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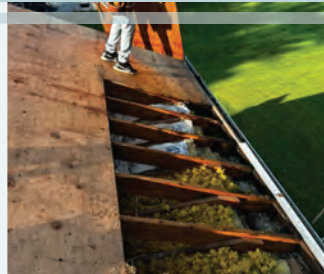
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Home is where the art is

From horse stables to a well-loved artists' home



PHOTOS BY DION OGUST

By Carol Graham

IF EVERY PICTURE tells a story, this home is a book full, with every chapter a fascination. A former horse stable — long, somewhat narrow — with a central entry into a grand, high-ceilinged room that once served as the stables' hayloft. It is now a light and art-filled comfortably, elegant abode that is home to two Hudson Valley artists.

The gallery-like walls of the great room bear many pictures tastefully hung and almost wall-to-wall. There are water colors, oils, portraits and landscapes that hold all kinds of stories, created by storied artists, mostly friends and acquaintances of the inhabitants of this house. It has taken a lifetime to gather them here. As



we walk by the homeowners name each artist introducing me to them as if the painters themselves stood in the room. While names like Donald Elder and Richard Segelman are well-known to me, others are delightful introductions: Melinda Stickney Gibson, Guy Pene du Bois, Lucille Blanche, Charles Rosen, and so many more. The quarter-sawn oak Arts-and-Crafts furnishings that accompany the art seems as though they could belong nowhere else, and are a dedication to the integrity of the extraordinary vision here.

Down the long hallway to the east, with plaster walls containing horsehair insulation, there is a shelf with an elegant, Greco-Roman bust of Thalia as well as a bold contemporary creation by Tim

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Rowan. This corridor leads to the cozy primary bedroom, once housing horses, as well as one for guests. In the inviting bath there is a lovely clawfoot tub that sits atop authentic Mexican Saltillo tile.

Every room has a story. The story is told through the art that draws you in. It's difficult not to be impressed. I am slightly starstruck by all these painters,

and delighted to feel the love and enjoyment the paintings have brought to this home's inhabitants. Michael Valenti and Linda Brewer are notable artists themselves, and their own remarkable work intermingles with the carefully curated pieces by their fellow artists.

Linda is a ceramicist and Michael, a painter. From the eclectic kitchen with

the original cabinetry surrounding the high-end Viking stove, her well-crafted cups and saucers serve us coffee, as she points out Michael's beautiful series of tomatoes that he painted for her, in celebration of her birthday.

A catch-all room, in the east wing leads to a screened-in porch, displaying an exquisite array of Linda's various pots on a

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table, sitting in contrast to a casual stand of fly rods. It seems a perfect still life. Michael is a fly fisherman when he's not painting or working on his collection of toy trains.

We leave the house, and walk through the yard with Linda's raised beds now dormant until Spring arrives, to the studio. I respect and appreciate how full the lives are, that dwell here. This home, born out of stables built in the nineteen-forties, offers an inviting foundation for the life of creativity and artistic appreciation that is so evident on my visit. It is well-served to be standing today. The story is rich. And time has added value to humble beginnings. I remark on the beauty. Michael tells me, "We are very happy here."



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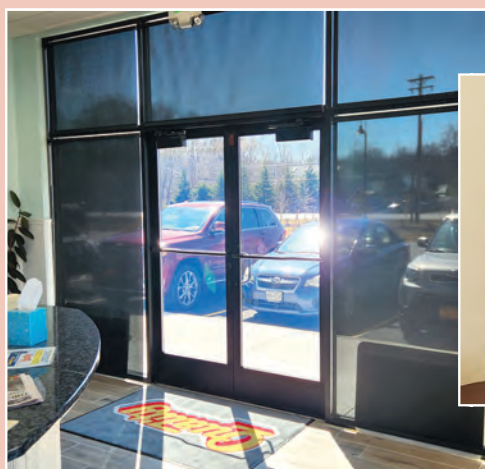


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Reclaim and repurpose

Canelos Studio aims to give a second life to discarded materials

by Susan Demark

MOST PEOPLE DON'T consider trips to the dumpster as creative. They toss construction material like ripped up boards and discarded flooring into landfills without a second thought. It is all garbage to them. Not to Joe Canelos though. Joseph "Joe" Canelos turns this garbage into design. Canelos repurposes these materials into his designs for custom-made furniture pieces in hopes they will become cherished heirlooms that will last long into the future.

