

ARTCYCLING

GUIDE

**Instructions
for
sustainable
art and
design
production**



Co-funded by the
Creative Europe Programme
of the European Union





Artcycling Guide
Instructions for sustainable art and
design production

Produced for the Artcycling COOP,
co-funded by European Union, Creative
Europe programme.

Collaboration between Intras, Spain;
Pacific Stream, UK; Retextil, Hungary
and Cultura21, Denmark.

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Introduction

Artcycling - Sustainable and inclusive decorative arts

Preface

This guide is part of the collaborative project “Artcycling COOP”.

Its purpose is to assist the artists, guides, teachers, and supporters involved in the project, in understanding and practicing the art-cycling process.

This first version was created in October, 2015. As the project progresses from now until 2018, new cases and examples will be added from the ‘Artcyclers’ themselves.

The guide will eventually be part of a website that is still under construction. Check out for its status at <http://artcycling.org>

We would love to hear your feedback at any time when you use this guide. Please address this to Cultura21 at: artcycling@cultura21.dk.

Artcycling is a collaboration between Intras in Spain, Cultura21 in Denmark, Re-Textil in Hungary, and Pacificstream in the UK.

The collaboration is supported by European Union, the Creative Europe programme and local partnerships.

Welcome to the Artcycling guide. We hope it will help you in a lot of artful making.

Artcycling: the project

As artists and designers, we create mindsets. With our creations, we can show that sustainability is possible - and beautiful.

-Can art change the world? -Can you?
-Can you make a living at the same time?

Artcycling means **recycling** and **upcycling** through art. It stands for art that makes a positive impact on the planet, the people, and the artist.

Artcycling was created to help you do it all: make art, save the planet, and make a living. Together, we will make a cooperative of Art-cyclers, across the borders of Europe.

We invite artists with a disadvantage, to cross the threshold into this dream, and make art that makes a difference. You can be part of develop the new face of art, where recycling, reducing, reusing, and including, is the normal order of the day.

With the artists, we will develop a way to creatively reuse waste, to combine this with craftsmanship, and to develop new sites and small enterprises that offer the best of these creations.

Artcycling: the guide

“This is a guide to becoming an artcycler: a maker of beautiful things that keep the world healthy”

Today, there are millions of ‘green’ products in the world. Anything you might need in your everyday life, is also available in a green version. Eco-, Green, Bio-, and so on. If you want to be a green consumer, you can find a guide, and follow it step by step, to the go’s and the no-go’s of sustainable consumption. But our goal is making, not consuming.

- This guide was developed to help the artists involved in Artcycling in making recycled and upcycled, responsible and sustainable art

It will help you enter a world in which nothing is waste and nothing is impossible. We will give you answers to

some of the questions you may encounter, when you start making design products, artwork, and crafts, that do good while being beautiful and useful.

In the guide, you will find:

- A short introduction to sustainable art
- A guide to the first steps of recycling and upcycling
- Presentations of artists and designers that may inspire you

Of course, you can’t learn how to do this through a guide. The most important learning process lies in the making. This guide is the companion of a training and supporting program in all the countries of the Artcycling collaboration.

Welcome to Artcycling. We hope this will change your life.

Groups, networks and sites

When you become part of Artcycling, you will get to work with other artists and craftspeople with the same interests as you. Until 2018, we will be working with a group of artists in every one of the four countries. The activities start in the fall of 2015.

Artcycling works on three levels - you will be part of all three:

- The local group of 7-10 likeminded artists in your own country. In this group, you will be invited to workshops and training sessions in Artcycling
- The growing networks around these groups, drawing on the connections of the partners and the community
- The online community, where you can share and find inspiration from artcyclers in the other countries - and through this, the community of Artcyclers across borders in Europe

The trainings in sustainable art creation will take place with the help of a group of experts in the field, and will be based on hands-on learning.

During the project, we will offer you guidance and support in working with sustainable art and social entrepreneurship, and in setting up a website/shop through the Artcycling platform (under development).

Confirmed experts involved in the project will be announced on Artcycling COOP’s international and local pages on Facebook. Search for ‘Artcycling’ to find the pages. Join and be updated!

Local group, online networks, European community - join the Artcyclers!



Sustainable Art

“Is the way you live trashing the planet or nurturing it?”

(Natalia Marshall: Live an eco-friendly life, 2007)

A very brief introduction to sustainability

Sustainability is a term that has been around for centuries (since the 1700's, actually). Its importance grew strongly in the 1970's and 80's, after research started showing that potentially irreversible damage was being done to our climate and environment. And that this was most likely the effects of industrial production and accelerating consumption.

In 1987, the UN report “Our Common Future” defined sustainable development as the ability to meet the needs of those living today, without jeopardizing the needs of future generations. A lot has changed since 1987, and what was seen as a potential threat back then, is now recognized as a decisive turn in the history of the planet.

