

THE ART OF UPCYCLING

What would you do with a million pounds of tangled lobster rope? Thousands of old maps and postcards? Or 750 tons of old sails? If you've got vision, you might transform them into tough, stylish doormats, vibrant mixed-media paintings, or high-end tote bags. You might even turn mountains of discarded oyster shells and plastic bottles into cozy fisherman's sweaters. Or take a literal ton of discarded textiles and make colorful quilts and clothing. These New England artisans and entrepreneurs divine beauty in what others toss away; they see what is often overlooked. In the process, they make life a little more beautiful for our planet.



COCO CORRAL

Loving Anvil | Biddeford, ME
lovinganvil.com

WHAT SHE MAKES: Big, bold jewelry—bangles, rings, and necklaces—from reclaimed metals and reworked heirloom stones. Her own adornment: “a raw turquoise ring that has the complete passage of Kerouac’s ‘the mad ones’ [quote] hand-stamped on the back side.”

SNAPSHOT: “I’m pretty intense about what materials I use. I didn’t want to use stones that had traumatic histories in terms of how they’re dug out of the earth. The stones I use are from my own digging around, or rock hounds I’ve developed a friendship with, or items sent by clients. And there are a couple of industry refineries that are certified as just using recycled/reclaimed precious metals.”

INSPIRATION: “Sterling and fine silver is such a dear, comfortable, and inspiring friend; 14k gold is a dreamy, thrilling seductress. They both allow for endless possibilities. I love the struggle inherent in manipulating metal. And just when I think I’m done, a whole new door opens.”

FAVORITE MEMORY: “When Esperanza Spalding wore my ring on stage at the Oscars in 2012. When she started to sing and lifted her hand to her face, I could hardly see through the tears streaming.”



LIZ MARTONE

EFM Studio | Round Pond, ME
efmstudio.com

WHAT SHE MAKES: Hand-cut mosaic glass inlay in repurposed metal and wooden serving trays. "Glass allows an old item to literally sparkle. I try to use recycled glass when I can. That is my next hill to climb: using only recycled glass materials."

SNAPSHOT: "I love rummaging through thrift stores and old barn sales, but the best will always be the freebie on the side of the road. My home is filled with items that just needed to be given a second chance. We as a society are getting better about donating and selling what we no longer want, but there is still a problem with thinking things are disposable."

INSPIRATION: "I moved to Maine from New York City on Earth Day six years ago, so the actual day will always be an important marker for my life and art. And I'm extremely inspired by the youth. I host an art camp for kids ages 7 to 13 in my home. Kids' minds are so free. They teach me to look at things in a new way."



TIM & JEANINE BARTHELMAN

WharfWarp | Freeport, ME
wharfwarpc.com

WHAT THEY MAKE: Colorful doormats, pet leashes, and wreaths, using 100 percent upcycled lobster rope from working waterfronts, saving about nine tons of plastic rope—roughly 111 miles' worth—from the landfill.

SNAPSHOT: "Upcycling lobster rope takes a lot more effort than simply having new rope shipped to your shop. We source, collect, haul, sort, and prep the rope before we start to make anything. After weaving, we wash, dry, and finish our products. People are amazed at what's created from these old coils."

INSPIRATION: "The maker community around Maine and beyond. So many people are coming up with unique solutions to repurpose items once thought to be waste. Our customers appreciate that they are not only getting beautiful designs but are helping to reduce marine plastic waste. Last year we started working with the Maine Island Trail Association to repurpose rope that their volunteers collect from our coastline—that trail gives a real feel for our coast."

PREVIOUS SPREAD: MICHAEL D. WILSON (PORTRAIT); COGO CORRAL (NECKLACES)
THIS PAGE: TRISTAN SPINSKI (PORTRAIT); WHARFWARP (WREATH)



TIM BYRNE

Get Back Inc. | Oakville, CT
getbackinc.com

WHAT HE MAKES: High-end vintage industrial furniture, culled from the machinery and materials of old New England. Most popular: the swing-out seats. "Customers really like the idea that we are preserving the industrial creativity from long ago."

