



The Repurposed Library

Lisa Occhipinti

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33 Craft Projects That Give Old Books New Life

We all love to read and learn from books, but The Repurposed Library takes our passion even further, presenting us with 33 projects to make--quite literally--out of books. For these projects, Lisa Occhipinti rescues and repurposes orphaned and outdated books from flea markets and library sales and turns them into new art objects and practical items for the home. Her creations range from artfully constructed mobiles, wreaths, and vases, to functional items like shelves, storage boxes, and even a Kindle "keeper" for those who want to replicate the sensation of holding a "real" book while reading from an e-reader. Projects utilize every imaginable part of a book--from hardback cover to individual pages--and are a DIY celebration of a new way to view a book's potential.

The Repurposed Library Details

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From Reader Review The Repurposed Library for online ebook

Kelly H. (Maybedog) says

Although having books turned into art and household items is better than throwing them away, the main image on the cover is giving me an anxiety attack just from looking at it. I want to bat someone's hands away and say, "No! Bad person! That's not how we treat books!"

Katherine says

I had this really great analogy of how cutting up books as someone who loves books was maybe like hunting: I don't have a problem with people who do it, and I'd definitely use the end result, but I don't think I could bring myself to actually kill something with my own hands. Cutting up/gluing together/taking apart books feels criminal and murderous.

BUT as I read this book, I think about the books I still have in boxes in my basement - books I don't want to get rid of, but will probably never read or read again. Some of them have awesome covers! Why file them onto a shelf when you could make them into some interesting art piece for everyone to instantly enjoy?

Now I'm sad that I didn't haul home a few extra boxes of books from that book sorting event a few summers ago :(

Totally gonna make that "Pagework Quilt." :)

Shelli says

When I was given *The Repurposed Library* for Christmas – Christmas like three years ago, mind you – I immediately had the same reaction that so many other reviewers seem to have had: "Oh my god! They want me to *mutilate* books? For 'art'? But books *are* art! And excuse my pretension and moral outrage, but this isn't even actually *art*; these are *crafts*." I couldn't help myself; I was raised to regard books as practically sacred. My mom had very specific rules about book use and care: not eating while reading, only turning pages from the top, storing books carefully on their spines, etc. – rules I find myself living by even today (and my partner still rues the day when I caught him trying to dog-ear a page in one of my books. "What do you think Post-It Tape Flags were invented for, you Neanderthal?!"). This reverence for the printed page that my mother instilled in me at an early age has left long-lasting behavioral patterns as well as attitudinal ones: I lovingly tend my little collection of leather-bound, first edition, and signed volumes, I eschew paperbacks for their hardcover counterparts, and I have nearly all of my favorite books from when I was a child, looking only a fraction of their actual age. So, yeah, it was kind of weird that **it was my mother** who bought me *The Repurposed Library*, but that is a mystery I can never hope to unravel, so let's not even go there.

After smiling down at it politely if somewhat confusedly, I went home and stashed this book away on that dark, corner shelf of books that I'm not overly interested in keeping (let alone actually reading) but feel duty- and guilt-bound to retain because, for example, my mother gave them to me. As I am currently trying to come to terms with the dilemma posed by the ridiculous quantity of books that I own (compounded by my

partner's own ridiculous quantity), I started going through books on the aforementioned dark and forgotten shelf and decided to give this one a go.

While the projects are nice and everything, I still can't help but have the same visceral reaction – these are *books*, dammit! And although of course I know that not everything old is valuable, and that mass production was certainly already a thing a hundred years ago, the fact that the books repurposed in all of these projects are antique-looking just made the whole thing even harder to swallow.

So basically, the bottom line is that I'm a terrible person to review this book. I'm giving it two-and-a-half stars however, because some of the finished products are actually pretty appealing, and because I see no reason why the ones that only use the pages and not the covers couldn't be successfully pulled off with high-quality color copies of book pages, appropriately artificially aged. In the meantime, all of my unreadably purple 19th-century equivalents of Dan Brown thrillers will remain proudly displayed on my bookshelves, *thankyouverymuch*, perfectly intact.

2.5 stars.

Lea says

There are several good ideas for repurposing old hardcover books. There's good tutorials with hand drawn illustrations. If you're okay with repurposing books, you'll find a lot of good ideas in this book.

Jayme says

I thought this was cute. Some of the ideas were really neat, and some of them I thought were kinda lame. My favourites were the journal, the kindle cover and the bookmark. I feel the need to go shopping for some of those old timey looking books so I can make some of those projects. The Symphony sale is coming up in April... I hope I can remember to pick up some books for that purpose when the time comes. lol

Kristin says

Outstanding to both a library, book and creative reader! I've sold my own book art on etsy and the author has an outstanding etsy shop at <http://www.etsy.com/shop/theshophouse....> Projects presented were practical and possible for the average crafter. Lots of advice was given for online sources for books and supplies. Great job.

