UPCYCLIST
CONTENTS

Introduction 9

WOOD
El Nebot del Persianer 14
Höst Restaurant 18
Bon Restaurant 24
Hendzel + Hunt 30
Bleu Nature 36
Les M&Mdesigners 42
Window House 46
Nic Parnell 52
Markus Friedrich Staab 58

TEXTILES
Bokja Design 64
Studio Brieditis & Evans 70
Yeli Gu 76
DVELAS 80
Meb Rure 84
Brut Cake 88
Ting London 94
Carola Van Dyke 98
Fun Makes Good 104

METAL
+Brauer 110
Yesterday Reclaimed 114
The Rag and Bone Man 118
Facaro 124
Willem Heeffer 130
Alex Randall Design 134
Rafinesse & Tristesse 140

GLASS AND CERAMICS
Attendant Café 146
Juli Bolaños-Durman 152
Esther Derkx 156
Beat Up Creations 160

PAPER AND PLASTIC
Atelier Bomdesign 166
Claire Brewster 170
Alvaro Catalán de Ocón 176
Jennifer Collier 182
Sarah Turner 188
Meike Harde 192
Stephen Sollins 196

MIXED MEDIA
Madeleine Boulesteix 204
Manoteca 210
Coudamy Architectures 216
Sophie Crichton 220
Kirsten Hassenfeld 226
Stuart Haygarth 232
Michael Johansson 238
Swarm 242
Jonas’ Design 246

Directory 252
Acknowledgements
and Picture Credits 255
Some of the doors were originally green and had a Germanic feel, as they were sourced from a town in the west of Romania. These were painted blue to fit the South of France theme.

Doors were used to break up the length of the space and create intimate booths.
WHAT IS UPCYCLIST?
Upcyclist started in 2011 as a blog reporting on the finest examples of creative reuse. Its aim was to showcase the aesthetic possibilities that can occur when transforming something seemingly worthless into something of value. The website is a growing curated collection of projects that cross over into all spectra of the visual and decorative arts, including furniture, lighting, interior design, fine art, sculpture, architecture, fashion design and jewellery design. The Upcyclist school of thought encourages us to re-evaluate overlooked materials, objects and spaces in ways we never thought possible and proves that creative reuse knows no bounds.

UPCYCLIST AND UPCYCLING
The concept of upcycling was popularized by the books UpCycling by Gunter Pauli (1999) and Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things by Michael Braungart and William McDonough (2002). The term was used to describe the practice of converting something disposable into something of greater use and value, preventing the waste of potentially useful materials by utilizing existing ones and lessening the need to use new raw materials. In contrast to recycling, upcycling does not require that the materials be broken down. Instead they are modified, altered, enhanced, combined and transformed into objects of a higher aesthetic or environmental value, either for the same function or a completely new one.

The principles underlying Upcyclist go hand in hand with ideas about mindful production and consumption. The chief aim of this book, however, is to draw attention to an aspect of upcycling that is too often overshadowed by its links to thriftiness and environmental concerns: the tenet that intelligent reuse is both an art form in its own right and a technique for creating objects of exceptional beauty. Upcyclist celebrates makers who work with waste materials out of desire rather than obligation, because they best express an idea or lend something unique to a desired aesthetic. Their approach sits in opposition to quick-fix upcycling which, in spite of any intention to be environmentally friendly, can often lead to low-quality pieces that are likely to end up back in the waste
stream. More attention should be given to creative reuse which results in beautiful objects that are considered works of art, surpass trends and become heirloom pieces that people want to keep. As a consequence, they are diverted from landfill for several lifetimes.

REFINING REUSE

Appropriation and modification of everyday objects has continued to be a useful medium for artists and designers ever since Marcel Duchamp signed an upturned urinal in 1917. Blurring the lines between art, design and craft, *Upcyclist* aims to illustrate that something made of junk does not have to be rough, rebellious, anarchic, heavy or shocking. 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. The new wave of artists and makers are meeting the challenge of creating works that are fresh, clean-cut and refined despite being generated from something old.

