They insisted that I stop drawing on the walls. So I snuck behind the furniture with my pencil. They later admitted that they secretly admired each new discovery, amazed at my artistic obsession and the insane attention to detail for such a young kid. My parents were my first enablers, unwittingly starting me off on my lifelong wanderings along the offbeat path of art making.

My father, a master of “making something out of nothing,” showed me how to resurrect even the most forlorn castoff objects. I loved to explore his tidy workshop, filled with project parts, cool tools and a well-organized assortment of fasteners, finishes and raw materials. I have him to thank for my problem with seeing potential in the gorgeous “junk” which now chokes my studio space.

My mom was a budding artist in high school, but stopped creating artwork when she began creating (many) children at an early age. She was at least able to find satisfaction in documenting her family in photographs. The family albums were where I first engaged with the world of mystery to be found in old photographs. I loved her cameras, and I was thrilled to have them handed down to me. From the time I was 11 years old, I have been intent on interpreting my encounters with the world through a camera.

Several years ago a large padded envelope came in the mail. Inside: Easter Bunny. I was so touched and amused that my parents had saved it. My husband took one look, laughed, and gave me a knowing look. “So, you’ve been making mixed media art your whole life!” A revelation to me, but here was the proof: a scrap piece of Plexiglas and glue from Dad, sequins, tinsel, some fabric, cotton balsbards of a basket and a bead from Mom.

Nothing much has changed, really. I gather stuff, I manipulate it, I combine it with other stuff. My art, then and now.