A master craftsman, Canelos has established a business, Canelos Studio, which sources from demolitions and discarded material waste at places such as flooring companies. From these materials, he designs and fashions what he calls "lasting pieces of functional art" for the home. He is committed to sustainability and community, and produc-



SUSAN DEMARK

Joe Canelos chiseling the wood in his workshop.

ing bespoke pieces out of quality, locally sourced materials.

A look at his designs reveals one-of-a-kind pieces that stand out in any room. Last year, for example, Canelos collaborated with Maryline Damour of design firm Damour Drake to craft a commissioned custom piece for the Morning Room displayed in the Kingston Design Showhouse. He created a hexagonal china cabinet out of salvaged mahogany with white oak details. He has also crafted a tripod coffee table out of various reclaimed hardwoods and a globe stand of reclaimed mahogany and white oak. Canelos says he likes using



PHOTOS PROVIDED

The Estoile China Cabinet that Canelos designed from reclaimed mahogany and white oak detailing. Canelos is shown preparing it for Kingston Design Show.

pieces of wood “that are on the brink” of being carted away to landfills and takes obvious pleasure in the reclamation of materials. “Each piece has a story,” he adds. “I never make the same piece twice.”

Take the honeycomb artwork he made to display records in a wall cabinet. Every part of it is repurposed, for example, from flooring that he salvaged at a home in Claverack. Lest one think he is raiding

dumpsters in a happenstance way, his materials come from working as a social entrepreneur within the community to establish relationships through which he obtains so-called waste materials.

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He arrived at this option in a significant way. By working in fabrication and production, doing storefronts and theater sets he saw the waste first-hand. Canelos cites a book-signing event for which he helped construct a pop-up. "You put it in, the event goes on, and then you

go down and do the strike," he explains of the fast process of building a set and then tearing it down after a single use. He saw just how much very good wood

and other materials were thrown away. "The things we were tossing hurt my soul," Canelos says. These days, he arranges to get floorboards and other useful materials that places are getting rid of to design and construct his pieces.

The process of establishing a studio sounds very much like a journey in the same way that a piece of reclaimed wood takes a journey to become a completed grandfather globe stand, flamingo writing desk, or tripod coffee table that he ultimately crafts. He has been constructing one thing or another for at least 10 years, he says, and worked in fiberglass, carbon fiber, and metals before. He studied industrial design and maintained an interest in theater. Two years ago, he honed his focus into what he calls "functional art pieces for the home" and started Canelos Studio, based in New Paltz, where he lives. His studio is an insulated garage in his home.

Canelos Studio sources from discarded material waste, designing what he calls "lasting pieces of functional art" for the home.



