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Display of art and sole

Talented artists show that with a little creativity, old shoes can end up in a gallery instead of a landfill

Most of us wouldn't think twice about throwing away our old shoes. After all, what good are flapping soles and broken heels? But some creative people look past the tattered straps and scuffed uppers and see something different: art materials.

To promote environmental awareness, Form Four and Form Five students from Liu Po Shan Memorial College, HKMA David Li Kwok Po College and St Paul's School (Lam Tin) participated in the Create Your Own Shoes Competition 2014. Each student was told to remodel an old shoe into a dynamic piece of art. The competition was co-organised by Ocean Harvest Charity Foundation, the Environmental Association, Dr Kong and the Hong Kong Accessories Designers Association. The organisers' research suggests that many people don't take proper care of their shoes, leading to waste. They wanted to bring this message to secondary school students as well as promote both art and creative expression.

"We want to show them that no art degree is necessary to create art. You only need creative thinking," said Ocean Harvest founder and Dr Kong vice-president, Professor Raymond Ng.

Students certainly took his advice and

created an interesting mix of artwork using paint, glue and a large variety of non-conventional materials like Legos, toy soldiers, cogs and keyboard keys.

Liu Po Shan Memorial College student Kuen Tam Sze-ki, 16, said she learned to reuse waste materials. She covered her girly flats in newspaper, painted brown, while scraps of fur and lace lined the insides. "Normally, I would have thrown away these scraps after the school fashion show. But this time I used them

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to decorate my shoe." An aspiring fashion designer, Sze-ki said the contest was very useful. "I want to incorporate eco-friendly materials into my designs," she said.

Besides teaching students to recycle old materials, the competition allows them to display their artistic vision. Winner Lamdy Wong Lam-yi, 16, impressed the judges with her dancing shoes. She used an old Barbie doll, glittered pipe cleaners and plastic gemstones to recreate the beauty of dancing and to bring the message of "just dance" to a larger audience. "These were my old

dance shoes. I no longer dance but I couldn't bear throwing them away," she said. "I hope my artwork will help others remember their experiences of dancing, too, especially after they grow up."

Lamdy wants to become a visual arts teacher and use what she has learned from the contest during lessons. "I know more about combining patterns to create new things now. I can share this experience with my future students. It has also enhanced my understanding about design products."

Rebecca Leung, a design consultant and co-organiser of the event, hopes that next time they can include school bags and other accessories, which will require more involvement from social enterprises and the government.

"We have had a lot of industry support, but with more resources, we can increase the exposure and do more for the environment," Leung said.
YP cadet Miranda Yeung

The artworks will be on display at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre until today

Lamdy Wong (right) shows off the dancing shoes that won her first prize.
Photos: Miranda Yeung

