

ANA ENGELHORN

If sustainability is truly at the heart of a design, the use of space becomes secondary, and the client has to live with the result. A sustainable approach could dramatically change what you had previously envisioned or it could be exactly what you wanted. For example, although there is paint that removes CO2 from the air, you can only get that paint in very light colours at the moment. If you were committed to being as eco-friendly as possible, you might have to sacrifice your first choice of colour or make compromises, like using that paint for just the ceiling or only in some areas of the house. Every aspect of a design or build is like that – you need to think about what you would like and how sustainable you are going to go. It's about making choices.

Inspiration for sustainable, organic design can be found everywhere, that's the beauty of it. I am inspired by so many things – the places I see on my travels, places and images I come across in daily life, suppliers who have weaved sustainability into how they make their products. For instance, Helloosow in South Africa produce chandeliers out of clay beads instead of plastic and also give underprivileged women a job opportunity and the chance to be part of something bigger.

Organisations like Recover upcycle furniture and work with donated or reclaimed materials – they also offer jobs to people recovering from addiction or mental illness. There are many companies using waste materials to create innovative products. For example, Exovative Design create lamps made from agricultural waste and mushroom roots! I also try to meet up regularly with other interior designers to see what they're doing and go to

galleries to see what artists are doing. All these observations and experiences get logged in my brain and come together in my mind to inspire my own design work. I can often visualise what I want to achieve; the challenge is to then sit down and try to piece it together on the computer and bring my vision to life.

Looking outside my own studio and on a global scale, I am half German, half Spanish, but was born in Switzerland. I instinctively go to those countries for inspiration, but also feel very inspired by Italy, France and Scandinavia. Scandinavians are, for me, the best at creating sustainable yet comfortable, designed interiors or buildings. Swiss and Germans, on the other hand, take sustainability to the top but don't temper it with softer textures and items. I think sustainability will become increasingly important – in interior design as well as in

construction. Off-site modular building, for example, where waste is reduced and more environmentally friendly buildings are created, is becoming more popular. In interior design I would like to see more progress on textile waste. Burning unwanted textiles should be made more difficult to encourage businesses to rethink how they might recycle or sell them. We, as designers, I think, will move to using only the most efficient products where possible, especially in areas like windows and lighting. I think people in general will start taking more responsibility for the items they own. Designers can help by encouraging clients to either reuse, restore or pass on unwanted items to charities or organisations who can salvage and repurpose them.

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Above: Featuring 18th Century Reclaimed flooring

Furniture for all our futures...



Reusable bags, reusable plastic, recycled paper, energy efficient lightbulbs, eco showers, electric and hybrid cars... environmentally friendly upcycled furniture? YES!

Upcycling is now not only a hobby it's a professional status. Over 300,000 tonnes of reusable furniture is discarded annually in the UK alone and Condover Furniture is buying it and making it sexy again, mending, sanding and accenting it with cool glass either in the form of crystal glass knobs from Murano, Italy, or Nottinghamshire, UK. Created out of a desire to repurpose furniture from an international move, and to help others to make the choice to consider the environment when enhancing their home and workspace, professional upcycler Vanessa Dee has turned a passion into a



company. After exhibiting at the Shrewsbury Flower Show and at 100% Design in London in 2019, in October Vanessa moved her business from a home showroom to her first shop in Condover, 4 miles south of the county town of Shrewsbury, Shropshire; a beautiful place to visit for a short break.

Vanessa has partnered with Glass Designer Maker, Ingrid Pears M.B.E., to accent the upcycled furniture with unique glass 'pebbles', which she embeds into the fronts and tops of the furniture and individually handmade crystal glass knobs. If the furniture needs painting Vanessa uses only top quality environmentally friendly Little Greene primers and paints and the oils and waxes she uses are either environmentally friendly or leave an environmentally finish, too. The results are absolutely stunning and have been very well received by both those looking for that unique piece and by those looking for a sustainable option.



The next time you are looking for a feature piece of furniture that also helps the environment, visit Condover Furniture's website or their small showroom and workshop in Shropshire. Take a look at Condover Furniture's showcase video on YouTube (search Condover Furniture) Environmentally friendly upcycled furniture at its best!

Visit the showroom:
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