

# LET THERE BE LIGHT

Sanjay Bhat gives a new lease of life to old and discarded objects. In his hands, anything and everything can become a light fixture

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**W**here you and I see scrap, Sanjay Bhat, sees the possibility of a lamp. Meat mincers, wooden logs, old typewriters, defunct cameras, an out-of-order air drill... anything that Bhat sees, is upcycled and fashioned into a light fixture.

Bengaluru-based Bhat says that the concept of upcycling always existed although it was never really called that. Originally from Siddapura in Uttara Kannada, Bhat remembers tinkering with a traditional charkha in his childhood, adding serial lights to it and even getting mildly electrocuted.

After completing his Bachelors of Applied Art at Chitrakala Parishat, Bhat moved around a bit before settling in Bengaluru. In his 28-year career in advertising, Bhat has worked at Ogilvy One, Wunderman Chennai and is now a Creative Director at Wunderman Thompson in Bengaluru.

"I think everyone is creative," says Bhat. "Some of us just get lucky to be able to make a living out of it. I am one of those people and I have spent my time honing my creativity, for work and play."

The lights were an outcome of Bhat wanting to do something more than a 9-to-5 advertising job. "I've always liked how lighting can completely transform a place. Before I knew it, I began working with lights. I would spend weekends scouring junkyards for odd, dismantled, and vintage pieces. My interest soon became therapeutic, and overnight I found myself designing lights for friends and family. I have to thank my friend Divya, at the Bengaluru Oota Company, for asking me to design and produce all the lights for the restaurant. That is where it all started to transform into something bigger than a hobby," says Bhat.

Over the years, his hobby has gone through much trial-and-error and he now sources old carved wooden pieces directly from saw mills and antique shops. For other materials, he scours metal junkyards, Sunday markets and even has a couple of people bringing him vintage stuff. "Converting a meat-mincer to an elegant lamp made for a somewhat unusual and extremely interesting piece."

For Bhat, anything vintage can do with a bulb and he believes that it gives it a new lease of life. "I personally love using vintage typewriters and cameras. I have also transformed a lot of carpentry tools into lamps. I use a lot of raw and reclaimed wood as the base for my lamps," says Bhat. It's not only antiques that are fashioned into lamps. Bhat wants to use Bluetooth speakers and wireless chargers as parts of table lamps to make lighting multifunctional and intelligent.

Bhat's creations extend to both restaurant and home lighting. "In order to get the lamp right, I have to see the space. Each lamp I make is one-of-a-kind and it must fit into the space." Bhat's home is his workshop and he admits, "my wife is not happy with the mess I create but as the brand is growing slowly, I am looking at a place to have a dedicated workshop." Bhat's products have a quirky edge and quite fittingly, he calls his brand, 'End of the Tunnel'. "This is because I make



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sure every project gives something old and discarded a new life, filled with light. There is always, light at the end of the tunnel." Quiz him on his future plans and he says, "We are working on building the brand to go big online and transforming it into an artisanal brand and thereafter we can look at lighting the entire world." Bhat sells his products through Instagram and Facebook and he truly epitomizes what Charlie Peacock said, "Creativity is making marvellous out of the discarded."