

Take a Leap: Create Perfect Harmony with a Bench and Old Sweater

DIY, How-tos | February 21, 2012



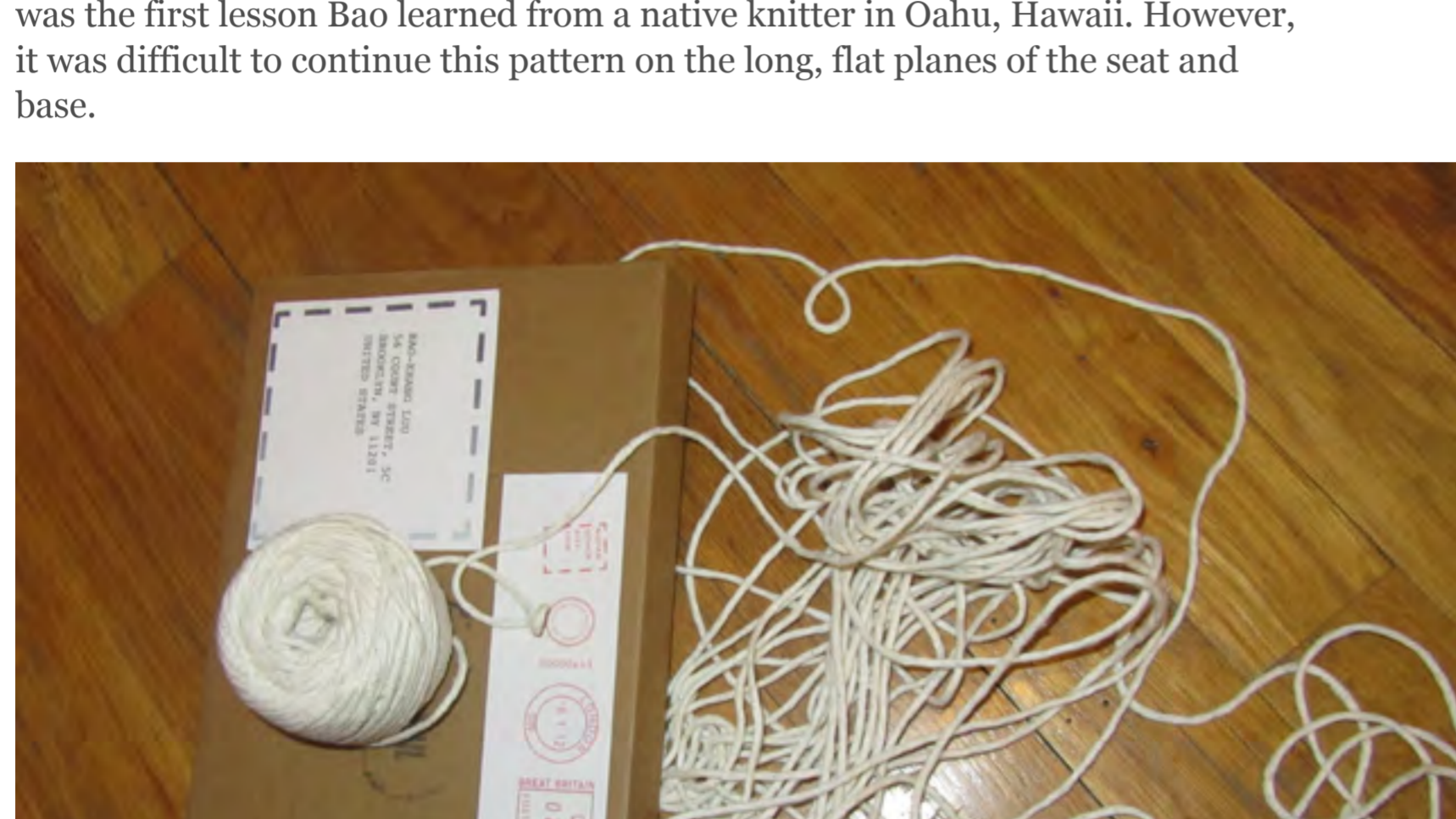
An old sweater and bench find new life in this beauty.

Bao-Khang Luu first came to my attention when I saw him [decorate a room with trash](#) on [The Nate Berkus Show](#). (Set your Tivo, the episode is running again this week!) He's also shown up on [Krr](#) as a [buyer](#) and hopefully a seller in the near future. I've become even more familiar with the designer this past week as we've set up shop on the floor of his workspace to [cover my beat-up piano bench with the thread of an old knit sweater](#). While this is my first venture into upcycling, Bao is known for his artfully designed home decor made of discarded everyday items.



