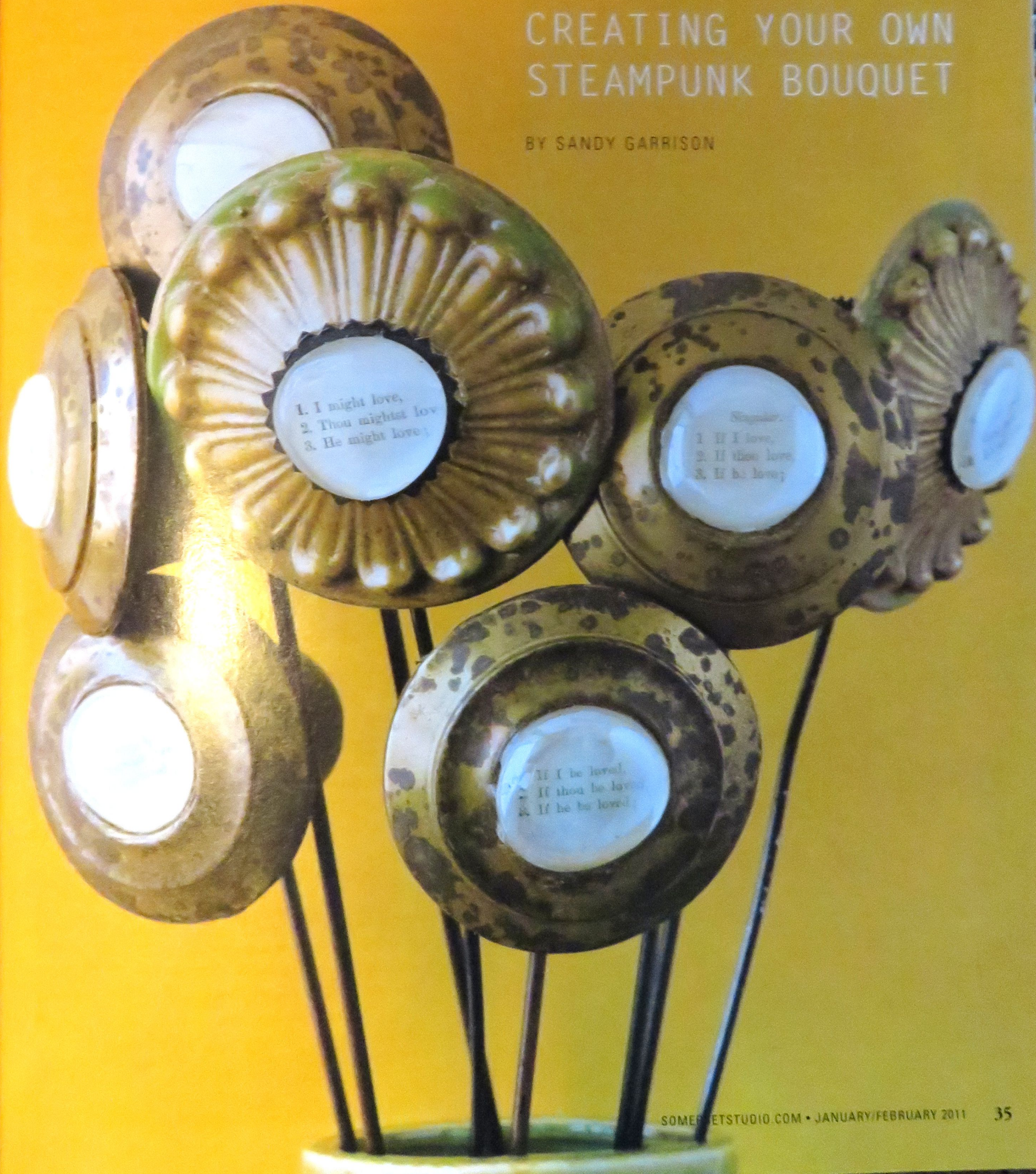


LAMP-PART POPPIES:

CREATING YOUR OWN
STEAMPUNK BOUQUET

BY SANDY GARRISON





Sometimes I think the only reason I'm actually in the antique business is for the junk boxes: run-of-the-mill cardboard containers often filled to the brim with timeworn treasures; nothing gets my heart racing like the sight of one. The treasures therein can take many forms: old wooden trim with remnants of original paint, boxes of rusty hardware, sparkly jewelry bits, or smoke-stained vintage crystals — almost anything can be the starting place for a fabulous project. You just never know what you're going to come across at a flea market, auction, or even a humble garage sale.