- If we don't change direction and reduce our negative impact on the ecosystems of the Earth, we will see some serious crises coming together and threatening civilizations, and many of Earth's life forms.

The most commonly known problem has to do with CO₂. The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere induces what is known as the

greenhouse effect, leading to higher temperatures, heating of the oceans, melting ice caps, and violent changes to biodiversity and human life conditions. This is widely known now as climate change and global warming. But the problem is much wider.

We need to understand both what it means to be “sustainable”, and how we can get there. There are many ways to define sustainable, but here are some clues:

- Try to *leave the world a better place when you go, than when you enter.*
- Think of how this might apply to the city you live in, the nature that surrounds you, or the people you share with.
- Focus on creating the *best conditions possible for emerging life.*
- This way, we do not need to understand the conditions of generations 100 years from now. We can act today, in fact, we have to act today.

A slightly more technical approach comes from the Natural Step movement, one of the most influential collectives of roads into a sustainable future: In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing:

1. concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth's crust
2. concentrations of substances produced by society
3. degradation by physical means
4. and in that society, people are not subject to conditions that systematically undermine their capacity to meet their needs

We hope that this guide can help you see how to act today, use your artistic sense, and both have fun and make a living.

Sources:

Our Common Future: Our Common Future, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987. Published as Annex to General Assembly document A/42/427, Development and International Co-operation: Environment August 2, 1987.

Natural Step: <http://www.naturalstep.org/the-system-conditions>

Example:

IDEO.org is a non-profit affiliate of IDEO.com, one of the world's most famous design agencies. In IDEO.org, focus is on creating design solutions that matter in making the world a better place. They use their presence in hundreds of places, to come up with solutions like the seed planter, made from recycled materials. With their Human-centered design, IDEO bring together the so-called "pillars of sustainability": environmental care, social justice, economic sharing, and cultural dialogue.

"Working with the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA), IDEO.org is designing a new low-cost teff row planter to improve the livelihood of farmers in Ethiopia."

Quote and picture from

<http://www.ideo.org/projects/building-a-low-cost-teff-seed-planter>



© IDEO.org

Making arts green

The term “greening the arts” refers to artistic practices using less energy, polluting less, being more conscious about littering, transportation, and the use of materials in artistic events or production. The arts world is just as good or bad as the rest of the industrialized world, when it comes to being sustainable.

Here we will talk about making arts green, and improving the impact of arts and design. The idea is that art is still art. But the way you address your work and your materials will change your mindset. And change your art.

- Artists and cultural producers play an important role when it comes to how we see the world. Think of the role of modern art, the invention of perspective in painting, the sculptures on Easter Island.
- Art is central to how we understand ourselves. When we change the way we make art, we change the impact we have, individually. We also present ideals and examples that make a difference for others.

- Design is more and more important today. When we make furniture, paintings, lamps, or clothes, out of love to people and nature, we make it possible for others to buy in on this. We also show that it is possible to change. And design is also design thinking, as IDEO reminds us

We speak of making arts green to stress the role of design and arts in moving transitions. When you think of yourself as an artist, think also of your role as a game-changer helping future generations. And not only as this, but also as an entrepreneur, changing the rules of business. But not only as this - you are also a human being making choices that make you feel much better.



© Evelyn Noval

Example:

Evelyn Noval - sculptor, recycler is born in Germany, but has been living on the island of Bornholm since 1978. Bornholm is a place that has a strong network of artists and craftspeople working close to nature and with plenty of recycling and upcycling initiatives. Noval is part of the Arts and Crafts Association Bornholm, ACAB. For a number of years, she has been

working with transforming junk/waste/trash into lamps, jewellery, and small sculptures. From the 24 artist big collective 4D, Noval and others make sustainable art a part of the everyday picture in shops and homes of Bornholm.

<http://www.bricksite.com/enoval/portraet>
<http://norubbish.dk/2015/03/objets-trouves/>

Materials and environment

Sustainable art is about changing our mindsets. Just like we can change the way we think about our consumption, we can change our way of producing. After all, both art and consumption are about how we engage with materials and people, and what stories we live by. When it comes to materials, we always have a choice.

- Do you use materials that are full of chemicals or more natural?
- Do you think about where you get your frames, your gems, your cloth?
- Do you think about how the materials you use can be used by others? How you can let your waste be part of another life cycle?
- Do you think about the story that is told, not only by the way your work looks and appeals to people, but also the story told by where it came from and how it was made?

From the point of view of the environment, the second best choice is to use materials that are made with less chemicals, that do not destroy the conditions of emerging life, and that do less harm to nature and people when they are produced. Working with

materials that have already been produced, purchased and used. The even better choice is to think about how your entire production could make us look at the world in a new way. Try to look at everything around you not just as inspiration, but as elements in the stories that you could tell. Where do you find joy, wisdom, or hope? What could be reworked into new fabrics? How could you produce art that makes a positive impact from the beginning?