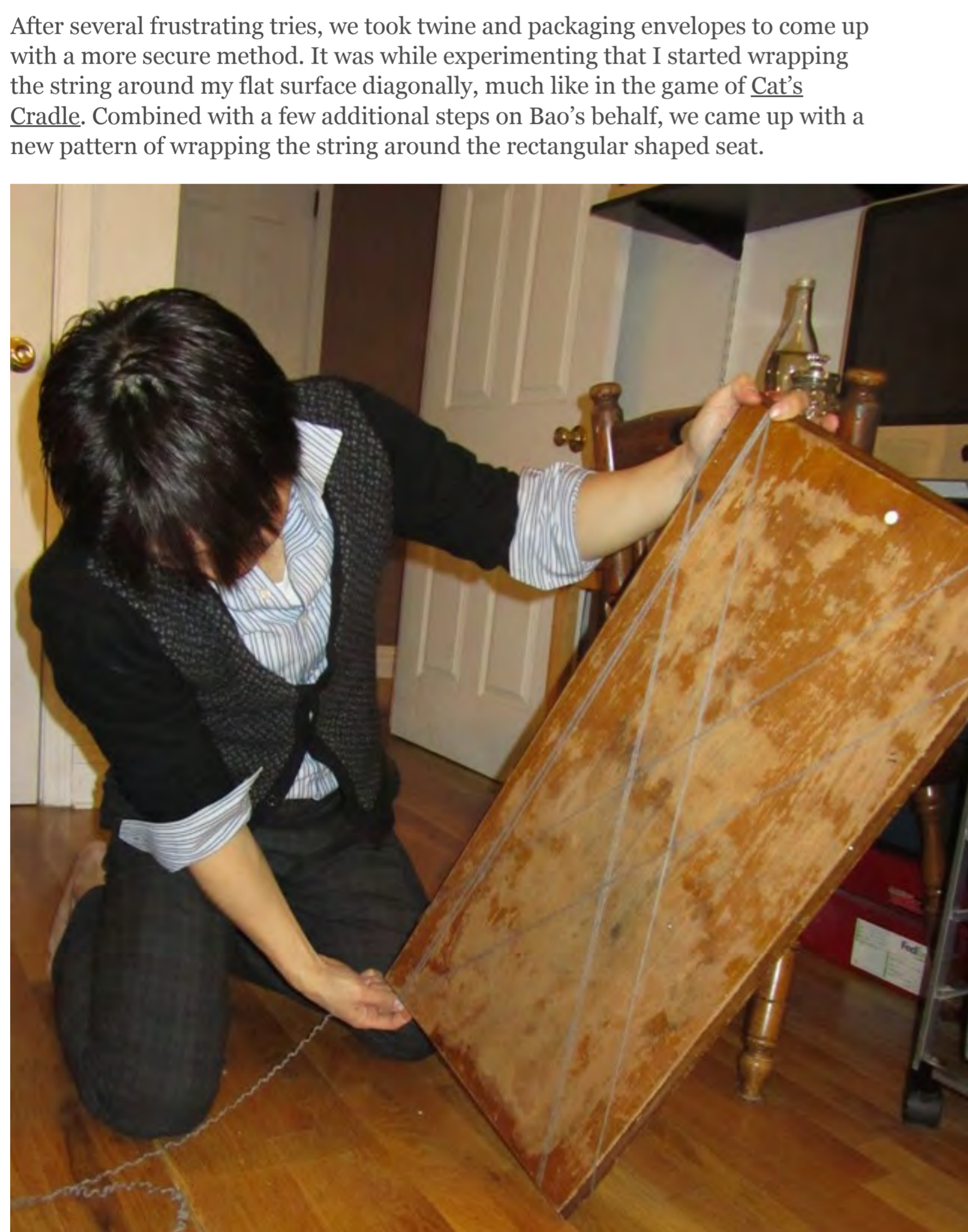
With the legs complete, it was time to focus on the long planes of the bench seat.

As the upcycling project progressed, a few challenges popped up. On the legs of the bench, we employed a technique similar to wrapping a round skein of yarn. It was the first lesson Bao learned from a native knitter in Oahu, Hawaii. However, it was difficult to continue this pattern on the long, flat planes of the seat and base.



Figuring out the logistics of the seat on a smaller scale.

After several frustrating tries, we took twine and packaging envelopes to come up with a more secure method. It was while experimenting that I started wrapping the string around my flat surface diagonally, much like in the game of [Cat's Cradle](#). Combined with a few additional steps on Bao's behalf, we came up with a new pattern of wrapping the string around the rectangular shaped seat.