SNAPSHOT: "When I came here from Ireland in the 1980s to live, I was working as a finish carpenter and cabinet maker, and the amount of things ending up in dumpsters was unbelievable to me. My first recollection of industrial [furniture] was some pieces I saw at a New York flea market in the 1990s—I knew that I could take these pieces, which were in their original condition, and redesign them into functional pieces of furniture."

INSPIRATION: "Old factories and mills. I never know what I will find when I go into an old building. It's not so much that we are saving things from the landfill—it's all steel and can be recycled—but that we're saving the whole creative genius that went into designing for the industrial era, and presenting it as functional art. I love the quote: 'EARTH without ART is EH.'"



GET BACK INC. (TABLE); NORDRODEN/SHUTTERSTOCK (WELDING); PAT PIASECKI (PORTRAIT)



CRISPINA FFRENCH

Becket, MA
crispina.eco

WHAT SHE MAKES: Quilts, rugs, and clothing from upcycled textiles, saving more than one million pounds from the landfill since 1986. Her work has appeared alongside such fashion industry giants as Comme des Garçons and Todd Oldham, but more recently she's focused on creating an online community for upcycling entrepreneurs (stitcherhood.crispina.eco).

SNAPSHOT: "Customers love the nostalgia and attention to detail in my work, the little hidden pockets, embroidery, and buttons. The heart blankets and sweaters imbue a sense of cozy protection from the cold and the craziness of the world."

INSPIRATION: "I am inspired by the value of harvesting trash. Thinking carefully about what we wear is a gateway into a lifestyle that better supports us, our communities, and the planet. Wearing consciously is kind of like eating consciously."



MIKE LAMAGNA & LAUREN McCORD

Long Wharf Supply Co. | Newburyport, MA
longwharfsupply.com

WHAT THEY MAKE: Fisherman's sweaters from a blend of recycled oyster shells and water bottles, plus cotton or lambswool. Each sweater produced by this brother-sister duo uses five oyster shells and eight water bottles, removing 320,000 bottles and 200,000 shells from the waste stream in the past two years.

SNAPSHOT: "We began developing our SeaWell Collection in 2019," says Lamagna. "I had already worked extensively with nonprofits focused on reseeding local oyster reefs to help improve water quality. When I learned that we could help remove oyster shells from the waste stream, use them to make fisherman's sweaters, and use every purchase to reseed oyster reefs, I knew we were onto something special."

INSPIRATION: "My dad," Lamagna says. "His love for the ocean is the reason the rest of my family has such a deep relationship with it. Our first style—the Edgartown SeaWell Quarter Zip—was inspired by my dad's vintage fisherman's sweater from the '70s. It's still our best seller."

DONLIN FOREMAN

Horse Hill Studio | Harrisville, NH
horsehillstudio.com

WHAT HE MAKES: Found objects and leather crafted into curiosities, including trays from the slate roof that once tiled the imposing Granite Mill, where his artist studio sits. "The pieces I use have a voice, a strength, a profound beauty in displaying the terror and wonder of the passage of time."

SNAPSHOT: "When I was performing with the Martha Graham Company in Japan, I gained an appreciation of things old and worn—things chipped or peeling or bent or rusted. I learned it had a name: wabi-sabi. I started with old pallets that firewood had been stacked on, combining the slats with leather to make wall hangings."

INSPIRATION: "It's important that the pieces come from local buildings or woods. The standing dead oak, striped maple, and beech I use are all over the woods. I have a lot of slate at the moment, but I can imagine someday using slate from other old barns in the area and crediting the barn and builder and including a picture of the place where it spent 150 years."