We suggest you start your next process by going to a place that inspires you. Look at the materials that are there, or the patterns. Or whatever detail has fascinated you. When you start thinking of how this could be used in your own work, you might want to focus more on the materials that would be implied. Can you use the ones in the place? Can you provide some from another production? Would there be a natural place to go and a partner to approach for this? Think of the life of the material. The stories. And go on to understand the possible life cycles.



© Trashionbag

Example:

Trashionbag is a project that makes bags from ad banners, from sports events or concerts. The materials are waterproof and solid; if sewn well, they will last a lifetime of use. They are unique, each one made from different pieces. The bags are designed by Patricia Abreau and Luce Leonardo (VAHO), but many of the bags were

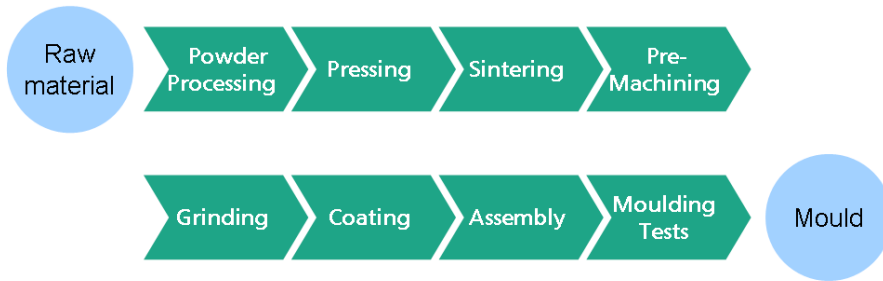
made by inmates in the La Modela prison in Barcelona. The flow raises questions as to the business model - how do they actually share the revenues?

<http://www.trashionbag.dk>
<http://www.vaho.ws>
<http://norubbish.dk/2012/04/vaho-trash-ion-bags/>

Rethinking the value chain

A value chain is the concept used in economics to describe all the links that transform raw resources or materials, into products and again to waste. In the value chain approach, the goal is to add value every time you add a link to the chain. From cotton plant to cotton, from cotton to cloth from cloth to garments, and so on.

A value chain example can look like this, for the production of optical glass. Notice that every step along the chain increases the value of the product. It also requires work, materials, energy. So every step can be seen as a cost in environmental terms. Or as a source of redistribution and reuse of energy or other value.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precision_glass_moulding

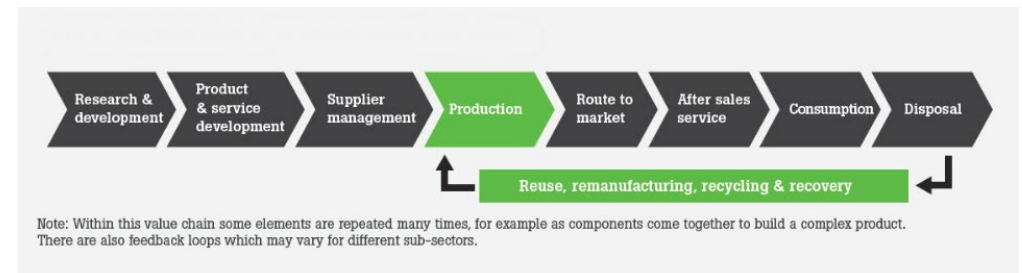
Value chains also point to people and work processes. If you can increase value but reduce work or even skip a step, you save resources and increase profit. But the main problem for sustainability is that producers forget what the chain requires (materials, energy) and what it produces (waste, energy). A number of questions can be asked, to anyone engaged in production. Questions that are also relevant to arts and crafts:

- What role do you play for your suppliers (as you may not take care of every step)
- How do you actively contribute to value for them? (think of this also if your main supply comes from a dump)
- Who are your suppliers and what does their upstream chain look like (their supplies and suppliers, etc)?

- What is the value they add - or you add - to the materials received?
- Where does the added value come from? What does it require?

One of the problems of the operating system that rules our economy today, is that many are constantly adding links to the chain, but without adding real value. So more resources are needed, but no qualitative difference is made. Most markets are so saturated that it is hard to add any real value, unless you break the chain or 'make it longer'. This is precisely the genius of recycling and upcycling. Instead of letting products lose their value, you take the product at the end of the value chain and ask: how can we add value to that which has lost its value?

This can be illustrated:



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-manufacturing/future-of-manufacturing-a-new-era-of-opportunity-and-challenge-for-the-uk-summary-report>

Each link in the chain requires energy. How do you transform energy in, to energy and resources out?