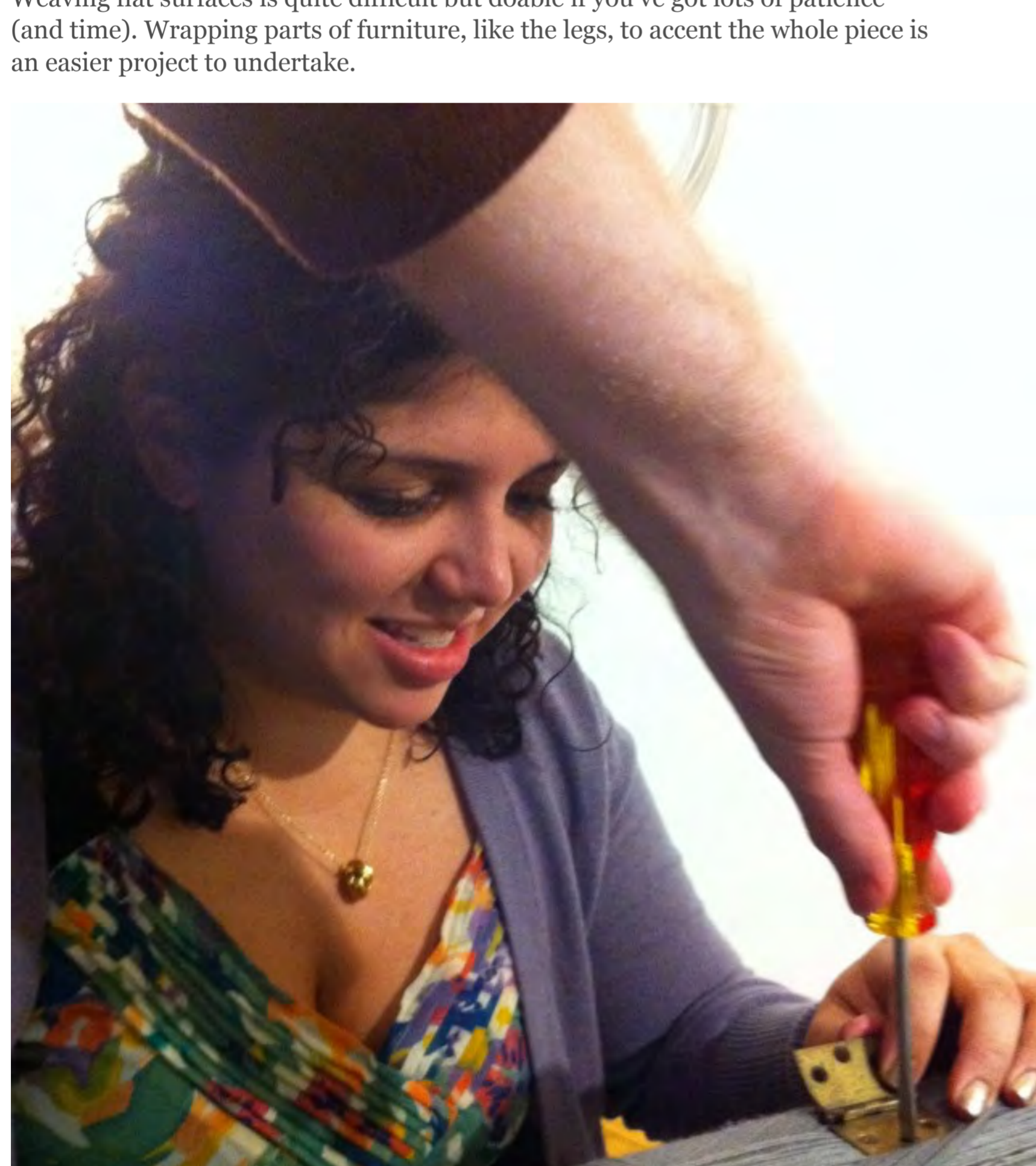
Testing out our new weaving pattern on the seat.

For many of Bao's designs, he creates simpler versions for others wanting to take on a project. His company [Relevé Design](#) is popular among the DIY crowd for the tutorials on pendant lamps made of plastic 6-pack rings. Although designs have been simplified, the idea remains the same—using discarded materials to create items with a new purpose.



Wrapping up loose ends.

Weaving flat surfaces is quite difficult but doable if you've got lots of patience (and time). Wrapping parts of furniture, like the legs, to accent the whole piece is an easier project to undertake.



