



Take a Leap – Spinning a New View on Upcycling

DIY, How-tos | February 14, 2012



Transforming something old into something new.

I've been living with an eyesore for years. An old piano bench that I picked up one day on my way home has followed me from apartment to apartment. Not wanting to discard the functional piece of furniture with built-in storage, I've often stuck it in some corner of my living space with little thought.

But last Sunday I took a leap. I spent the afternoon with **Bao-Khang Luu** in his home/workspace learning to upcycle. I brought over my ugly bench (now replete with chipping varnish) in hopes of creating a presentable piece of furniture. Bao specializes in transforming discarded items into beautiful and eco-friendly home designs that sell through his company [Relevé Design](#).



Bao intricately wraps a spindle leg of the bench much like a ball of yarn.

Growing up in an immigrant Vietnamese family that repurposed items as a regular way of life, Bao is no stranger to upcycling. When he was a kid, repurposing came out of necessity, yet Bao's belief in not wasting materials is just as unwavering today. It's why I found myself sitting on the floor of his Brooklyn Height's apartment wrapping my poor bench's legs in the yarn of a sweater as it unraveled before our eyes.



A old knit sweater unravels as we weave the thread around the bench leg.

Over the next week, the worn bench will gain new life as a functional piece of art. Spending time in Bao's home has opened my eyes to think creatively of items in my own home the most of them with their intended purpose or not. Bao encourages all DIYers to do the same with [upcycling projects](#) on Relevé Designs. This young artist/designer makes his high-end designs with low-end materials accessible to DIYers and most importantly, he makes the concept of upcycling attainable to all.

Check back next Tuesday to see the finished product. We'll have more photos and a complete tutorial.

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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