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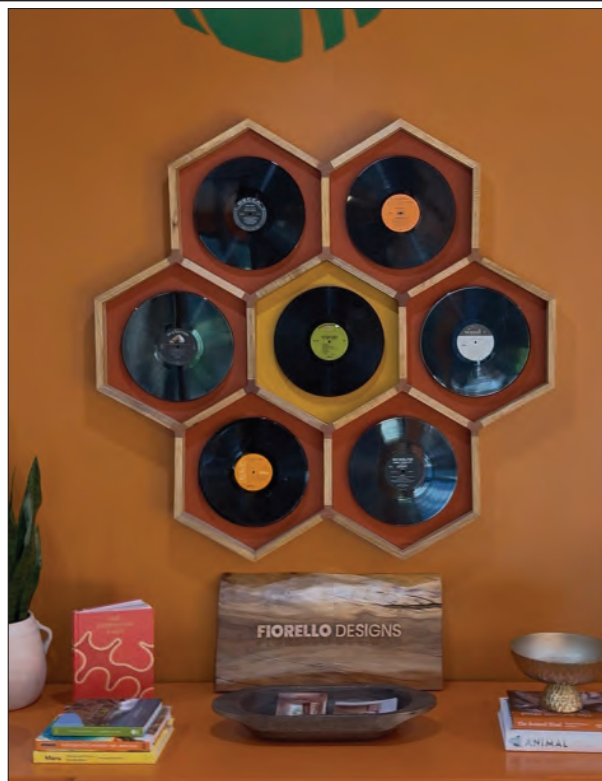
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Left, Canelos shows the smooth wooden element that he has produced from wood he salvaged. It will become part of a furniture piece he is designing; right, a unique design of a honeycomb wall display.

Some who establish new businesses look to scale up. Canelos kind of eschews business plan talk and emphasizes that he wants to work closely with homeowners to craft an entirely new type of piece that will elevate a space in their home and become a prized heirloom. "If I make four

or five pieces a year for people, that could be my whole business plan," he says. This is not an exaggeration as is evident when Canelos explains how he measures an element to a 32nd of an inch or needs an ultra-perfect edge to craft the tight cut of a sliding dovetail joint. Such precision

takes time. Still, he muses about producing a line of furniture designs.

Canelos' conversations are sprinkled with many influences from the Fibonacci spiral in nature and feng shui to Steve Jobs and the superhero Iron Man. "I became intrigued by the forms and shapes of Iron Man...it's the perfect juncture of a human and an auto body. Everything in his suit is mechanical and believable," he says. This obsession happened when he had a terrible bike crash in his teens, suffering a horrible injury that required

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three surgeries. He could not walk for about five months. He became fixated on building an Iron Man suit and dove into electronics and circuitry.

His influences are also in his family. His father is a cabinet maker and an oil painter. His mother is an early childhood educator who is very crafty. He talks about visualizing very early on that ideas have colors. He also recalls at 3 years old he began to learn about tools.

The Hudson Valley also feeds Canelos' immensely curious and creative nature. "There's something in the water here that makes everyone creative," he observes adding, "there's a serene and spiritual energy about the whole place."

For Canelos, creating is as much about sourcing and reclaiming what has already been produced away from waste into new uses, visions, and designs. "Why is waste built into capitalism?" he asks. He is inspired by the sustainability fostered by Habitat for Humanity, Buy Nothing New Paltz, and the Too Good to Go app that helps consumers link with businesses selling surplus food cheaply.

This master craftsman and social entrepreneur aims to help shape a world where what he reclaims and repurposes benefits companies, subtracts from the planet's waste, and adds up to lasting functional pieces of art and beauty. As Canelos sees it, "I'm all about a win-win-win situation. There is no loser. The solutions are the ones we need to be focused on."

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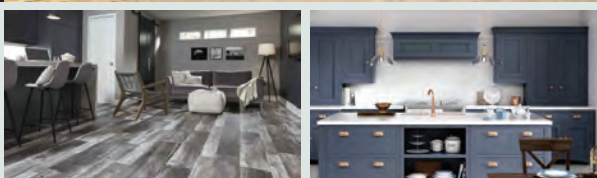


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by Sparrow

I JUST RETURNED FROM my compost pile, where I deposited the stem of a zucchini, the tip of a yam, a red pepper stem, the bottom of two baby bok choy: the remnants of a soup I made today. The soup feeds my wife and me; the scraps feed Mother Earth.

On the way back from the compost, I plucked ripe elderberries from a bush – small and tart, with tiny woody seeds (the dessert for my soup-meal!). Composting gets you out of the house, like walking the dog. Dog owners are thinner than cat lovers, because they have to walk, while cat people must form their legs into laps and sit motionless for hours.