If you go to a flea market in Copenhagen, you will find hundreds and thousands of items that seemingly have no value left apart from the rest of affection that clings to them. Old typewriters, shaving equipment, electronics, pottery and lots of books. Or old records, like Vinylize found. At this point, they could be getting ready to get burnt, melted, or recycled at the recycling plant. But like objects at recycling plants, or on the shelves in second-hand shops, all they ask for is your rethinking.



© Vinylize / Tipton

Example:

Vinylize - seeing the world through music

The Hungarian initiative Vinylize has existed since 2004. The idea is simple: take old vinyl LP's, and turn them into high-end, perfectly crafted designers frames for glasses. The first collection was made in 2004. The frames are handmade and sell in many countries today.

<http://www.tipton.hu/>

Sources:

TOSCA - sustainable value chains
<http://www.tosca-life.info/activities-start/identify-your-supply-chain/>

Sources:

Paul Hawken and Hunter S. Lovins: Natural Capitalism. <http://www.natcap.org/>

John Fullerton, Hunter S. Lovins et al: Regenerative Capitalism. <http://capitalinstitute.org/>

Openwear - collaborative community <http://openwear.org/>

Ethical Economy - Arvidsson and Peitersen <http://cup.columbia.edu/book/9780231152648>

Ethical economy and social entrepreneurship

A wave of social entrepreneurship has swept across Europe. Social entrepreneurship refers to startups in business, arts, and technology, that relate to issues in the world outside of their own microworld, in their core. They make partnerships with disadvantaged groups or individuals, getting the best out of their skills, and using their difference to make a difference. They use natural resources to produce, while creating a positive impact (Natural or Regenerative Capitalism). Social Innovation refers to all the initiatives that address social and/or sustainability issues in new ways.

Beneath this, and as a result of this, the face of business is changing. Which now leads us to claim that artists can get inspired by the way that social and sustainable entrepreneurs approach the world. The main difference lies in what economists call 'externalities'. When you externalize, you place a lot of things outside of your core activities. This is what we saw in the value chain as waste going out or energy required, to reach the increase in value. These include the effect of production on nature, and the role of your work in caring for people or places.

It has become normal to offer more than a product, more than an experience, and more than an art piece. It is becoming normal to be part of communities that create together, share their ideas, brand themselves together, and share the value of their work, yet remain legally separate. Today, making art is not about creating the unforgettable masterpiece (or rather, for the very few, it is, but not for the rest of us). It is about creating relevant, meaningful stories, that make the people that purchase the works, feel better, less guilty, less damaging in their impact on the planet.

- When you relate art production to the work of regenerative capitalism, the differences in scale can make it hard to relate to. But try to keep thinking of how every step you bring into your own chain leading to a product, can be seen as a way to (re)generate value and resources.

A social entrepreneur meets social or sustainability related issues, while intervening creatively through business, projects, or products.

The relational connections of art work

An artwork is more than just art. The artwork and the artist form a maker of relations and a (shared) vehicle for meaning. And through its engagement it enters in relations with systems, be they economic, social, environmental and cultural.

When we talk of sustainable arts - or business - we include everything in the way we understand our work. Just like the creative process draws in everything it can find, the social entrepreneurial artists consider it natural to include a positive impact on their communities and environments.

- Think of the impact you have on the world around you.
- Now think of the flows of your economy. Would you call yourself a conscious investor, or consumer?
- What about the way you direct your economy, when it comes to art?

Today, the ethical economy is growing every day. Ethical economy is an economy that includes relations of enterprise to the planet, the people, and the places. The concept points to the possibility of work that is driven by something more than only making money.

Most of the cases we have included combine creating work that can be sold, with working with care at the heart of what they do. The interesting news is that increasingly, people are willing to pay for that story.

Example:

Jeremy Underwood is an American photographer, whose series “Human Debris” seeks to make people reflect on how humans interact with nature.

“Human Debris is a commentary on what humans leave in the natural landscape. The project spotlights the environmental condition of Houston’s waterways through the building of site-specific sculptures assembled out of harvested debris collected from the beach. Each found material lends itself to a new creation, encompassing the former life of the debris into each sculpture. These objects are simply artifacts to support the work, photographed in interaction with the landscape, then left to be discovered. This work challenges viewers to reflect upon our consumer culture, the relationship we have with our environment, and the pervasion of pollution.”

<http://jeremyunderwood.com/trash-sculpture-public-art/>

Together, the artwork and the artist are what make relations and share meaning.



© Jeremy Underwood - Human Debris

Recycling and upcycling

‘Recycling is: a practice that takes an item and targets it for reuse, returning it back to the cycle of daily contribution to society rather than discarding it to trash’

‘Upcycling: A process that can be repeated in perpetuity of returning materials back to a pliable, usable form without degradation to their latent value —moving resources back up the supply chain.’

(Tyler Caine - <http://intercongreen.com/2010/02/17/recycling-vs-upcycling-what-is-the-difference/>)

Upcycling transforms by-products, wasted materials, and unwanted products, to give them new value.

