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Rethinking Designs

It's not waste until it is wasted. Rather, a passionate zeal to explore the inherent design in every waste material can lead to product innovations.

A Coimbatore based design movement, Thunk in India, trashes the notions of garbage and instead provide utility-centered, durable products. They explain how their designs come up with products that can easily replace anything you buy - in style, design, function and life.

CG: What was the motivation behind choosing 'waste' as a material to work with?

TID: It is both inspiring and challenging to use creative thinking as a tool to solve and address many immediate problems around us. Waste is one such major issue. The whole process of converting something that is perceived as waste into something useful and visually appealing is very interesting and creatively challenging. And the fact that there are so many possibilities is a constant motivation.

CG: What inspires you to come up with different forms and designs, every time?

TID: A design created out of 'waste' is a statement in its own way. Whenever something new is created, it

reminds you of its belonging. This is both creatively satisfying and a lot of fun to go through new processes every time. Also, when you have a particular waste material in huge quantities, the possibilities are endless.

CG: How does minimalism in your designs help you in achieving your goals?

TID: Usually the new materials made from waste that we work with, are not like any normal fabric. There are many issues with cutting and stitching. So it has been a conscious decision to create simple products with great finishing. This simplicity helps us to make it look more appealing.

We work on designing durable products that are known for their functionality, apart from great looks. Keeping the designs simple and working helps the products achieve their goals.



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01 Chair created out of waste scooter parts and waste polythene.

02 The long view of the back drop for Bonjour fashion week, in collaboration with Baya and artists Vivek Chokalingam and Thara Thomas.



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03 Hand bag produced with waste polythene carry bags and reject cotton yarn.

04 Wallet.
05 Pen stands.
06 Magazine holder.

All were made from waste polythene carry bags and reject cotton yarn.



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CG: How do you strike a balance between aesthetics and utility in your products?

TID: Our materials, being unique in many senses, bring out the aesthetics of our product. Along with the form, the functionality is what makes our concept complete. Every product, we believe, has a need to fulfill. We enjoy creating designs that serves that purpose.

CG: How do your design sensibilities help you influence the lives of the underprivileged?

TID: It is only fair that slum women and rag pickers who play a crucial role in waste management get their share. But it's more important that they get trained in skills so as to earn a life of dignity. We work with them and intervene with designs to ensure empowerment of their livelihood.

CG: As a collaborative venture, how does individual expertise contribute in the process?

TID: We are always open to new designers and artists joining us and bringing their individual insights and interpretations to the table. We have very few full time employees. More often than not, designs are created out of collaborations between artists, designers and artisans working independently on different projects. This helps in continuous flow of newer ideas and keep the initiative fresh and going ←