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Art exhibit opens today
By TED AMSDEN

Local textile artists Veronica Derry, Judith Kreps Hawkins and Alice Vander Vennen will be showing their work at The Upstairs Gallery in Port Hope from today through April 12. The three have exhibited as part of a group before, as they are members of the Colborne Art Gallery collective, but this is the first time they have shown as a trio. The women combine found objects with other materials, with the resulting works presenting an entirely new context.

Vander Vennen's work is assemblage. As she takes work from one context, she says, and puts it in another, "a story arises" and a new visual entity is created. She is presenting three large pieces that measure 18 by 50 inches, using willow branches, copper and fabrics. One of her sources of art parts is a deconstructed piano. Putting the elements together using some of the piano pieces "is like a song, like a melody of some sort."

Kreps Hawkins says she is presenting a mix of new and old work, with some pieces that have been reworked. She likes to use cast-off materials and bring them together in non-traditional ways.

"I like to tell a story about our affinities with materials and how they affect us and our environment . . . how they serve us, building us up and destroying us at the same time . . . Things are not what they appear on the surface."

Derry will be showing 10 pieces, three of them recently completed. They are figurative-based. Once she starts working with materials, she says "they speak to me." She considers inner issues as she works. She uses "fabric as an expressive medium." Derry says she is "really excited" about the prospect of showing with Kreps Hawkins and Vander Vennen and seeing their work together.

An opening reception, with the opportunity to speak to the artists, takes place Saturday, March 7, between 2 and 4 pm.