Definitions; recycling, upcycling

When you separate your trash in bottles and cans, and let them be used once again, as what they are, or as raw material for new, similar products, you are recycling. The concept covers a lot of ways to lengthen the time span before a product or material becomes waste.

When you recycle and reuse an object (like passing on clothes, or using a bicycle wheel frame to hang strings for plants in your garden), you extend the objects lifecycle. Your action has two immediate sets of environmental effects:

- You keep the material object from the dump, and eg. becoming landfill
- You lessen the environmental impact of producing a new product instead

Apart from the environmental aspect, there is also an economic side. Recycling can create value in circulation, through various distribution channels, like flea markets or online portals for selling used clothes or building materials etc. Or by treating the object into other new useful material to be applied for new use.

Of course, using waste materials alone doesn't really change the big picture.

Upcycling is when you are able to treat an object in a way that enhances the material quality or transform it in direction towards raw resource. You are moving value up the stream in the circle. This is an action, that not only prolongs the life of a product, it also captures qualities of the material and takes them up the value chain.

- Upcycling transforms by-products, wasted materials, and unwanted products, to give them new value. Turning wasted materials into something of a better quality or with higher environmental value.

This difference is crucial to artistic work. Whether we are talking about furniture made from coffee mould, or new materials made from shredded jeans, they alter the life of the components of an object. When art moves into this field, everything it does immediately changes the history of the materials in use.

Still, there is the other aspect of upcycling, which is about making value not only in the environmental sense, but also in the economic one. The challenge of the artist is of course, as it always is, to make artworks and craftworks, which attract buyers and offers them value.

The life cycle of artworks

A central concept in sustainability is the Life Cycle Analysis. In its full version, a LCA is a detailed analysis that looks at a product's entire life: from ore extraction, to material production, manufacturing, product use, end-of-life disposal, and all of the transportation that occurs between these stages.

In other words, LCA tries to understand how a pencil starts its life as forestry, continues through lumbering, cutting, transporting, refitting and connecting to other materials such as graphite (same story for this material) and paint (again), adding perhaps packaging and marketing to the life of the pencil. After being produced, it is transported again and sold (or sold online and then transported), where it is used and either thrown away as trash or collected and used for recycling or upcycling.

- Artwork has a life cycle just like all other productions. But sustainable art does not only show how to reduce the damages in its intrinsic life cycle. It also breaks into other life cycles to add value to products, by creatively redefining their life cycles.

- Through recycling and upcycling discarded materials, art and design can change waste to gold. Or through re-designing the product itself, it can change the cycle of a product.

Life Cycle thinking is a valuable way to remember that everything that goes around, comes around. You may be setting up an event loaded with recycled materials: pallets, old wood, used window frames, bottles, etc. But you also need to consider, where everything is going after you are done with it. How can you improve the impact you make?

How can you leave the world a better place than it was when you started?

Sources:

Solidworks: Life Cycle Analysis

<http://www.solidworks.com/sustainability/life-cycle-assessment.htm>

Panarchy: an understanding of ecosystems

<http://www.resalliance.org/index.php/panarchy>

Example:

Reduce. Reuse. Grow. Is a company that have designed a biodegradable coffee cup. But not only that. When you throw it into the woods, it will become wild flowers. The cup is lined with seeds, selected to they conform to local varieties and conditions. The genius of this product lies in

benefiting from a bad habit, in this case littering, instead of fighting it. And in the selection of seeds that show how the inventors have thought things over.

<http://www.planttrash.com/>
<http://www.boredpanda.com/biodegradable-plantable-coffee-cup-reduce-reuse-grow/>



© Reduce. Reuse. Grow.

Serendipitous and creative: find what you can use and fail!

Touch beauty by erring, seeing, finding, and re-mixing. Learn siteness.

It is important to understand the value chains and the consequences of moving materials one or the other way up and down the chain. And it is equally important to remember the qualities of working creatively. We encourage all Artcyclers to find and develop your own way to find, reconstruct, and recombine objects and materials around you.

You will need to be as open to value in the world, as HC Andersen's Klods-Hans, who ends up getting the princess with a clog, a dead crow, and a handful of mud. This luck is called serendipity. It is about using what is already out there. As in the example of Jeremy Underwood below, or the case of Jonas Edvard and Nikolaj Steenfatt, an important part of the process consists in walking into places, seeing what is there, going into details, and exploring new combinations.

- The practice of serendipity is, as Sacha Kagan said*, a walker's wisdom. This practice is well known in art as the collection of *objets trouvés*, found objects.
- Serendipity is not just trusting in chance. It is about exploring the world around you, trusting that you will find something else than you were looking for.

You need to learn in site, to rediscover value by seeing things where you did not expect them. Open to them, and start to play with them so they can enter your creative process. If you don't have one, make it.

