

# From Trash to Treasure

LABIBA MUSTABINA

There are two kinds of people in the world. One who lack the commitment of being emotionally attached to objects, creating piles of 'trash' out of their belongings frequently. And the other kind, who would rather cling on to even the most ridiculous objects such as the pen caps or the twisted remnants of dysfunctional earphones in hopes that they'll come handy someday. I, being a bit of both, come bearing a solution: Upcycle! Basically, upgrade a few of your trashed objects into something much nicer, meanwhile de-cluttering all the clutter that is killing the beauty of your space.

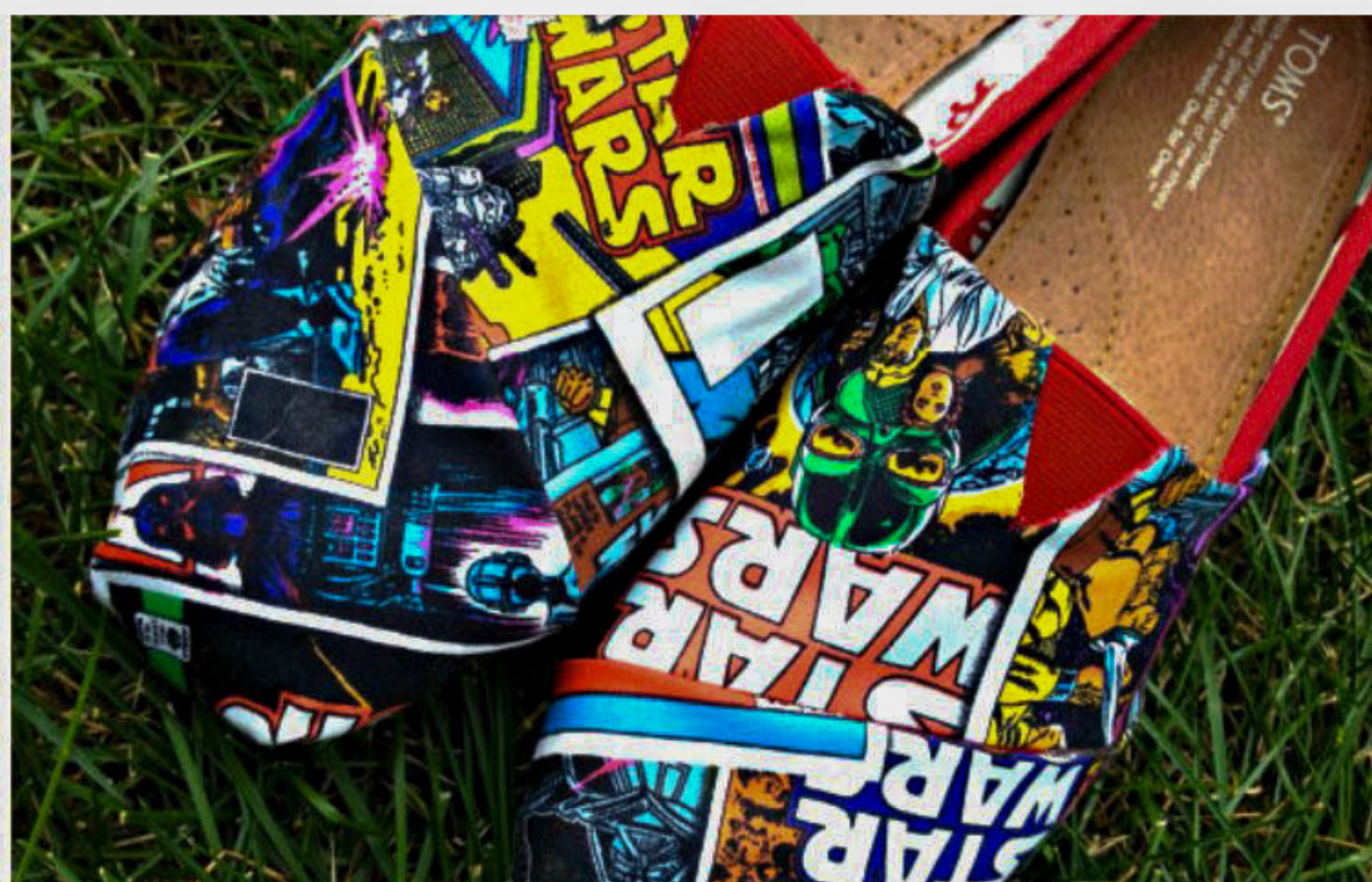
## Spoon

Your regular meal pal can be transformed into something exciting. Jewellery. Got some ancient spoons with swirly designs lying in the corner of the cutlery drawer? It's time to dust them off, for you're going to make a ring and a pendant out of it. First up, since you'll be working on shaping metal, you might want to take the help of someone accustomed with handling tools. Then, simply follow these steps:

- Hammer the head of the spoon flat while keeping the handle intact
- Cut off the head of the spoon using heavy duty pliers keeping about an inch of the handle with the head
- Sand off any sharp edges with sandpaper
- Starting with one end of the handle, hammer it slowly around any dowel or rod, which bears the same thickness as your finger, till it obtains the shape of a ring.
- As for the pendant, twist back the remnant of the handle on the head of the spoon to create the loop and sling a jewellery cord through it. For extra oomph, don't hesitate to glue on sequins of choice!

