http://www.heraldsun.com/lifestyles/reuse-in-many-hues-at-cameron-gallery/article_ad55c324-3d5e-11e6-98e7-a35d210f8ef2.html

EDITOR'S PICK FEATURED

Reuse in many hues at Cameron Gallery

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Submitted/Courtesy of Katherine Soucie

"Hosiery Wall," by Katherine Soucie, is on view in the exhibit "Mottainai" in the Cameron Gallery at The Scrap Exchange.

"Mottainai Waste not, Want not," Cameron Gallery, The Scrap Exchange, 2050 Chapel Hill Road, Durham, through July 9.

Buried deep inside The Scrap Exchange is the small Cameron Gallery which is hosting more and more fascinating exhibitions. Currently the gallery is ablaze with brilliantly colored fabrics, clothing, rugs, embroidery and jewelry, all made from reclaimed waste. Titled "Mottainai" for the Japanese term conveying a sense of regret concerning waste, the exhibition could not be a better fit for the Exchange. The Exchange has been built on the mantra reuse, recycle, protect the environment and that is exactly what Katherine Soucie, the creator of the exhibition, is all about.

She only uses scrap materials and wastes nothing, not even the water to mix the dies. Chellie LaPointe, the gallery's director, told me she had been working with Soucie, a Vancouver-based artist, for a year about bringing a show of her work plus examples of things from her workshop, the art collective Sans Soucie, to Durham on its way to Savannah, Georgia. What began as a small show grew into preparing materials for an installation on the premises and giving a workshop about how to dye and how to reclaim pre-consumer waste.



In preparation for the artist The Scrap Exchange gathered up four stove top burners, stainless steel pots and 300 pounds of pre-consumer hosiery waste from the Efland Hosiery Mill. (The mill has been supplying the Exchange with pre-consumer waste for years.) Soucie cooked up her dyes dipped in her materials and hung them to dry on six laundry lines. For a week, she worked out on the loading dock, stewing the hosiery and talking to customers who stopped to ask questions, and then she gave a workshop. Those who took part went home with the learned skill of using the sequential acid dyeing process and hand dyed fabric samples plus recipes on creating their own dyes. All this was before the show opened.

The materials Soucie prepared became the large installation of fabric, cascading in a rainbow of colors from three lines across the back wall of the gallery. It seems there are no hues from lime greens to pinks to reds to blues to lavenders that cannot be created by hand. The wall to the left is covered with one-of-a-kind dresses, scarves, blouses and small purses, made from materials like the ones prepared on site. Soucie is the designer and creator of the clothing made from the dyed hosiery. She adds screen-printed blocks of material of varying sizes sewn together to each garment. The garment or accessory becomes one-of-a-kind art to wear or use, something usually only available from high

fashion couturiers or at top craft fairs. In fact, LaPointe said while Soucie was in Durham she received several calls from Cirque Du Soleil; she is working on costumes for their new show.

But there is much more in this exhibition. On the corners of two walls are strands of material, leftovers, from the clothing making. Besides one set of strands are small framed jewel-like embroidered flowers by the artist Kristen Chursinoff, who buys this kind of product for all her embroidery. On the opposite wall beside similar strands of scrap material is a large hand-hooked rug in shades of grey with abstract forms of oranges and deep reds floating across the surface.

Michelle Sirois-Silver makes hand hook rugs using the waste product from Soucie's artistic practice plus other similar waste products. Both artists are part of the collective but are also independent and have studios of their own. There is also a small display of fashionable jewelry which includes bracelets, earrings and belts by Diane Farnsworth. They are also made with the scraps from the fashions. In this case the jeweler soaks the material in the resin, puts the whole thing into a mold, and after it hardens it becomes a good-looking piece of jewelry. Nothing is wasted; no dye, not even water.

To punctuate her point that nothing is wasted a large tapestry hangs from another wall in the gallery. It is made of vinyl with an abstract design of long colored marks splashed across it. It is the cover of the table Soucie worked on during her several days of mixing dyes and dipping the unfinished panty hose in the liquid colors.

The term “mottainai” with its deep meaning of avoiding waste is especially significant in a society like ours where throw-away and planned obsolescence are the accepted philosophy. It is the American equivalent of waste not, want not.

We make a stab at recycling plastic, while disposable tableware chokes our dumps and our oceans. The term “mottainai” encompasses the four Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle and repair. The Sans Soucie cooperative has as its raison d’etre the words “Transformation, Empowerment and Sustainability equals Zero Waste,” and they do it. And The Scrap Exchange does everything it knows how to warehouse scrap materials, sell them cheap, and encourage all who enter to reuse everything.

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