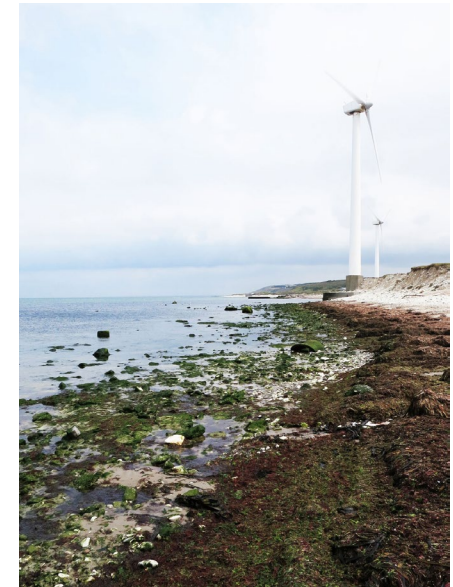
*) source:
Toward Global (Environ)Mental Change - Transformative Art and Cultures of Sustainability (2012)
<https://www.boell.de/en/content/toward-global-environmental-change>

Example:

Jonas Edvard and Nikolaj Steenfatt - designers in Copenhagen, Denmark, has developed their own material from seaweed harvested at the beach near their workspace.

When they look for material for their lamps and furniture, in the Terroir project, they went to the beach or into the sea.

<http://jonasedvard.dk/work/terroir/>
<http://steenfatt.dk/work/terroir/>



© Jonas Edvard and Nikolaj Steenfatt / Terroir

Creativity is, at the end, a matter of mixing and re-mixing. Once you have understood the issue of materials and cycles, you will need to open to the possibility of creating. There are basically eight steps in the creative process:

1. Start out with an idea, about a material, a look, a purpose, or something else. Sketch it, write it down, describe it to yourself.
2. Err into the world and see how it answers to your idea. Ask relevant people, or go to the places that hold the answer.
3. Get close to the sites and materials you think you might feel inspired by. Listen to how they respond.
4. Take your time. Consult your intuition. Listen to what is emerging. Find.
5. Let as many ideas as possible develop from there. Note them all.
6. Select the most important questions that you need to answer. What don't you know about your work?
7. Design a way to get the answers. If you fail, try again, and remember carefully what you did. Failing is good.
8. Create a prototype. (See the links hereunder from "Openideo.org", for inspiration on prototyping!) From there, repeat from 6. At some point in this mini-cycle, you will know what to do.

On Prototypes; Openideo.org:

- 1) https://www.ideo.com/images/uploads/news/pdfs/FultonSuriBuchenau-Experience_PrototypingACM_8-00.pdf
- 2) <https://challenges.openideo.com/blog/testing-prototyping-tips>



© Reese Fernandez-Ruiz

Example:

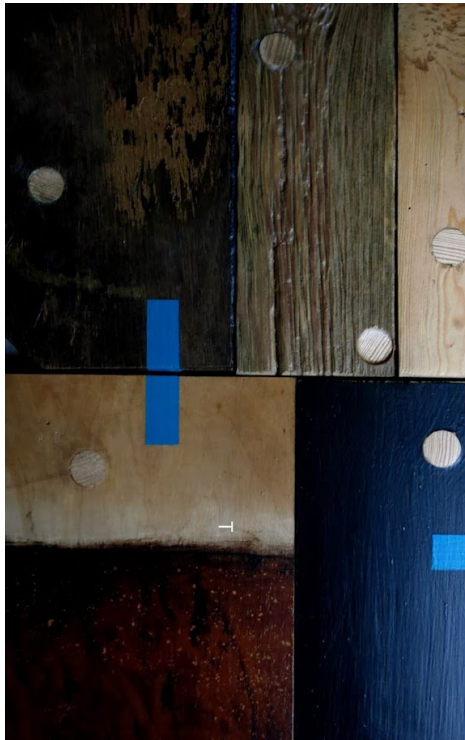
Rags2Riches - supporting serendipity and creative entrepreneurship
R2R was founded in 2007 in Manila, Philippines, by the young entrepreneur Reese Fernandez-Ruiz. She had experienced how the women around the dumps of Manila and the Philippines were working very creatively to create e.g. rugs out of recycled materials. With her initiative, she made it possible for the women to regain more than the microscopic share that middlemen were leaving for them up until then. Today, R2R has trained more than 900 women in creating upcycled products, bringing in designers and fashion experts to

inspire them as to what products could be created from the waste of the dumps. R2R has become one of the most successful social entrepreneurs in the region and was awarded the Rolex Foundation Awards in the environment category in 2010. As many decisions as possible are made with the participants, continuously merging international and local savoir-faire. *"If it's not inclusive, it's not progress."*

<http://rags2riches.ph/>
http://www.rolexawards.com/explore/themes/empowering_women#!/empowering_women/upcycling_meets_fashion_design

Recycling and upcycling materials in art work - a shortlist to develop

In the end, only your imagination and creativity set the limits to what you can recycle and how. Therefore, this list is merely a small inspiration to get started, and a couple of material suggestions based on experience.



