

‘A Regal Couplet’: Ritchie and Cambio honor SPA’s 20th

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Sculptor Heather Ritchie working on the collaborative piece “A Regal Couplet.”
Courtesy Studio Place Arts

BARRE — Years ago, local stone sculptor and fiber artist Heather Ritchie spent a winter season working from Pria Cambio’s studio, also a fiber artist, at Studio Place Arts (SPA) while Cambio was out of town. Both had a chance to get to know and admire each other’s work.

This past year, an opportunity for the two artists to collaborate emerged. Cambio’s lifetime collection of art glass perfume bottles fell from a broken shelf and Cambio quickly wanted to transform them into something new. Perhaps the broken perfume bottles could be incorporated into an original stone sculpture?

Ritchie jumped at the opportunity to create a mixed media sculpture that would repurpose the damaged perfume bottles. As a longtime member of SPA, she liked Cambio's idea to honor SPA's 20th anniversary.

"A Regal Couplet" was created by Ritchie using Danby marble salvaged from a library project in New York City. The marble columns were turned on a lathe, and modified by Ritchie to include nooks that shelter and display the colorful, damaged perfume bottles. Ritchie's apprentice Wolf Whitney worked the surface of the marble columns by hand to create a lustrous finish.

According to Ritchie, her instincts "were to elevate all of the elements involved in the sculpture, the marble, glass and wire, and stay true to Pria's creative methods." Ritchie "knitted" flowers from copper wire and inserted them into the art glass pieces, threading together stone and glass.

"A Regal Couplet" is on view in the front window of the SPA gallery through Oct. 30. Its purchase will be a donation to celebrate SPA's 20 years of community enrichment.

Go online to www.studioplacearts.com for more information, call 802-479-7069.