Composting heats the earth. A compost pile has warmth, like a human hand. (Or more like a breast, sometimes with the butt of a carrot on top as a “nipple.”) It’s warm because of bacteria: thermophiles and actinomycetes. We’ve been brainwashed by antibacterial soap manufacturers into believing all tiny organisms are evil. But, in fact, cooperating with bacteria is the key to a happy life. Eat yogurt and kimchi and sauerkraut and miso to improve digestion. Cultivate your “microbiome” – that is, the skin bacteria which moisturize your body and repel harmful insects.

And your kitchen scraps nourish earthworms! Compost tastes great to worms – quite similar to lemon meringue pie. [Note: That’s an educated guess.]

Those of us who are bad poets – recently I wrote:

One Big Egg

can
feed a
family
of nine.

— are proud that our compost piles actually contribute something useful to the world. More and more people are dubious that the plastic in their recy-



SUSAN DEMARK

cling bins really gets recycled, but you can see compost transform into soil with your own eyes, feel it with your fingers.

One day, my wife was writing an article – she is also a journalist, for this newspaper – about how to discourage bears from breaking into your house, when she heard someone stirring in the kitchen. “Sparrow’s up early,” she thought, but when she checked, it

was not me, but an *Ursus americanus*: a smallish black bear, maybe a yearling, attempting to open a packet of alfalfa that

~~~~~  
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brainwashed by  
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into believing all  
tiny organisms are  
evil. But, in fact,  
cooperating with  
bacteria is the key  
to a happy life.**  
~~~~~

we kept as rabbit feed.

“Get out!” Violet shouted, and the bear did. I’m telling this story for a reason. The creature was attracted by fruit in our compost pile. Since that moment, Violet has decreed that no apple cores, banana peels, or eggshells go into the compost while the bears are awake. Once they begin their hibernation – roughly around Thanksgiving – fruit refuse can safely be

laid on the pile. All that ends in April, when the bears stretch and yawn again.

Since we’ve adopted this yearly regime,



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no more bears have stepped through our doorway.

These days we place all our bear-attracting refuse in a plastic bag in the freezer, and bring it to the composting center behind the Shandaken Town Hall, in spring and summer. My urban friends do something similar, carrying frozen compost to a local community garden, or to a bin provided by the city.

My career as a composter began in the spring of 1976, in Gainesville, Florida. I was renting a one-story brick house with two friends, which came with a garden bed. I planted rows of vegetables, and ended up with a crop of two tiny carrots, the size of my thumb, and five tiny kale leaves. But my compost pile was a success, moistened by the nightly thunderstorms of a North Florida summer. And I liked composting better than gardening. It didn't waste water, and it produced one of the most valuable substances on earth: fertile soil, for someone *else* to garden with. It is pleasurable to visually increase the size of our planet.

Back in the 1970s, all human knowledge was contained in the local library. I took out a gardening book, and learned the anatomy of a compost pile: one layer of vegetable matter, one layer of grass clip-

pings, one layer of manure. I lived near the stables at the University of Florida, so I'd bicycle to them, shovel horse droppings into a plastic bag, hoist it into my ubiquitous backpack, and bicycle home.

In honor of my 1970s self, I went to the Woodstock Library and found *Organic Gardening (Not Just) In the Northeast* by Henry Homeyer:

