



Trashmagination Podcast #75 - Skateboards

Welcome to Trashmagination, a podcast about reimagining trash. I'm Carla Brown.

In today's episode, we'll talk about the creative reuse of skateboards. We'll learn about artists who take old skateboards and make them into other things. At the end of episode, I will share project ideas that you could make yourself even if you don't have an interest in woodworking. We'll also talk about skateboards made from recycled materials.

For those who don't skateboard, here's helpful vocabulary. The flat part of the skateboard is called the deck. Most skateboard decks are made of glue and wood (usually maple), but some decks incorporate aluminum and fiberglass. The deck is made from a series of layers or veneers coated with glue and then shaped into the skateboard design. These veneers are often multi-colored so when you cut into the deck, you get a rainbow effect. Just like a rainbow, skateboards are made from seven layers.

On top of the deck is grip tape which is like sandpaper and provides traction for the skateboarder's shoes. The other parts of the skateboard are the trucks, which are the metal parts that attach the deck to the wheels, and the wheels, which are usually made from polyurethane, a synthetic rubber polymer.

Creatively reusing skateboards uses the same tools and skills as many other woodworking crafts. One big tedious difference that you have to remove the grip tape from the deck before you make them into anything new. Removing grip tape is very difficult. Some people try to heat up the glue with a heat gun but mostly it involves a lot of hard work.

Creative reuse of skateboard decks is not a hobby that you could start quickly if you have not done woodworking before and don't have a lot of woodworking power tools. It requires heavy duty hydraulic presses, huge band saws and table-mounted belt sanders. But if you are interested in woodworking, there are a lot of inspiring artists for you to learn about – so let's get started!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZaVvwsCFtk>

Artists Who Creatively Reuse Skateboards

The best-known artist who works with recycled skateboards is Haroshi [<https://www.instagram.com/haroshi/>]. One of his recent sculptures was a huge hand giving the middle finger. In the photos, it looks about six feet tall. He also makes little abstract humanoid sculptures called Guzo. The colorful layers of veneer in the skateboard really accentuate the curves in his sculptures.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbAnic9YgbM>

Martinus and Adrian Pool are brothers located in Canada who specialize in recycled skateboards [<https://www.instagram.com/adrianmartinus/>, <https://adrianmartinus.com/>]. They make bowls cut on a wood lathe. To make the bowls, they glue together a stack of skateboard decks into a big cube. The lathe spins that cube at top speeds and the brothers use a very sharp tool to shape the bowl. They also make this awesome coffee table which curves down, and they make mosaic art from diamond shapes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xQRrhCtsjk>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2027026883977015>

Another Canadian skateboard creative reuse artist is John Gibson from 2nd Shot [<https://www.2ndshot.ca/>]. John cuts skateboards into incredibly tiny pieces to make itsy bitsy mosaics small enough to be a watch face.

Nick Pourfard from Prisma Guitars specializes in making electric guitars from recycled skateboards [<https://www.prismaguitars.com/>]. When he started, it would take him six months to make a guitar. Now he can make one in a day. One of the reasons I love Nick's work is because he talks about how the skater puts energy into the skateboard, and then that energy is transferred into the guitar, and then the musicians feel that energy when they play the guitar. Another person who works at Prisma Guitar, Michael Svendsen, talks about how sometimes skateboarding is an illegal activity in certain areas, and when we do creative reuse, we are not usually doing something illegal but we are questioning the rules about how we are "supposed" to use a certain material.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJSZrfIZK-w>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10155173255081711>

Inge Guzyte (ING-ah JEE-ta) cuts up skateboards and puts the pieces together to make portraits [<https://www.instagram.com/ingaguzyteart/>]. Some are realistic portraits and others look like cartoon characters.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7g1Tdd3QEVM>

Jason Podlaski from Deckstool makes stools from recycled skateboards [<https://www.deckstool.com/>]. He also makes wall panels or tiles that feature the distinctive urban art found on skateboards. Sometimes the tiles are squares or rectangles. Other times they are made from the rounded toe or heel of the skateboards and layer like fish scales. He designed something called the Skate Hook which looks like half a skateboard with a piece that folds out and forms a hook for your coat [<https://www.recycledskateboardgifts.com/product/skatehook-recycled-skateboard-wall-hooks-set-of-2-two>].

