



Where art and green practices meet

Artists, environmental designers give new life to ReSource materials

Mark Collins For the Camera

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When Julee Herdt walks into the ReSource Yard, she doesn't see junk, trash or useless left-behinds. She sees possibilities.

After they've taken her Green Technology class -- a course at the University of Colorado that focuses on energy-and-resource-efficient design -- Herdt's students do, as well.

In last semester's class, scrap wood and leftover tiles became a table with removable dining trays.

A bag of sports shoe inserts, destined for a landfill, were re-imagined into a rug.

An old eight-panel door and piece of glass were transformed into a table and shelving unit.

A salvaged CD rack became a sleek wine rack that includes a working LED light hovering in one empty bottle to add ambience.

Waste industrial paint and old metal canisters were fashioned into a child's rocking chair. Part of an old aircraft wing became a coffee table, and reclaimed wood was used to create a one-of-a-kind baby's bed.

"As a society, we're so wasteful and we forget there's value in (discarded materials)," Herdt said.

In addition to Herdt's students, a growing number of local woodworkers, furniture makers and artists use ReSource Yard as a supply stop when creating their works.

ReSource Yard is an organization that promotes waste reduction by sourcing and selling a wide range of used building materials. It's part of the Center for ReSource Conservation, and recently moved to a new location at 6400 Arapahoe Ave.

Annette Croughwell and her husband, Ted, scoured ReSource Yard for building materials

when they remodeled their house in Nederland a couple of years ago. That's when Croughwell, an artist who uses reclaimed materials in her work, discovered the Yard is a source for material and for inspiration.

"I love a treasure hunt," Croughwell said.



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"Resource always has great stuff. Even though I go for the reason of 'work,' I just like walking around to see what's come in."

Croughwell takes old windows and doors, then adds pressed flora and fabrics to create unique scenes. Her work is on display at the West End Gardener in Boulder, and can be seen online at chickadeewindows.com.

She said trips to the Yard spark her creativity.

"In fact," Croughwell said. "I sometimes have to rein myself in. I could easily go home with a dozen windows and doors. My home could start looking like the Resource Yard if I'm not careful."

In Herdt's class, students must use salvaged materials. Most newly manufactured materials are off limits. It's all part of a getting the design students to look at resources in a new, greener way.

"A lot of times they'll come in with a can of spray paint and I'll say, 'No, that's a household hazardous waste. We're not using that,'" Herdt said.

"If you wouldn't live next door to the adhesive factory or the paint factory, then don't use it," Herdt continued. "It's how you live that becomes the design process. You have to live with what you design."

One of the goals of her class, too, is to begin to explore the energy it takes to manufacture and ship various materials. Herdt calls what goes into manufacturing new materials "embodied energy."

"By using these waste materials, that automatically gives (the finished projects) a low embodied energy because they're not going out and buying new materials," she said.

Herdt first offered her Green Technology class in 1997, before "green" was synonymous with the environmental movement. The first three years, she said, she had to recruit students. Nowadays, there's a waiting list for the class, which is offered three times each year.

She and her students built an office for ReSource Yard a year after the material reclamation outfit opened in 1996. Herdt will be involved in constructing a new building at the new ReSource location this spring. The new building -- a lobby -- will employ BioSIP construction materials and will be completely solar powered, Herdt said.

"It's an amazing place," Herdt said about ReSource Yard. "You have to walk in with a feeling of serendipity. You may come in looking for gray tile, but when you get there, you may find broken green and blue tile. You have to be able to shift ideas and work with what they have."

"It's a place to go to find ideas for design. It's good to walk in there with an open mind."

Contact Mark Collins at 303-473-1369 or BDCTheater@comcast.net.



Curt Hammerly made a Bon Sai table from salvaged redwood from old fencing at Resource. (Paul Aiken)



Tristan Atwood, Rudder Twin Beech Table, with parts from an airplane rudder and recycled wood from Resource on display in the Environmental Design building on the CU Boulder Campus. (Paul Aiken)

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