

Wood

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Ken Burton devised a clever, deceptively simple cabinet that starts with a tiny triangular box, inverted, fitted with drawers and set upon legs that emerge from a base that echoes the triangular form. After this, any treasures inside would seem anticlimactic.

Useful pieces emerged from the workshop of Kevin Kopil, who constructed a high table and stools with an Asian/postmodern feel, emphasizing the graceful heft of the table legs with interwoven stringers in contrasting wood.

Keith Sandberg devised a witty table that depicts a giant screw ostensibly fastening the top to the base; the artist winks at the viewer, “repairing” a natural crack in the top with a single, elegant butterfly joint.

Elsewhere, William Hoehne and Susan Clark created an artwork in furniture form, stacking fat disks of wood as a base for “Michelin Chair” and upholstering the seat in a fabric printed with circle motifs.

While you could, if sufficiently petite, repose upon “Michelin Chair,” you would think twice before settling into Charles J. Adams’ “Guardian Chair.” The artist’s surrealist construction in laminated and inlaid contrasting woods resembles a giant insect with wings, horns, spikes and a scorpion tail.

“Works in Wood” includes a well-populated collection of non-furniture art objects, such as Laura Petrovich-Cheney’s evocative geometric paintings in reclaimed wood, Norine Kevolic’s airy bamboo and wood plaques and Brian Paul Kolakowski’s concise explorations of a squid and a skeletal fish.

Among the more compelling small works are Edward Murphy’s compositions in bark, salvaged wood and aluminum. Rarely does texture so effectively dominate artwork.

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“Utilis,” bark, aluminum and salvaged wood, by Edward Murphy



“Blue Planet,” silver maple crotch wood, by Andy DiPietro

“Mahogany Screw Table,” Honduras mahogany, walnut sprayed in graphite, ebony, by Keith Sandberg



Apple Platter with Yew stick rim, apple, yew sticks, by Bryan Richardson



“Heat of the Sunset,” curly maple, poplar, sycamore, sapele, by Michael Kehs



“Trilobite Traces,” holly, big-leaf maple burl, by Michael Kehs

Aging

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If we are speaking about what younger people are doing — especially if it is about computers and technology — old often means “I really don’t get that and feel like I am out of touch with people younger than me.”

Generations have their identity, I admit. But tools and technologies shouldn’t be the domain of one generation or another just because that technology — like the Wii or Twitter — seems to be part of that generation’s identity.

If you want to try out using a computer, social media or some other technology made hip by a younger generation, do it. Put your own stamp on it.

When it comes to health, “old” stands in for worries and fears. We worry about being ill and dependent on family and friends or fear having a condition that can’t be fixed or might only be fixed at too high a price. Commonly, these worries and fears come from our experiences when we were young watching someone we love deal with the same problem we have now.

But our memories of what happened back in the day miss two big points. First, one person’s experience is definitely not everyone’s experience. Second, health care is different and better now. A good example is surgery.

Many patients tell me “I’m too old to have surgery.” When we start talking, I easily see that they are remembering past experiences with loved ones and don’t know that health care has changed.

Surgeons — thanks to the help of anesthetists

— now can operate on people in their 90s and older with tools that help them look into the body rather than opening it.

If your doctor is recommending surgery or another treatment for you, the best thing to do is to make an informed choice, not one based on your birthday.

Myth: Old means that you should not or cannot do certain things.

The example of surgery brings me to say this loud and clear: Your birthday is something you celebrate more and more as you get older. Your birthday does not determine what you can or cannot do.

We’ve known for a long time that your birthday does not determine what activity is right for you. But most people still believe older people cannot do certain physical activities.

In fact, a study reported a few years ago showed that age doesn’t limit what we can do physically. Ten people older than 90 were asked to do high-intensity weight training, something we don’t associate with very old folks. Lifting those weights worked like a charm. Everyone who completed the study gained strength, added muscle and walked better. Good stuff, no matter how old you are.

There are great stories about remarkable people who are very old — the college graduate with a great grandchild, the octogenarian marathon runner, the world-traveling couple who have been married for more than 60 years.

We think of these people as one in a million. I think they represent so many people in their later years doing all sorts of things to make for a full life every day.

There is no age limit for activities, health or

relationships. If you want to do something that you think may be affected by your health, check with your doctor or nurse practitioner, and get a plan together. But please don’t say, “Well, I’m just too old ...”

Myth: It helps to know when you are too old.

Wrong! I know what you are thinking — we’ve all been told “act your age.” That’s all about behaving right in the right place.

For instance, it’s never going to be OK — regardless of your age — to wear super-short shorts to church. Right and polite is ageless; do what feels right for who you are now all the time. You should not discriminate against yourself

on the basis of your age or exclude yourself from something because of the years you have lived. Doing so will only get you in trouble.

That’s right — trouble with a capital T. There are several studies showing people who think of and — most importantly — talk about themselves as old are putting themselves at risk. Talking about yourself as old may affect your physical and mental health. You could put your health at risk if you think you are too old to do something. And, if you believe you are too old, activities as simple as walking might become harder for you.

I joke with my patients not to talk about being old until they reach 100. Then

I say I specialize in care of older people but I don’t discriminate on the basis of age so I’ll still take care of them. While teenagers don’t think my joke is funny, their parents and grandparents do. So, go ahead. Joke about your age on your birthday and laugh when you get that funny card announcing your age to the world. But please — as I tell Judy all the time — stop calling yourself old. Go do what you want to do. You’re not too old.

Have some thoughts on

this or other aging issues? I’d love to hear from you. Email me at mythsolving@gmail.com and follow me on Twitter @SarahHKagan. Until next time, be well and stay active!

Dr. Sarah Kagan is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing where she specializes in geriatric issues and the care of older people. She is a visiting scholar at universities around the world and was awarded the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship for her work. Her column on aging myths appears in newspapers and on digital sites throughout Calkins Media.

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