*Upcyclist* does not restrict itself by defining what upcycling is or isn’t. Instead it explores beauty in any kind of remodelling, reconfiguring, restoring, reclaiming, repurposing or appropriating, with the intention of inspiring a design-conscious audience.

ARTISTS, DESIGNERS AND MAKERS IN THIS BOOK

The success of a project that incorporates upcycling often depends on the space for which it is intended. With this in mind, this book shines a spotlight on beautiful reuse created for a range of environments, including furniture, lighting, art objects and installations.

The works featured have been created using a wide range of reclaimed sources. Categorized by their main material, projects range from contemporary rugs made from t-shirts (page 70) to restaurant interiors decorated with old doors (page 24), flooring made from vintage belts (page 94), furniture crafted from redundant boat sails (page 80) and lighting fashioned from weathered plastic found washed up on the beach (page 232).

The book profiles 45 artists, designers and makers that come from a variety of creative backgrounds. Few of them have set out to be upcyclists and to define their creations by their upcycling practices would be to oversimplify their work. Their ability to take waste and turn it into something contemporary, beautiful and exceptional, however, is testament to their unique creativity and skill, as well as their ability to challenge our perception of the material world.

What *Upcyclist* strives to capture are the ways in which reclaimed materials make demands of the imagination. Working within the parameters of reusing something others might consider waste creates a challenge that designers and makers relish. It appeals to their thirst for problem solving, naturally encourages innovation and unleashes previously untapped ideas. These creatives not only shape how we think about the things we buy and throw away, but show us that ideas are sparked by the process of upcycling that may not have manifested through any other means.

THE FUTURE OF REUSE

With a new generation of upcyclists setting the benchmark for beautiful reuse, there is infinite potential yet to be discovered. As reuse techniques become more advanced and refined, these
practices will expand to appeal not only to the luxury market but the mass market too, as companies begin to investigate upcycling potential on an industrial scale. As resources become scarce, all markets should be considering the life span, reuse value or disposability of every manufactured product from the outset.

As a result of our ongoing love affair with all things vintage, the idea of second-hand being perceived as second-rate has almost dissipated. Upcycling goes one step further, enabling us to create a contemporary style of our time, as opposed to replicating a bygone era.

The evolution of upcycling runs parallel with the times. As new technologies emerge, new species of reusable materials become available. How they will be reused in the future remains to be seen.
WOOD
Founded by Salvador Nadal Belda in 2012, El Nebot del Persianer (‘nephew of the blinds maker’) is a multidisciplinary design atelier focusing on interior design, product design and communication. With a passion for environmentally sound materials, Belda has developed a range of contemporary home products made from old Venetian blinds. The inspiration for the project came from Belda’s uncle Lucas Sanz Belda, who had a career in making, hanging and repairing blinds for over 50 years. Belda explains, ‘Initially, all blinds were hand-crafted from cane. Years later, they were made redundant as factories began to make shutters from wood. This inspired me to reuse the old blinds for another function. By utilizing these autochthonous materials, the project became a tribute to an object that had become characteristic of Mediterranean towns.’

Born out of a love of craftsmanship and with reference to a historical and cultural context, his contemporary lights made from blinds are designed to combine the traditions of the past with the hope of creating a sustainable future. With the help of Lucas, Belda was able to make the most of first-hand knowledge of how the blinds were originally manufactured in order to upcycle them into something new. ‘We use materials that are at our disposal not only for the benefit to the environment, but to create objects with soul,’ says Belda. ‘They are composed of materials that have surrounded us whilst we were growing up. Giving a second, functional life to an object is a beautiful concept and this is something new objects cannot compete with. Sustainable practice makes the most of materials that have already been used and doesn’t rely on using more materials and energy to harness them. The product itself needs to be as environmentally friendly as the manufacturing process, since one without the other is useless. We not only like unique objects, we love the idea of reusing and extending the life of an object that can no longer serve its original function. Since childhood I have always loved objects that tell stories about how people lived long ago. I think we all have a fondness for the things in our daily lives that have been recovered from our roots and are reminiscent of times past.’

