

A Second Life for Old Doors

Madison Environmental Group's office furniture looks brand new. Most of the simple, elegant pieces are made, however, from materials salvaged from deconstruction projects around Madison. Architect Christi Weber designed and now sells the furniture and also consults on other projects with FullCircle Design, a branch of Madison Environmental Group.

It all started when the group consulted on the use of salvaged materials in the deconstruction of a Madison area hospital. The hospital had over a hundred unwanted doors and the group found a practical reuse for the large birch slabs by converting them

into tables, benches, and shelving.

Now other businesses and homeowners looking for a beautiful and green alternative, can buy the furniture, or even



Photo courtesy of Full Circle Design

make it themselves using FullCircle Design's do-it-yourself kit. Weber says that the company is not trying to actively compete in the furniture market, noting the difficulty of

being price competitive when so much furniture is made in China.

Still, FullCircle Design's furniture aesthetics are displayed in the Madison Museum of Contemporary

Art in a recent exhibit, which showcased urban living vignettes that each incorporated a piece from the museum's permanent collection.

FullCircle Design packed as much function into the 12 by 14 foot space as possible to reflect the small footprint of urban living illustrated in artist names' "Impression of Chicago," said Weber.

Sustainability is a growing trend in interior design, ac-

cording to Weber, who noted that the other displays in the exhibit also incorporated green aspects. FullCircle Design's emphasis, however, on using not just recycled, but salvaged materials is unique.

The company motivates others to imagine new possibilities for salvaged materials as well. Weber consults with businesses and homeowners who are looking to remodel or improve their space. People's ability to stay where they are, as opposed to relocating to a suburb, encourages her to help people rethink their space. "I love being able to make something more beautiful, usable, and functional for people," she remarks, "then they're just all around happier in their space."

-By Julia Cechvala

EKRA: Emily Kircher Recycling Artist

Walking through downtown Madison or perusing a crafts exposition, you might see a series of small colorful rugs, jewelry, and cat toys, in a nearby booth. It was in this manner that I encountered Emily Kircher, recycling artist. She explained that she refers to herself as an artist rather than another title due to her preference against constraining herself to a particular method or material. She primarily works in salvaged fabrics, in the form of old clothes, linens, curtains, remnants with which she crochets rugs and purses, and dishes she cuts up into tiles to make mosaics. "I also use bottle caps (plastic and metal), books, old maps, and anything else that is second-hand is fair game for me," she writes.

Kircher's material tends to be donated by private indi-

viduals or found in any one of the plethora of thrift stores throughout Madison.

For her, "a combination of my love of crafting and my

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concern for the environment" is what spawned her idea to use only recycled art in her work. "I think the idea of sustainability comes through in everything I make because I use as close to 100% recycled, second-hand, or salvaged materials as possible. People are amazed when I tell them what I can make with castoffs- a great thing about my business as a crafter is that it gives me an opportunity to educate people on sustainability and recycling." Ms. Kircher is also going to be featured in an upcoming documentary and the book, *Handmade Nation* (<http://indiecraftdocumentary.blogspot.com/>), by Faythe Levine, which will feature twenty-five independent artists.

-By Zaber Karp



Sustain Dane's RainReserve rain barrel system has been awarded two Green Log Home and Lifestyle Awards, the only nominee to win in two categories.

The awards were created to recognize "the most noteworthy and innovative green home living solutions."

Winners were chosen by a combination of on-line polling and input from judges affiliated with Environment News Service, a newswire with a focus on environmental issues.