Gitte Kolbeck Kjær, architect. Reusing wood
<http://gkk-selectedworks.blogspot.dk>

Wood

Wood is a generous product, and abundant in many forms, from old furniture to waste from demolition or construction sites, to leftover edges from board production, wood in the woods, and many more. It is mostly quite easy to find, leaving storage as the biggest problem. A breakthrough came some years ago for the patchwork-like recycled/upcycled tables, made from sticks and pieces from old windows.

Genbyg, recycling building materials::
http://www.genbyg.dk/en/furniture_design_made_from_recycled_materials/index.php?gallery=1

Stefan de Croock, wood artist, making murals out of old doors:
<https://vimeo.com/131256672>

The difference between recycling and upcycling could be seen as using used wood in new tables (recycling), and upcycling, in which wood is decomposed and turned into a new product altogether (if the material created can be reused, for instance). But the definitions remain fluid. There are many examples, however, of wood projects in which discarded pieces are cut up and transformed, thus adding lots of economic value to them.

Metal

Recycled sculptures from old tubes, pipes, agricultural machines, and so on, is an old-time classic in the art world. But it is not only about the dog made from a doorknob, or the snail made from an old spring, you will also find more specialized forms of recycling, such as art made from bicycle parts:

<http://stealmag.com/diy/129389.html>

We already see a lot of upcycling of used metals, but this a field where a lot is yet to be done. The very complexity of fused components make it challenging, but even without upcycling as such, a lot can be done by welding and bending. UK based artist Robyn Woolston works with both metal and many other materials in her often complex works. The works recycle, and speak to our understanding of life and the planet at the same time.
<http://www.robynwoolston.com/page7.htm>

What will be the next change in upcycled and recycled metal for arts and design?

Plastic

Generally, plastic has had a bad reputation, as it is the material that symbolizes the petrochemical industry more than any other. However, the long-lasting nature of plastic, which makes it an enemy of many life forms, also makes it an abundant resource for re- and upcycling. Pictures of walls, houses, and smaller construction parts made of discarded bottles, have gone around the world. And numerous products are being developed today, where the plastic bottle is the main ingredient in upcycled clothing. With the breakthrough of the 3D printer, we can fairly easily make sculptures out of upcycled plastic waste. But even without 3D printers, it is fairly easy to turn discarded plastic into art.

<http://www.inspirationgreen.com/plastic-waste-lights.html>



<http://www.robynwoolston.com/page7.htm>

Textiles

Textiles are the easiest material to cut up and reuse. Curtains, tablecloths, parachutes, mail bags, the list is endless of textiles that are already being circulated again thanks to clever designers. Again, there are at least two overall strategies: keeping the original texture of the material, but cutting it up and putting it back together in new forms. Or shredding and moulding it, turning denim into vases, or curtains into tables. Maybe you will start the third trend in artistic textile upcycling.

Article on how upcycles denim is recommended as a fashion trend in 2015:

<https://sourceable.net/upcycle-from-denim-to-furniture/#>

Biological materials

Technically speaking, there is not much re- or upcycling about making a lamp out of seaweed. We choose to include the biological materials anyway, as they are combinable with other materials. And some of them actually do upcycle, as when mushroom mycelium is combined with agricultural waste to form material for furniture (Danielle Trofe, in this case). <http://www.wanteddesignnyc.com/exhibitor/launch-pad-wd-2014/danielle-trofe/>

Other examples of bio-stuff are seaweed, mussel shells, and coffee mould.

<http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2015/may/05/the-uk-company-turning-coffee-waste-into-furniture>



Different upcycle examples - from denim to furniture

Rethinking the heart of your art

Art at the heart: remapping your artistic production

In the following is described a set of criterias.

You can use these as questions to understand the work of artists, designers, and craftspeople. As guides for assesing your production, and to find inspiration for creative directions to develop in your work.

In the Artcycling process, we expect to use the list to help you rethink your practice. Or to help you define a new practice.

The heart of art: how do you define your work?

Vision

What is the vision behind your work - where would you like it to take you, and what is the goal that you will give up nights for? In what way do you wish to promote sustainability and what is the world like that will welcome you?

Concept/core

What is the core and the concept in what you do? If vision is the why, the concept is the 'how of the why'. How does your concept relate to place and time, matter and mind? If defined well, the concept will always help you know whether to go in a certain direction or not, it will guide your decisions.

Aesthetics

What is the aesthetic view on which your work hinges? Why does your art / craft make people want more? Why does it make you happy? How does it rely on a way of experiencing the world? What are the ethics that grow out of it?