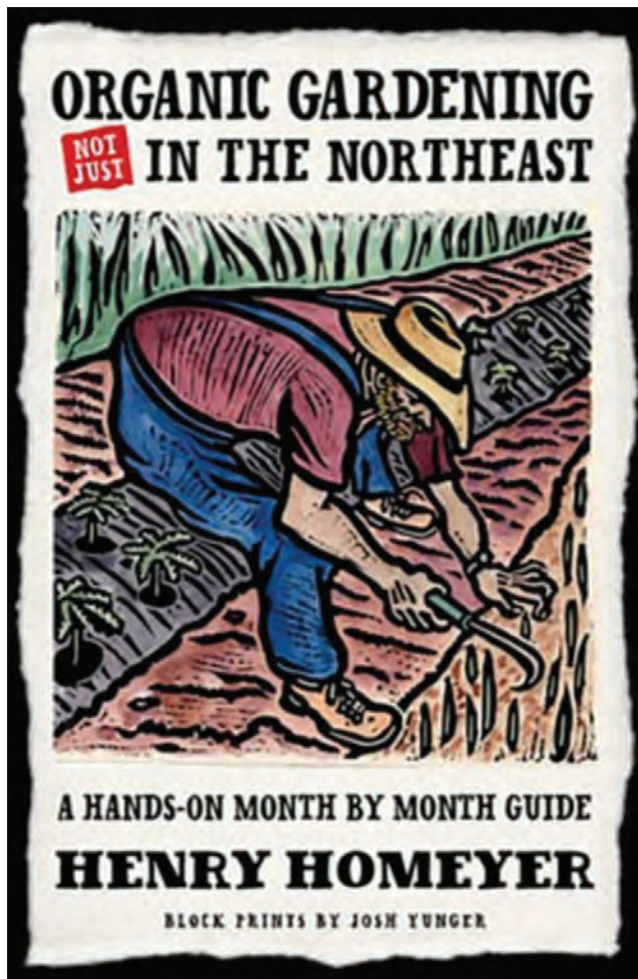
"Compost is not high in nitrogen – perhaps one or two percent – but it has many advantages over chemical fertilizers. First, compost helps to build that light, fluffy, dark-colored soil that we all want. It helps clay soils to drain better, and sandy soils to retain water better. No chemical fertilizer can make that claim."

My compost pile today is less doctrinaire – mostly just a mound of kitchen scraps, occasionally festooned with dry leaves or grass cuttings.

Of course you can put anything in a compost pile, even a toaster, but not everything decomposes quickly. *Veg in One Bed* by Huw Richards

lists materials that shouldn't be in compost: 1) fish and meat scraps, which attract rats; 2) excessive citrus peels; 3) tea-bags, which contain plastic; 4) glossy or coated paper, which leach harmful chemicals into the soil.

I had a disillusioning experience digging through the garden beneath my grandparents' porch in Scranton, Pennsylvania, as an adolescent. Numerous peach pits they'd thrown in the soil over the years had become desiccated, mummified. They had neither sprouted nor transformed into humus. That's the reason my wife and I have a midden. (I am indebted to my friend Petula for



this term.) It's a pile for items that don't quickly break down. Archaeologists spend much of their lives shifting through middens, where ancient cultures deposited broken pottery, bones of animals, husks of fruit. I picture future archaeologists finding my midden and deducing that 21st-century Americans subsisted on olives, avocados, dates, corn on the cob, and pistachios.

Most of us don't have the luxury of a midden, but we can all drive to the town hall and contribute to communal soil-building. And, of course, after a lifetime of feeding our compost piles, we ourselves become compost, no matter how thick a coffin we're buried in.

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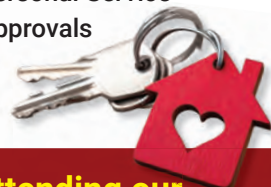
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Let it go!