OMAR RAWLINGS (PORTRAIT); LORI PEDRICK (TRAYS)

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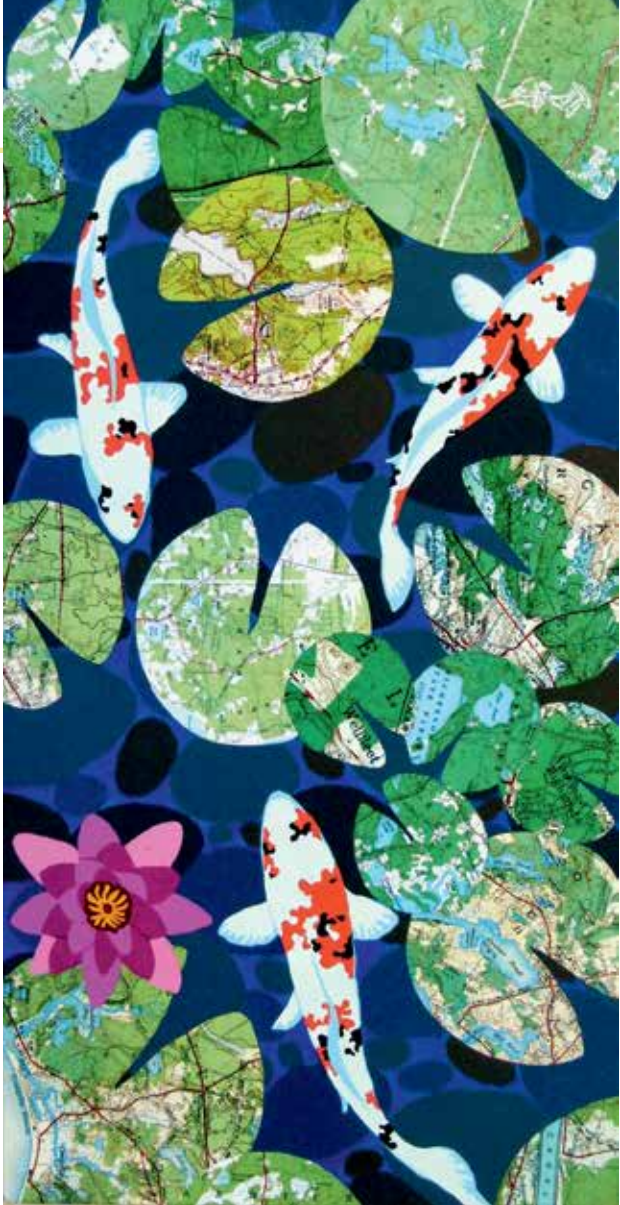
SEA BAGS

Portland, ME
seabags.com

WHAT SEA BAGS MAKES: Breezy totes, travel bags, pillows, and even lounge chairs from recycled sails; the most popular item is the one-of-a-kind Vintage bag. Last fall, the tote bags and bucket bags were GreenCircle Certified as 100 percent recycled content. Bottom line: saving roughly 750 tons of sailcloth from landfills since Sea Bags' founding in 1999.

SNAPSHOT: "There is no sail too small or too far away," says company president Beth Greenlaw. "We travel all over the country, partnering with sailing clubs, races, and marinas, to acquire and reclaim sailcloth. As long as there are sailors, we'll never run out of sails."

INSPIRATION: "Our employees. I really mean it when I say it's 'all hands on deck.' We minimize packaging, reuse boxes when we ship products to our stores, and make our hang tags from sailcloth scrap."



DOUG AMENDE

AmEnde Art | Guilford, CT
amendart.net

WHAT HE MAKES: Lively mixed-media paintings of New England—Adirondack chairs, birch trees, picket fences—that incorporate vintage sheet music, maps, and postcards, diverting paper from landfills and into art. Look for slivers of maps hidden in spears of marsh grass or travel postcards decking out beach chairs.

SNAPSHOT: "Ten years ago, I was doing a lot of antiquing and flea markets, and noticing all of the vintage ephemera. Nostalgia has always been a constant companion, and the thought of combining ephemera with my art intrigued me."

INSPIRATION: "History. With every piece I incorporate into my paintings I can't help but think of the time period it came from. I can get lost in the past, but I try to channel that back into my work." 🎨

JUST KEEP SWIMMING BY DOUG AMENDE (PAINTING); SEA BAGS (SAIL, PILLOW)



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