

# New book on upcycling highlights creativity, not quirk

By **Laura Pearson**  
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"Upcycling" is not a new concept, with roots in folk art; the ready-made work of Marcel Duchamp; the lavish interiors of Tony Duquette and much, much more. The term itself — describing the process of transforming cast-aside materials or byproducts into something of greater use or aesthetic value — has been around since the mid-1990s. Arguably, however, the degree of creativity and artistry has changed, going beyond thrifty, cutesy projects such as denim wreaths or Christmas ornaments made from plastic Keurig cups (both turn up when you search "upcycle" on Pinterest) to encompass more sophisticated applications — think entire walls made of reclaimed windows or abstract sculptures fashioned from discarded glass.

The latter are specific examples from "Upcyclist: Reclaimed and Remade Furniture, Lighting and Interiors," a recently published coffee-table book edited by London-based writer Antonia Edwards (founder of upcyclist.co.uk) exploring varieties of nouveau upcycling from around the world.

"Although some of the works in this book have a sense of fun, eccentricity or naive charm about them, others have a surprisingly delicate and understated quality," Edwards writes in the introduction. It's that balance of charm and subtlety that makes the pieces she includes — simple lamps crafted from Chinese biscuit tins (by Shanghai-based Jonas' Design); colorful rag rugs (by Stockholm's Studio Brieditis & Evans); and contemporary lighting fixtures composed of Venetian blinds (by Valencia, Spain's design atelier El Nebot del Persianer), to name a few — feel refreshingly progressive and, in many cases, covetable. Luckily, a directory in the back of "Upcyclists" helps readers locate designers' work online. You don't have to like all of Edward's picks to grasp the point that modern-day upcycling poses limitless possibilities, even elegance — and need not involve K-cups.

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