Jennifer says

If you are a bibliophile get this book. If you love a librarian or bibliophile buy them this book. If you know anyone crafty give them this book.

liberal sprinkles says

I've been a fan of Lisa Occhipinti since seeing a photo of her book mobile floating around the Internet. With [[ASIN:1584799099 The Repurposed Library: 33 Craft Projects That Give Old Books New Life]], she has delivered a lovely book with easy-to-execute projects on upcycling old books into new decorative and practical things for the home. While some of them require slightly heavier duty tools like a drill to craft, many can be made by just folding and the use of glue, a craft knife and some patience.

Among the projects that caught my eyes: a storage box for sewing or other materials, a mirror, a bookshelf, a clock, a three-book chandelier, a music book, sculpted vases, as well as ornaments like a dust jacket, bookplates and bookmarks made from old books or book pages.

This is a friendly book for beginners; the instructions are easy to follow although more photos would have been nice. Most of the projects are relatively simple; many can be tackled in an afternoon, a few are suitable even for crafting with kids. If you would like more challenging projects, take a look at [[ASIN:159253600X Playing with Books: The Art of Upcycling, Deconstructing, and Reimagining the Book]] by Jason Thompson; the projects and techniques taught in this book are more wide-ranging.

I didn't find the text impossible to read but I would have preferred it a little darker and thus clearer.

Melody says

I had this love/hate relationship throughout the whole book. To wit: "Oh, isn't that cute? Wait, that's... oh, fercryinoutloud that's LITTLE WOMEN all ripped up. I can't stand it." There are a few truly fun projects in here, projects I actually want to do, maybe even will do. But. Books. And I don't think all books are equal, and I don't think making art projects from any book is wrong. I just don't know that I can do it myself. I think it will be a good thing to try, though. Just to see.

Chris says

Very good look at how to transform old books into all sorts of things, such as lamps, a chandelier, a fireplace screen, an ebook reader cover, and more.

Amanda says

Most of the projects in this book are fun and approachable. I marked about 6 projects that I would want to try out. My favorite were the Christmas tree ornaments. The challenge would be finding old books that are pretty in themselves; some of the projects just wouldn't look that good with dull bound books.

Ms. Yingling says

Yes, these thirty plus crafts are really cool, and yes, some of the ancient nonfiction that I pulled while weeding this year might be good to use for some of them. There were even some crafts that I thought were cool, like the clock made out of a book with "time" in the title or the old bridge book made into a container for a deck of cards. I had brief thoughts of making a lampshade out of paper or maybe a bracelet out of some decoupage words.

But this makes me so, so sad. There were several books in this volume that I would have loved to read! That's the problem. Any time I get rid of a book, I have a feeling that someone, somewhere might like to read it, so I shouldn't destroy the book. Could I make a Kindle cover out of a Little Golden Book? Only if I had two copies, I suppose. There are a lot of cool old books used in this, and most of the old books that I get rid of would not make good art projects. Still, if you have a LOT of old paperbacks, you might take a look at this and make some of the vases.

I also can't look at end tables that are made out of butchered sewing machine cases. Or fruit bowls made out of old records that have been melted in the oven. Just can't.

Linda says

This book is for those of you who love the look and texture of old books. Maybe you like to dabble with mixed media. Or you might enjoy upcycling old things. No matter what you want to do, you will find some ways to craft at the next level.

There are nice colorful photos with simple diagrams that go with the directions for each project. Honestly, some I have seen before presented in a slightly different way. The 'book ledge' is one. The 'book adornments' were another. The lettered wreath is something that I might have viewed on Pinterest. So simple that I wondered why I did not think of that.

There are a few works that I'd like to undertake when I get some free time. Many others I have no interest in but they might appeal to you. For the actual amount of usable unique ideas the price of the book seems a little expensive. Neither awe-inspiring or bad, I would encourage you to look for this at a used book sale or your local library.

Erin says

A neat book of craft projects to make with books. I've been working on making things out of books (mostly library discards, damaged books and the few books I can bear to cut up) and this book has some neat ideas. Her tutorials are a bit short-- no more than two pages no matter how complicated the project-- but I think we're all spoiled to online tutorials now with multiple photographs for every step. That said, I haven't followed any of these tutorials yet, so I'll have to keep you posted after I make a clock or something else. I understand peoples' reticence about cutting up old books, but at the same time books get thrown out all of the time-- the library where my sister works just threw out several whole sets of outdated encyclopedias. At least books as art objects can find another home.

Adriana says

A part of me cringed all thru reading this book. While the crafts are creative and look really cool, I'm of a mind that is convinced that even the oldest, mustiest book has value as such.

That said, I really enjoyed seeing how the books where transformed into completely different things, be they useful or just decorative. The instructions are super easy to follow and the "difficult" parts are illustrated to guide you thru the craft process.

As another reviewer mentioned earlier, several of this projects aren't particularly original, but Occhipinti's instructions are some of the best I've ever seen.