## Comics

Don't hate me. I'm not asking any of you to sacrifice



your precious comic collection. But think about all the times when your baby sibling adorably spilled juice on it or when you clumsily spilled coffee on it. Yes, you can always shed a few tears about it but better yet, salvage whatever bits are left and create your own memorabilia.

- The easiest thing to do: cut the best parts of the comics out into strips and glue it onto both sides of cardstock from a cereal box. Voila! You now have a bookmark.
- If not, how about comic wrapped shoes? Again, cut strips out of the comic pages and bring forth your oldest pair of ballerina pumps/ sneakers you couldn't let go of. Use adhesive to carefully glue the strips as you cover the whole shoe. Once done, slop it with a coat of adhesive and dry overnight. Repeat the adhesive coating thrice, drying overnight each time. Finally, polish it off with a steel wool.

## Keys

I can't be the only one who has bunches of mysterious

keys lying around without a lock to pair it with. If that's the case, who loves wind chimes? All you need is some string and an old embroidery hoop.

- Cut the string into gradually increasing lengths with the longest being equal to the desired height for your wind chime
- Attach a key to each of the strings and tie them equally apart around the hoop
- Use four strings at four poles of the hoop and tie them together to create a hanging support and hang it away!

## Wrapping paper

To wrap it all up, you can never throw away wrapping paper, especially when it's not shiny. You can use them as covers for tattered old books or use them as scrapbook paper. You can 'quilt' them up and create vibrant wallpapers for any surface.

Basically, not all trash is 'trash', as long as you have a little innovation. Therefore, trash cautiously.



# Return of Muse Masters

MALIHA MOHSIN

'Muse Masters', a nationwide bilingual poetry competition with an emphasis on performance poetry, is back for its second season this March.

Organised by British Council and Monsoon Letters, the competition first started out in early 2014 to encourage performance poetry in Bangladesh. Aiming to be bigger and better this time around, the organisers have decided to also make room for poets who may be too shy to perform on stage. Interested participants can now submit in either of two categories – written poetry and performance poetry. The deadline for submissions is on February 22, and anyone between the ages of 18 and 35 is eligible to apply in both Bangla and English.

The structure of the competition invites the top 10 participants from each category to participate in a workshop conducted by a leading performance poet from the UK. The finalists are then invited to perform/present their work one last time in a final round before the winners are selected by the judges.

The final judges of Muse Masters Season 1 (2014) were Eeshita Azad, Head of Arts, British Council Bangladesh; Kaiser Haq, notable Bangladeshi bilingual poet and academician; and Rubana Huq, Editor of Monsoon Letters.

And while all of this is very exciting for aspiring poets, the question that remains with us is "What is performance poetry really?"

Is it simply poetry performed like we have traditionally indulged in Bengali *abritti*? Is it theatre? Does it have its own rules? How is it any different from 'normal' poetry?

Eeshita Azad, who is also a poet herself, says, "As a poet, I feel performance poetry can be anything, but as long as the poet

writing the poem thinks about his or her audience first. As opposed to any other form of poetry, performance poetry happens because of the poet's own need to get the poem out of the heart/head and onto the paper!"

The British Council has been working with its collective of poets rounded up from the last season of Muse Masters and previous other poetry projects towards developing the genre of performance poetry in Bangladesh. Last season's final performances saw participants perform with props, musical instruments and even lighting.

In an attempt to hone the performance skills of veteran participants and poets in its network, British Council has been continuously training them via workshops and opportunities. Sabrina Mahfouz, British playwright and performance poet, conducted a workshop for older participants during her visit to Bangladesh for her performance at Hay Fest Dhaka 2014. Other performance poetry workshops organised by the British Council have been facilitated by British poets Innua Ellams and Ross Sutherland. For this season, the older participants can be heard on Radio Shadhin 92.4 FM, performing minute-long snippets everyday leading up to the competition.

Azad says that this not only gives the older poets an opportunity to keep practicing their art and take it seriously, but also gives new and aspiring poets a better understanding of all the doors performance poetry can open for them. She expects Bangladeshi performance poets to lead the genre soon and facilitate the art for newer generations of performance poets too.

Find out more about the competition at <http://www.britishcouncil.org.bd/>