Lindsay Jo Holmes from MapleXO makes jewelry such as earrings, bangles and necklaces from recycled skateboards [<https://maplexo.com>]. Now MapleXO is offering earrings made from sliced skateboard wheels.

Dave Bachinsky from ShapeThree makes canoe paddles, bar-b-que skewers and cribbage boards [<http://www.shapethree.com>]. He gives back to his skateboarding community in Lowell, Massachusetts by building out the local skate park. He goes there to pick up broken boards to make more stuff.

What You Can Make from a Recycled Skateboard

Those artists are doing incredible things with skateboards. Next I'll mention some projects you could do with a recycled skateboard even if you don't want to do serious wood working.

I saw a few tutorials by interior designers who made shelves from skateboards mounted on the wall with L-brackets. Often they are not using recycled skateboards, but instead miniature ones from a discount store. These designers also creatively reused wheels and metal trucks from a skateboard to make drawer pulls on a dresser or hooks on the wall.

[<https://www.jennaburger.com/2011/02/skateboard-shelves/>].

https://youtu.be/lZR6_tHJYw

Another project to reuse a skateboard involves making a swing where you can either sit on the deck or stand on the deck if you hang it lower [<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Skateboard-Swing>]. This requires only very minimal woodworking skills and tools.

Skateboards Made from Recycled Materials

Next I'll share info about designers who are making skateboard from recycled materials.

George Rocha from Iris Skateboards makes skateboards from recycled skateboards [<https://irisskateboards.com/>]. It's not easy. He was actually inspired by the artist Haroshi who I mentioned earlier. His skateboards were featured on the TV show "How It's Made" which I will put in the show notes. While most skateboards rely on grip tape to provide traction, Iris Skateboards instead apply a layer of crushed recycled glass in the epoxy. That way, you can still see the beautiful colors of the wood veneer layers through the glass. George also makes surfboards from recycled skateboards and a recycled foam core.

Video about Iris Skateboards - <https://player.vimeo.com/video/201019012>

How It's Made episode about Iris Skateboards - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6VObFDHsZk>

The Bucket Board is a project by artist Mac Premo and skateboard maker Don Sanford to make skateboards from plastic buckets they found in the trash [<http://www.thebucketboard.org/>]. This project figured out how to make it work and then they give the skateboards to kids who wouldn't normally be able to afford a skateboard. They make the boards from recycled plastic buckets and people donate \$100 per skateboard for the trucks, wheels, grip tape and helmets. Then they give out the boards.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKP_Y_BPIMs

A company named Bureo is making skateboard decks from recycled fishing nets gathered from fishing communities in Chile. The deck is called the Minnow [<https://bureo.co/products/minnow-complete-cruiser-skateboard>]. The deck is sold with wheels made from 30 percent recycled vegetable oil and 100 percent recycled cores [<https://bureo.co/products/satori-eco-cruiser-wheels-blue>]. This company also sells a version of the game Jenga made from recycled fishing nets.

Grow Anthology makes longboards from recycled paper combined with a resin to make it waterproof [<https://www.facebook.com/Richlite/videos/10158705339870007/>]. They plant a tree for every longboard sold. <http://www.growanthology.com/category/eco-friendly-skateboards>

Thank you!

Thank you for listening! Please let me know if you have creatively reused skateboards at trashmagination@gmail.com. Until next time – may you see skateboards as a source of art in your life!

Instagram accounts that feature upcycled Skateboards:

- <https://www.instagram.com/boardsportfurniture/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/adrianmartinus/>
- http://instagram.com/second_shot
- <https://www.instagram.com/bureo>
- <https://www.instagram.com/deckstool/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/haroshi/>
- https://www.instagram.com/iris_skateboards/
- <https://www.instagram.com/maplexo/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/shapethree/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/wobydesign/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bo9aWzqlMVg/>

Facebook accounts that feature upcycled Skateboards:

- <https://www.facebook.com/adrianmartinusdesign/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/secondshot2011/>
- <https://facebook.com/bureoskateboards>
- <https://www.facebook.com/deckstool>
- <https://www.facebook.com/IrisSkateboards/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/MapleXO>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Shapethreeskate/>
- https://www.facebook.com/pg/lukebrabantsartist/photos/?ref=page_internal