

Upcycling and recycling focus of Sooke Fine Arts Fashion Show



Frederique Philip is organizing a fashion show of up-cycled clothing at the Sooke Fine Arts Show on Aug. 4.

By Sooke News Mirror

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Models will be strutting down the catwalk on Saturday, Aug. 4 at the Sooke Fine Arts Show, clothed in items sutured together by local designers under the theme of eco-fashion

The Arts4Re-Fashion will be held from 7 to 9 p.m., and will feature the work of two Sooke designers Jenn Bell and Dana Sitar, along with fashion show organizer and stylist, Frederique Philip.

The Arts4Re-Fashion will display garments designed from recycled clothing and outfits consisting of high quality, second-hand items fished out of Sooke's own thrift stores.

Philip said she hopes the show will encourage people to buy clothing second-hand, in addition to dispelling myths that used items are no longer valuable.

"You can really find fantastic things second-hand," she said, adding buying things second-hand leaves money for other endeavours.

"We waste so much. We are a society of consuming and look at where it's taking us."

Since her arrival in Sooke 32 years ago from France, Philip has maintained her stylish and eclectic European tastes on a budget, while at the same time being environmentally friendly by second-hand shopping.

For Philip, scouring through thrift stores is not about shopping, but about a creative process -- finding items that will complement each other, and repurposing them into an outfit.

"People say, 'Well, you really like shopping.' No, I don't really like shopping. It's more about the hunt. For me, it's the creative process," she said. "It's the joy of creating an outfit without spending too much money."

The concept of frugality is much understood by Sitar.

Sitar grew up in the Czech Republic, where living thrifty was a large part of her upbringing.

"We were raised on a really tight budget as a family and I learned how to live out of very little money and that's how I continue to live," she said. "I think that there's so much excess everywhere... It breaks my heart to see all the stuff that's thrown away and just to be forgotten."

Sitar learned how to sew at just 12 years old, and has been designing her own clothing ever since.

"It's not my profession, it's just what I like to do. I never really like to wear clothing that everybody else is wearing," Sitar said. "I also like the aspect of using old things that people don't need anymore and making new out of them."

On occasion, Sitar, now in her late 40s, has even unravelled sweaters to crochet and knit into new items.

For the show, some of the items she will be displaying include a raincoat made from plastic bags and two dresses made without electricity, in other words, sewn by hand, solely in daylight.

The object of the gruelling task, was simply to prove that she could.

"I just wanted to prove to myself and to others that you can make beautiful things out of discarded clothing and make it into something beautiful...without needing anything but your hands and needle."

The fashion show will be covered by the Sooke Fine Arts Show admission fee, and will take place at SEAPARC along with the rest of the events.

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