OPPOSITE:
Milano circular suspension lamp made of salvaged natural wooden blinds. The shade can also be painted in different colours.
ABOVE: Adela suspended lamp and storage container and Maru work table. The table is made of solid oak coated with natural oils made from plant resins, with a recycled wooden-blind pocket for storing books, magazines and other objects.

Sant Antoni Street in Belda’s town of Aielo de Malferit in Valencia. Old blinds are salvaged from the windows and doors of local houses when they need replacing.

OPPOSITE: Tilu standing lamp, also available as a floor and suspended version. The lamp’s graphic aesthetic is designed to create warm indirect light reminiscent of the sun that filters through the blinds during calm, summer, mid-afternoon siestas.
Norm, a design practice in the heart of Copenhagen working in residential architecture, commercial interiors, industrial design, photography, graphics and art direction, was founded in 2008. The Höst restaurant project started with a range of dinnerware designed by Norm for the Danish company Menu in 2012. It was inspired by the eclectic way in which many Danish chefs were beginning to work with New Nordic cuisine in Copenhagen. Seasonal dishes were served on different kinds of materials. Wood, stone, coloured stoneware and textiles were used as a way of symbolizing the element that the produce had come from. The result was a collection of tableware in a colour palette of greys, dirty blues and greens combined with wood and slate.

To launch the dinnerware, Norm came up with the idea of making an urban farmyard restaurant. Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen explains, ‘We talked about how good food tastes out in the open, the simple, rural life, a low-key restaurant in the mountains on vacations to southern Europe or eating at a country inn in Denmark. We took all those elements and interpreted them in a contemporary urban context, and tried to create the same atmosphere indoors.’

In collaboration with Danish restaurateur Cofoco, Höst was built using primarily reclaimed materials that they felt had the right patina and authenticity. Tables were designed from old ceiling constructions, wood ceilings crafted from Euro pallets and found windows repurposed from an old hospital. ‘Almost every element is custom-made for the place. Even our Mass Light lamps, which we designed for the Danish company &Tradition, were sandblasted to get just the right surface and tone to match the concept. The reused materials were small gifts that gave us new ideas, with all their stories, tactility and sensuality,’ says Bjerre-Poulsen.

Inspired by a mix of Japanese aesthetics, American minimalism and Scandinavian simplicity (whereby materials stand out as something beautiful), the treatment of old materials at Höst is in keeping with Bjerre-Poulsen’s and Kasper Rønn’s overall design philosophy. In fact, the name of their practice, Norm, derives from an interest in working with existing traditions and norms that have been refined through millennia, as opposed to always searching for something new. Bjerre-Poulsen says, ‘We want our designs to not only be made of good materials and with good craftsmanship, but to embody beauty and history and, most importantly, outlive fleeting trends.’
ABOVE:
Wood ceilings throughout are crafted from old Euro pallets dotted with company stamps. The small tables, inspired by simple planter tables, are made from the same material. The small window, sourced from an old hospital, offers a view into the working kitchen. The coat rack in the background is made from old bottle dryers.

OPPOSITE:
View through to the private dining room with simple Shaker-style chairs in varying nuances of grey. Inspired by traditional construction, the table is assembled with big nails to create a rough aesthetic.
Aus alt mach neu – der individuelle Designtrend

Upcycling ist eines der spannendsten Kapitel der aktuellen Designszene. Im Gegensatz zum Recycling werden hier ausgerangierte Wertstoffe nicht einfach wiederverwertet, sondern erfahren durch Umformung eine deutliche Aufwertung.