lots of support and extended work hours that really fostered creativity *and* productivity," Rosenbaum said. "Many of the artists already had tool experience and I was so impressed with the level of everyone's work."

Participants spent their days at Snow Farm diving deep into the mechanics of assembly. Under Rosenbaum's mentorship, the process went beyond simple drilling and bolting. Makers learned to:

- **Curate with Intent:** Selecting repurposed antiques that complemented the aesthetic of the flying shuttle.
- **Problem-Solve Mechanically:** Integrating movement and balance into their sculptures.



Students participating in the Steampunkinetics course were tasked with creating steampunk vehicles from textile loom flying shuttles. (All Images: Modvic)

- **Balance Form and Function:** Ensuring that the Steampunk elements felt integrated and authentic rather than merely decorative.

Bruce's assistant, Sommers, a retired engineering professor, provided valuable technical support. The atmosphere in the studio was one of intense collaboration.

Snow Farm provided the perfect backdrop for what Rosenbaum called, "this mechanical metamorphosis." The organization has long been a sanctuary for those who work with their hands and the Steampunkinetics workshop is a perfect example of this. Snow Farm's mission is to provide a specialized environment where artists can push the boundaries of their medium.

"These sculptures stand as a testament to the power of the maker movement," Rosenbaum added. "They remind us that history isn't something to be tucked away in a museum—it is a raw material, waiting for a creative spark to set it back in motion."

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