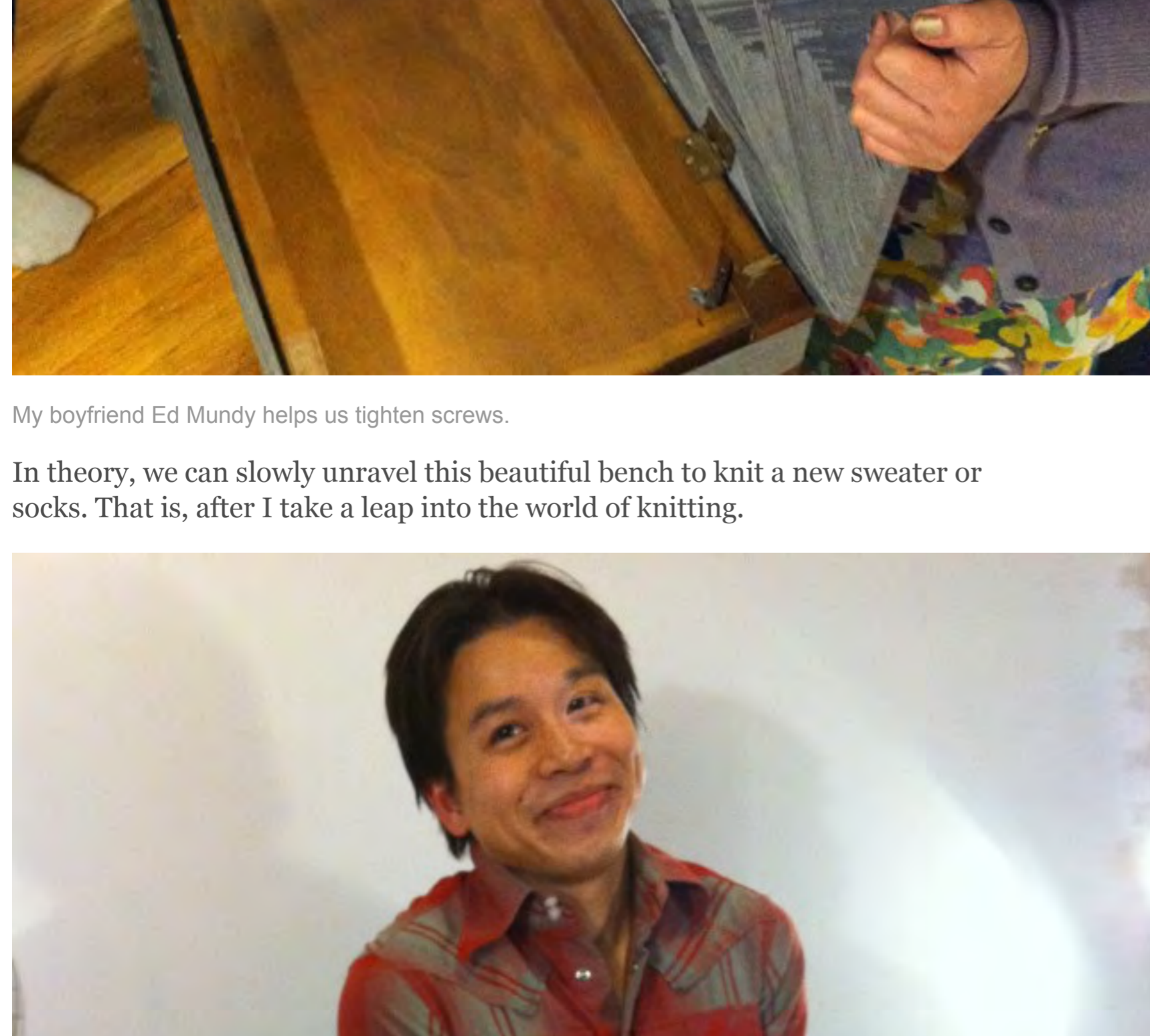
It takes teamwork to put the bench together.

We kept the project as straightforward as possible in terms of materials. Using just the thread of an unraveling woman's sweater (size, medium) and as little glue as possible, we were able to stick to the main principle of upcycling that states an item be able to be used again and again in multiple ways.



My boyfriend Ed Mundy helps us tighten screws.

In theory, we can slowly unravel this beautiful bench to knit a new sweater or socks. That is, after I take a leap into the world of knitting.



Bao-Khang Luu tries out his latest upcycling project.

Bao is currently en route to Hawaii for a week. He has plans to continue with his knitting and spooling lessons during his stay. We'll check back with him for a more in-depth tutorial on upcycled weaving which you can find here soon.

About the author



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Always up for a bike ride, a flea market, and whipping up baked goods.

Contributing from Brooklyn with serious NYC cred.

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