Out with the old, in with the new

By Karlie Flood

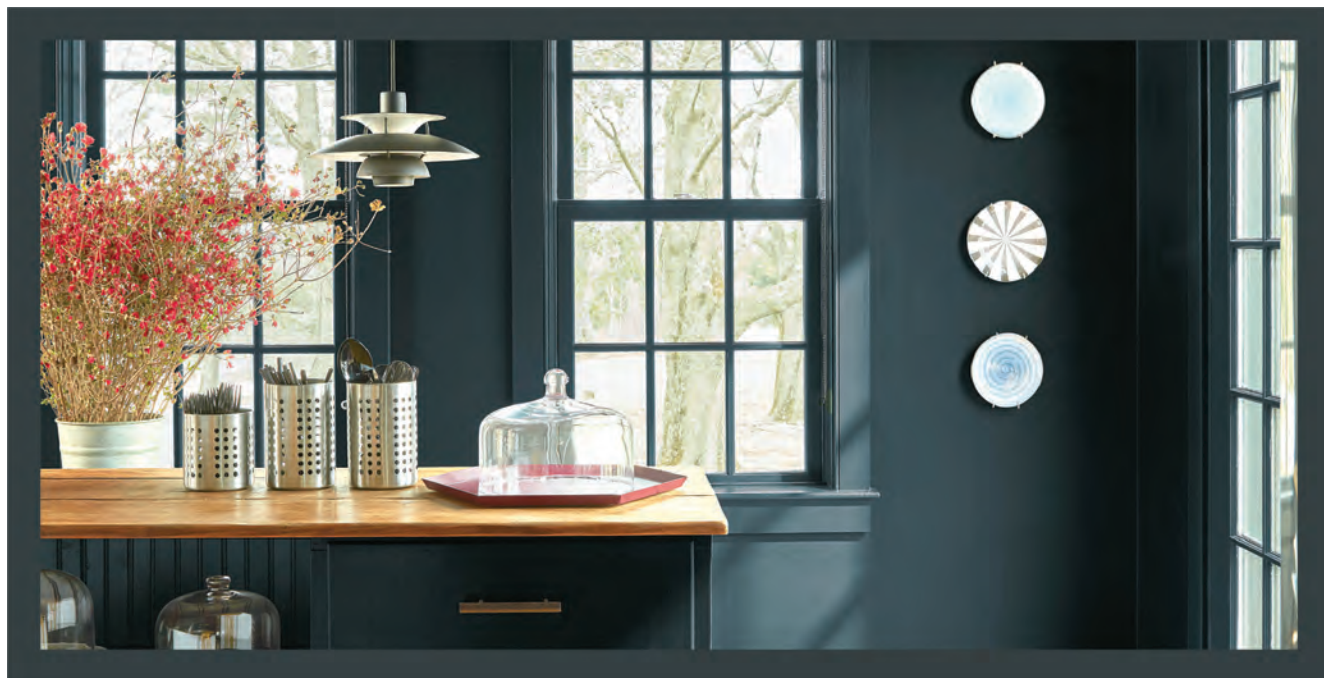
CLUTTER NOT ONLY makes a mess of your space, but your brain. NuVance Health reported that “a cluttered area forces your brain to split its attention, making it difficult for your neural networks to focus on one specific thing. Chaos can limit your brain’s ability to process information because your visual system has a limited processing capacity.” They recommend de-cluttering to free up mental bandwidth. That is often easier said than done. So how do we let go of things we have grown attached to?

This is exactly the question asked by an experimental project taking place right now in Kingston. Author Josh Glenn, a recent Kingston transplant, and New Orleans-based journalist, Rob Walker kicked off *Give It Up*, an experiment that asks its 11 Mid-Hudson Valley participants to each write a short nonfiction narrative to help them get rid of an object that they have been unable to give up for one reason or another. Through September 1st, these objects are on display in venues throughout Kingston, along with the essays. Visitors to the exhibits, and to the project’s website <https://giveitupkingston.substack.com/>, are

invited to submit responses attempting to persuade one or more of the *Give It Up* participants to give away or otherwise let the objects go.

After spending over a decade studying hundreds of objects and how their owners felt about them, via online story telling experiments, Glenn and Walker decided to create an interactive project in a physical place.

When asked why it is so hard to give up objects Glenn responded, “We are wired to want to tell stories about objects, which makes them meaningful.” He goes on to suggest, “so we want to write the ending to that story before we let it go.” When



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we have trouble writing that ending we struggle to give it up. The *Give It Up* experiment is testing the hypothesis that with community giving an object up becomes easier.

