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NOTHING IS SCRAP

At the 11th Kirloskar Vasundhara International Film Festival, we learn about upcycled products and how every scrapped item can be used to make something new

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Wouldn't jewellery made from plant seeds look pretty? Or how about using stools made from paint buckets and pillows made from thrown-away fabric?

Look around you. Almost every single object that you think of as waste and throw away — from your water bottle to the old piece of shirt that doesn't fit you any more — can in fact be used to make a whole new product.

As part of the 11th edition of the environment festival, Kirloskar Vasundhara International Film Festival, upcycled products are being displayed at Eco Bazaar by Studio Alternative at Kirloskar Campus, behind Mrutyunjayeshwar Mandir on Karve Road. There are several other stalls of eco-friendly products put up too.

Started in 2010, Studio Alternative is focused on upcycling and reusing of scrap material. Says Sonali Phadke, a partner at the company, "Instead of recycling which requires a lot of energy, we upcycle the scrap, which involves adding some elements to it and making a new product from it. Take any material that you think of as useless and look at in a different way, its functions and in what



Sonali Phadke

other ways it can be used. For example, thermocol is light, has insulation properties, so we use it as insulation panels."

Phadke and her team uses scrap which comes from industries, households, shops, stores etc, and which range from thermocol, shredded paper, plastic bottles, to tyres, tubes, egg cartons, tin cans, rags and lots more. As cassettes



Pots made out of newspaper weavings



Lamps from upcycled bottles

and CDs are getting obsolete, they get a lot of those too.

"We receive scrap all the time and also do customised items sometimes. The challenging part about the exercise is that you don't get the same kind of scrap every time — it comes in different shapes and sizes. Which is why two upcycled products of the same type always look different," she tells us.

She further explains that with all the scrap in hand, one needs to know its parts, designs, shape, sizes, properties etc and work around its design and experiment a little bit before figuring out what can be made out of it.

At the end of the day however, we are talking about scrap and the new products made out of it. So the life and quality of the product naturally comes into ques-



Earrings made of seeds

tion. "Which is why we often add new material with the old scrap to give the product a longer life and better quality. For example, we made a pillow out of rags, but for one of its sides, new material was used. That way, the customer too can use it like any regular product and not treat it with extra care just because it has been made from scrap," Phadke explains.

People often think that upcycled products should cost less since they are majorly made from scrap. But Phadke points out, "The labour and transport cost to make upcycled products is high, even if the scrap comes for free most of the time. This makes the cost of the upcycled products to go up and be almost equal to regular products sold in the market."

Studio Alternative will also be conducting a workshop to spread awareness about how everything we throw can be useful. Grown-ups and kids can learn to make some simple products such as newspaper flowers, jewellery made of fabric and plastic, toys made of plastic bottles and egg crates, a lamp made of a tin can and what not.

So the next time you're getting ready to discard something from the house, think for a minute about how you can use it. You never know, you might actually have some interesting brand-new stuff made for you. Try it!

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The Eco Bazaar is on at Kirloskar Campus, Kothrud till January 10, from 3 - 8 pm

Pics: Mukkund Bhute