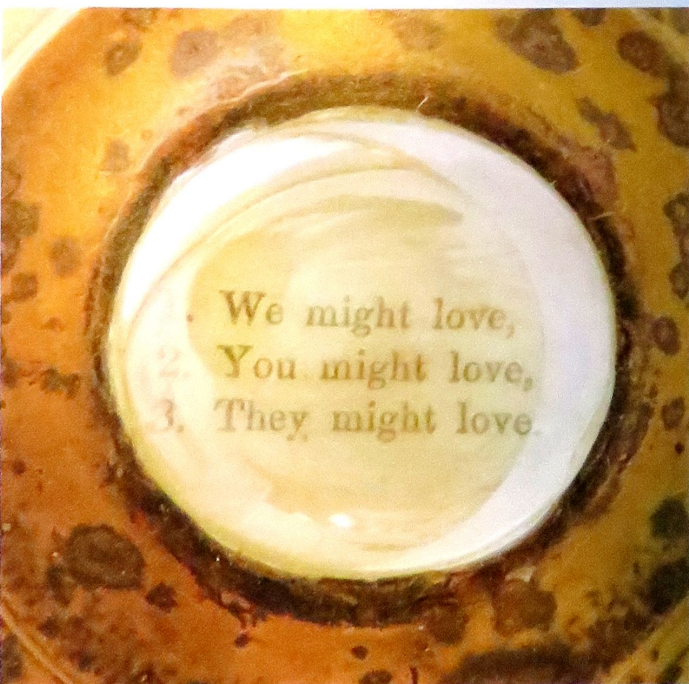
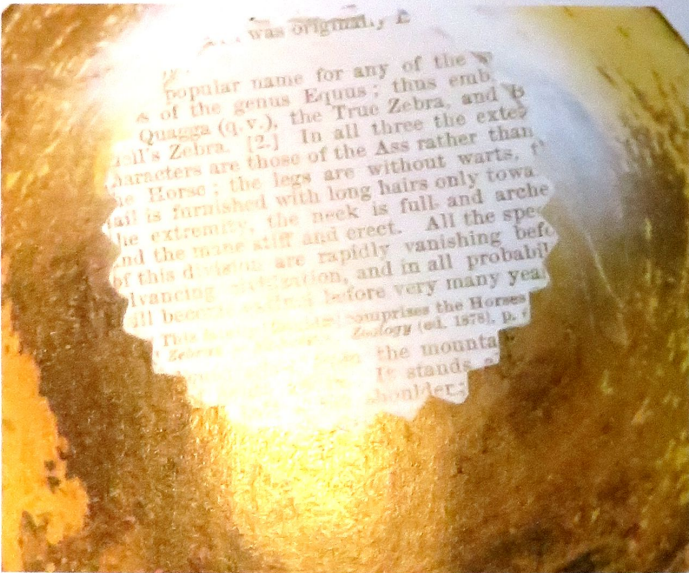
Vintage lamp parts hold a particular fascination for me — the soft patina of the old metal, traces of timeworn color, gorgeous organic shapes ... there's just so much to love. But what's a girl to do with them? This was the question facing me as I stared down at a pair of aged brass socket rings from an old chandelier that we'd recently purchased.

Truth be told, I think I already knew the answer. Maybe it was the winter weather, but something in me was craving a year-round garden, and these lovely little circles just seemed to whisper "flower." So if they were to be my petals, what could serve as centers? We'd just finished a series of holiday magnets using vintage scripts encased in glass. What if we simply altered the text, switching the Christmas-themed writings for something with year-round appeal? The glass bubbles we'd used for the magnets were just about the exact size to fit in the holes. A quick search through our stack of vintage books turned up the perfect solution: a terrific 1800s grammar book showing the conjugation of the word "love" — what a great text to highlight.

The last hurdle for this project was going to be finding the perfect thing to make stems. For our first set, we had some vintage metal rods with loops at one end — who knows what they were originally used for? These worked well enough when adhered in place with epoxy, but we wanted to make our next set more secure and ended up drilling small holes in the back of the lamp parts so that the metal stems could be coated with epoxy and then inserted. This time we used plain metal rods that had been cut to size with a Dremel for our stems. We also used a different style lamp part for the fronts, so that we'd have flowers of various sorts. We couldn't have been more pleased with the results, and the metal garden began to grow before our eyes. Our Lamp-Part Poppies make the perfect steampunk bouquet — industrial, elegant, yet heart-breakingly romantic.

TECHNIQUE

Start by disassembling and cleaning your lamp parts. We usually find that a little warm, soapy water does the trick, but check with the hardware store if you find the metal is not coming clean. While the lamp parts are drying, cut your stem wires to the desired length (about 18 inches); you can always cut them down once the flowers are finished to vary the heights or fit your container.



TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Adhesive: (E-6000); two-part epoxy & application tool
- Cleaning supplies
- Drill and bit matching the gauge of the stem wire/rod
- Gel medium: (Mod Podge)
- Glass bubbles: large
- Metal lamp parts
- Metal rod (16-gauge wire can also be used, but you may want to spray it black or dark brown before cutting)
- Paintbrush
- Pencil
- Safety glasses
- Scissors
- Vintage papers
- Wire cutters or Dremel tool with cutting wheel

Drill two holes on the back of each lamp part so that the rod can be inserted. Mix epoxy, insert rod, and cement in place; allow to dry. While the petal/stem portion dries, you can work on your flowers' centers. Place a glass bubble on your vintage paper selection, looking for key words or phrases you want to highlight; trace and cut out (one per flower). Use Mod Podge to glue paper onto back of glass bubbles. Be sure the text side shows through to the front. Once dry, use E-6000 to attach bubbles to fronts of flowers. You may also want to add a circle of vintage paper to the backs of the flowers to hide the epoxied surfaces.

Repeat until you have enough blooms to fill your favorite container. ✦

Along with her partner Joe Kerz, Sandy Garrison is the owner of rhubarb reign inc, an antique and design business located in small-town Indiana. From their studio, Sandy and Joe participate in antique shows in five states year-round. They specialize in cottage-style furniture, artsy stails, and found objects. Visit rhubarb-reign.blogspot.com. Sandy would like to thank her family, friends, and customers for their support and encouragement.

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