

SEW YOU KNOW

Upcycling the unwanted crafts beautiful results.

BY ANUSH BENLIYAN



Leftover Patchwork #1

In the early 2000s, when Debbie Ouyang moved to Pasadena across the street from Julie Benniardi, it was, as Ouyang puts it, serendipitous. Despite their distinct professional backgrounds—Ouyang had a career in finance, while Benniardi is an interior designer—the two came together over their love of textiles and sustainable luxury as well as a simple question: What happens to all of the fabric samples at the end of each season? They looked into the matter out of curiosity and discovered that more than 10 million tons of fabric are scrapped in U.S. landfills each year, and Los Angeles is the biggest culprit. “As it turns out, showrooms have had to discard the materials to make room for the incoming collection,” Ouyang says. “We were aghast that such gorgeous textile pieces were being thrown out and concerned about the detrimental environmental effects of the fabrics piling up in our landfills for years.”

Thus was born **ReWeave L.A.**, the locally based upcycling initiative they co-founded in 2018 to repurpose beautifully designed, unwanted textile samples in an array of colors, patterns, and textures into a line of one-of-a-kind home goods and ready-to-wear pieces available through their online store and stockists such as Maude Woods and Chateau Marmont. Taking inspiration from their environment—“from the beautiful yellow ginkgo trees lining the streets of our neighborhood to the closeness of families

and friends that reflects the character of Pasadena,” Benniardi muses—ReWeave’s one-off designs range from intricate throws crafted from a mélange of small swatches to signature BFF “Best Furry Friend” pet beds and versatile new Versa stools made from heavier fabrics, plus boho-chic tops, skirts, pants, outerwear, face masks, and more.

Ouyang notes that over the last two years, they’ve collected a total of 10,000 pounds of fabric waste from Thomas Lavin, Rubelli, Moore & Giles, and other interior design companies. They also donate 10 percent of sales to L.A. nonprofits that provide job training for those struggling with unemployment.

Most recently, Benniardi and Ouyang teamed up with Aux, the experimental production arm of design doyen Sean Yashar’s

The Culture Creative, a Los Angeles-based brand consultancy. Dubbed *Leftover Patchwork #1* (\$2,100), the collaborative project is a commentary on waste in the design industry in the form of a California king-size patchwork quilt made from deadstock textiles and leather scraps from the houses of Missoni, Scalamandré, Holly Hunt, Kneeder Fauchère, and Donghia. “The vision was Sean’s,” says Ouyang. “As he describes it, it’s ‘a kind of flag to all ethnicities, genders, and cultures.’” Keep an eye out for more pieces from the partnership, as well as future collaborations with other designers. *From \$100; reweave.com, theculturecreative.com/aux* 



ReWeave’s Julie Benniardi and Debbie Ouyang