The hope is that these stories will then inspire others to give objects away as well. From September 3 to 10, you can visit all of the objects at a group exhibit hosted by Camp Kingston and designed by artist and photographer Bridget Badore. A closing party at Camp Kingston on September 10 will feature readings of the most persuasive responses to the essays. Then, the contributors will—or won't—say goodbye to their beloved objects.

Do Glenn and Walker think we should all be minimalists? By no means! “At that time, if you were an educated, bourgeois person, you were supposed to not care about things and be anti-materialistic. And we were like, no! We like stuff, we’re interested in stuff, we appreciate how people hang onto

objects even though they look ugly and junky, just so long as they have a good story. The culture has caught up with us since then. Meaningful objects are

having a moment. You can quote me on that.” Glenn joked.

In an opinion essay titled “Clutter Is Good For You” published in *The New York Times* a few years ago, Walker explains



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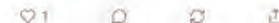
AUG 27



Help Adriana give it up

We're looking for a few words of wisdom...

AUG 26



Help Will give it up

We're looking for a few words of wisdom...

AUG 25



Help Annie give it up

We're looking for a few words of wisdom...

AUG 24



Anyone can participate by giving words of wisdom to help convince each person to give up the object they have become attached to.

the upside of hanging onto *meaningful* stuff. "The objects you already own are much more likely to be interwoven with the people and experiences that give life meaning," he suggests. "That's why your weird old clutter is probably more important than whatever It-object innovation you might acquire next."

It's true, "stuff" is having a moment. Across Tik Tok, the "messy girl" aesthetic has taken over: intentional clutter that is "messy," but contained enough to still be classified as chic. Girls Who Cluster, an Instagram account that features images of "clusters" that are posted and submitted by anyone—not just girls—have a whopping 43,000 followers who love the aesthetic of everything that Marie Kondo would tell you to throw out.

Glenn and Walker do have some

advice though for people wishing to de-clutter. They note that although they disagree with how extreme Marie Kondo's method is, "she's right that some part of the project has to be a

ritual." Glenn notes that he found it helpful to categorize his keepsakes by item type when cleaning out his house to move to Kingston earlier this year. Here is some of the advice they would

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like to pass along:

Make it fun

Walker suggests challenging yourself. Say goodbye to one object each month. Go to a clothing or object swap to trade something you haven't used in awhile for something new. Check out the Capital Vintage Fall Clothing Swap at the Senate Garage in Kingston on September 30: "bring what you can and take what you need."

Categorize

Glenn suggests categorizing your meaningful objects. Do you have a large amount of books that you loved as a teenager? Or rocks from visits to different places? Or birthday cards from family and friends? Maybe just keep a few examples to represent each category, and let the rest go.

Turn it into something new

Kaitlyn Murray, founder of the Hudson Valley Sustainable Fashion Week and sustainable clothing brand La Vie Apres A'mour and storefront Maison Apres in Kingston, has advice on giving new life to what you already own. Murray transforms a variety of pre-loved clothes—from men's button downs to blouses to suits—into chic, timeless pieces. Maison Apres, offers community, embroidery mending monthly, "Often times we



Give It Up is an experiment where participants each write a short nonfiction narrative to help them get rid of an object that they have been unable to give up for one reason or another.

have clothes in our closet that we love, but we go to wear it and it's missing a button, or has a stain, or a hole, but we

can't get rid of it, so we put it back into the closet. These items shouldn't just be discarded, they deserve to be mended

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and worn and loved for many years to come. The notion of 'oh I can just donate it and someone else will love it' is rarely the case. More often, our donations are ending up on Ghana's shores and deserts in Chile, and are so overwhelming that they end up having to landfill or burn them. Now is the time to really cherish what we have, mend what is broken, and support brands who are adopting a circular model," Murray states. For inspiration, check out The Hudson Valley Sustainable Fashion Show at Rose Hill Farm in Red Hook on September 26 to see a variety of upcycled and sustainable looks to encourage you to bring new life to what you already have.

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