Materials

With what materials do you work? Why? How do you find them process them, combine them - and how do you treat them when you are done with them? What role do they play in the lives of those who purchase them? What is the Life Cycle and value chain?

Context

How does your work enter into the flow of value chains and ecosystems? Do you work with upcycling, do you take all of your materials from recycling stations, have you created a system for sharing materials or knowledge?

Communication

How do you communicate your work? Who communicates it? What are the criteria and politics of communication around your work? What is the core of your communication, and how does it spread?

Organizing

How do you move from one work to many (scaling)? How do you include others in your concept - or do you work all alone? How do you make the concept work for you, so it makes your work easier?

Technology

How does your work relate to technology? Which technologies do you need, and how will you use them? What systems do you enter with your production, and how do you influence them (through what technologies)?

Audience/customers

Who is your audience, to speak in art terms - who are your customers? What is the value that you offer them? Are they connected, how do you reach them? How do they find you? Where will they be in five years?

Economy

What is your business model, if you have one? How many systems, creatures, people, communities, benefit from your work? How do you transform the value given to your work by your fans, into money in the bank?

List of local case examples

Denmark

Evelyn Noval - Objects Trouvé

Artist and designer. Decorative objects from trashed/found materials. Hand crafts. Part of local designers collective. <http://bricksite.com/enoval>

Jonas Edvard and Nikolaj Steenfatt

Terroir. Creating a new material by harvesting and treating local natural seaweed + recycled paper waste. Making lamps and chairs, prototypes. <http://jonasedvard.dk>, <http://steenfatt.dk>

Gitte Kolbaeck Kjaer - Bench Harbo

Architect. Sitespecific unique interior furnitures build from re-used wood. <http://gkk-selectedworks.blogspot.dk/>

VIGGA - Vigga Svensson

A concept and baby designer clothes producer. Based on leasing principles, incorporates recycling in the business-plan. A closed product life cycle loop. <http://vigga.us>

Jeppe S Vestergaard-Wonderful Waste

Material usage optimization of resource utilization in furniture production. Eg. furniture from left over wood pieces. <http://jeppevestergaard.dk/>

Thomas Dambo

Artist. Builds large sculptures of trashed materials, often as workshops with school children. <http://thomasdambo.com>

Hungary

Licorice

Creative products like jewelry made by recycled material. Its basics is metal and plastic waste (bike tube). <http://upcycology.hu/>

Medence Group

Designers and visual communication artist. Eg. makes bags of recycled materials, banners etc. <http://www.medencedesign.com/>

Cellux Group

Design and communication. Organizes recycling art workshops. Design articles promoting environmental thinking. <http://www.celluxcsoport.hu>

Vinylize

Since 2004 taking old vinyl LP's, and turning them into high-end, perfectly crafted designers frames for glasses. The frames are handmade and sell in many countries today. <http://www.tipton.hu>

SVIK Design

Handmade wood bicycle holders. Reuses bicycle parts. Tailormade to the specific preferences of the customer. <https://www.facebook.com/svikdesign>

Spain

Industrial Decoration

David Luna and collaborators Design and manufacturing furniture and decorative items. All the products are made with recycled industrial materials, such as pallets, wooden crates, pipes, glass jars and bottles, cans, tires and other parts of vehicles, etc. Many components don't get reused and are stored in industrial premises. The project has its' origin in the desire to rescue these materials and give them a second life. The result is an upcycling fabrication process which fusions Industry and ecology. The vision is usable art targeted at the lovers of industrial designed. <http://www.decoracionindustrial.com/>

Decafé

Raúl Laurí Pla

Decafé project uses a new, patented material made from used coffee grounds to manufacture organic lamps of different types: hanging, floor and table.

These designs is an example of how to make the most of our every day's wastes. Keeping some of the sensory qualities of the original product. <http://rlauri.com/>

UK

Robyn Woolston

Artist. Creates art work from various collected re-used / recycled materials. Such as plastic spoons and old musical instruments <http://www.robynwoolston.com/>

Anna Garforth - Head Gardener

Urban land artist and guerilla gardener, turns 2-litre milk bottles into cute characters with green hair-does and put them out in the streets for everyone to enjoy. <http://www.ecostreet.com/head-gardener-urban-eco-art/>

Jemima Wyman - Collective Coverings, Communal Skin

Explores camouflage fabric as a material with symbolic links to violence and conflict. Donated second-hand camouflage and hunting t-shirts is used as weaving material on hula-hoop looms. The local community is invited to meditatively weave with the artist while transforming objects of conflict (uniforms/hunting t-shirts) into objects of comfort <http://www.fact.co.uk/projects/liverpool-biennial-2012-the-unexpected-guest/jemima-wyman-collective-coverings-communal-skin.aspx>

