

News

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Peekskill Art Thrift Store Joins Creative Reuse Movement

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The dazzling array of colorful art supplies, bright piles of yarn and vast swaths of material are just some of the very affordable recycled items found at Retake/Remake, an art thrift store in Peekskill.

The brightly-lit space, which opened last February, sells assorted notions, paper, cards, envelopes, markers, crayons, pencils, stencils, stickers and stamps, items that not only inspire visual artists but have attracted a growing number of DIYers who browse the shelves and bins and let their creative imaginations take flight.

Most impressive is how much the recycled items are diverted from the waste stream of collected bulk or garbage pickup headed for inundated landfills. According to Barbara Korein, the founder of Retake/Remake, donations accounted for 27,207 pounds of collected material in the last year.

“We track incoming donated materials, weigh it in and list the zip code where it is from,” Korein said. “We are tremendously surprised by how people want to do the right thing in the environment given the opportunity. We need to make reuse a lot easier.”

As an artist and former high school art teacher in New York City, Korein became involved with the group Materials for the Arts (MFTA), the largest municipal upcycling reuse center in the country. It was established in 1978 to supply other nonprofit organizations and public schools with art materials.

“Everyone involved with MFTA saw the power of reuse and how viable the trash-to-treasure connection was,” Korein said.

She and her husband, Jim, moved from New York City to Cortlandt during the pandemic, wrote a business plan and incorporated Retake/Remake as a nonprofit. They rented the 1,700-square-foot store space and an adjacent 1,300-square-foot donation space at The Hat Factory in Peekskill.

Word spread mainly through social media, attracting customers from as far away as New Paltz.

Thumbing through a box of brand-new birthday cards at the store last week was Inge Schnut, a Carmel resident.

“This is the second time I’ve been here. I’m looking at material and for stamps because my son is interested in stamping,” Schnut said. “It’s wonderful, like looking at stuff in someone’s attic.”

Another second-time customer was Marianne Olbermann who was sifting through several bins of items used to make jewelry. Olbermann teaches jewelry making in an after-school program in Pleasantville for students in grades 1-3.

“The kids know they are working with recycled material,” she said eyeing some colorful beads the store recently received.

Retake/Remake accepts donations on Wednesdays and is open for shopping on Fridays and Saturdays. Korein said they are considering opening for one more shopping day to make it easier for art teachers and other people who work.

The reason the thrift store has succeeded, according to Korein, is the dedicated volunteers who clean, sort and organize donations and operate the store.

“The volunteers are a joy to work with, taking on all jobs, big and small, even the unglamorous cleaning is done without complaint,” Korein said. “I work with so many amazing women whose concern for the environment has made them want to be part of the Creative Reuse movement.”



Pictured from left are volunteers Linda Buckiewicz and Barbara Korein and Ivy Kelly and Phuong Su

A wide variety of art supplies are offered at RetakeRemake

The venture has also involved Korein’s family.

“Everyone in my family has been extremely supportive and helped me launch Retake/Remake in a variety of ways,” she said. “My daughter designed the logo, my son-in-law maintains the website and my very tolerant husband is the treasurer of the organization.”

There is a fun vibe in the store and the relaxed browsing atmosphere is conducive to spontaneous conversations between shoppers and volunteers who share their creative experiences. Korein said people long for that kind of interaction, especially since the pandemic.

“A shopper who is first learning to knit might ask about the correct needle size and I can call out in the store ‘Is there a knitter here and can you help this person?’ Inevitably there will be another person responding. That’s my favorite part, seeing the community come together.”

Prices for items that are gently or never used are hard to beat. For instance, designer and upholstery fabrics that might run \$100 a yard are marked down to as little as \$3.

“We hope the price point allows everyone to buy exactly what they want instead of just settling for what they can afford and not debating between a higher and lower price,” Korein said.

Retake/Remake started offering creative workshops last year. Two weeks ago, they ran a make a valentine drop-in workshop, and this Tuesday is a no-sew dog toy class to create a sturdy dog pull toy made from provided, repurposed fabric scraps. Other classes are expected to be offered in the near future.

Retake/Remake is located at 1000 N. Division St. in Peekskill. Donations are accepted on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is open for shopping on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, visit <https://www.retake-remake.org>.

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Abby is a local journalist who has reported on breaking news for more than 20 years. She currently covers community issues in The Examiner as a full-time reporter and has written for the paper since its inception in 2007. [Read more from Abby's editor-author bio here.](#) Read Abby's archived work here: <https://www.theexaminernews.com/author/ab-lub2019/>