

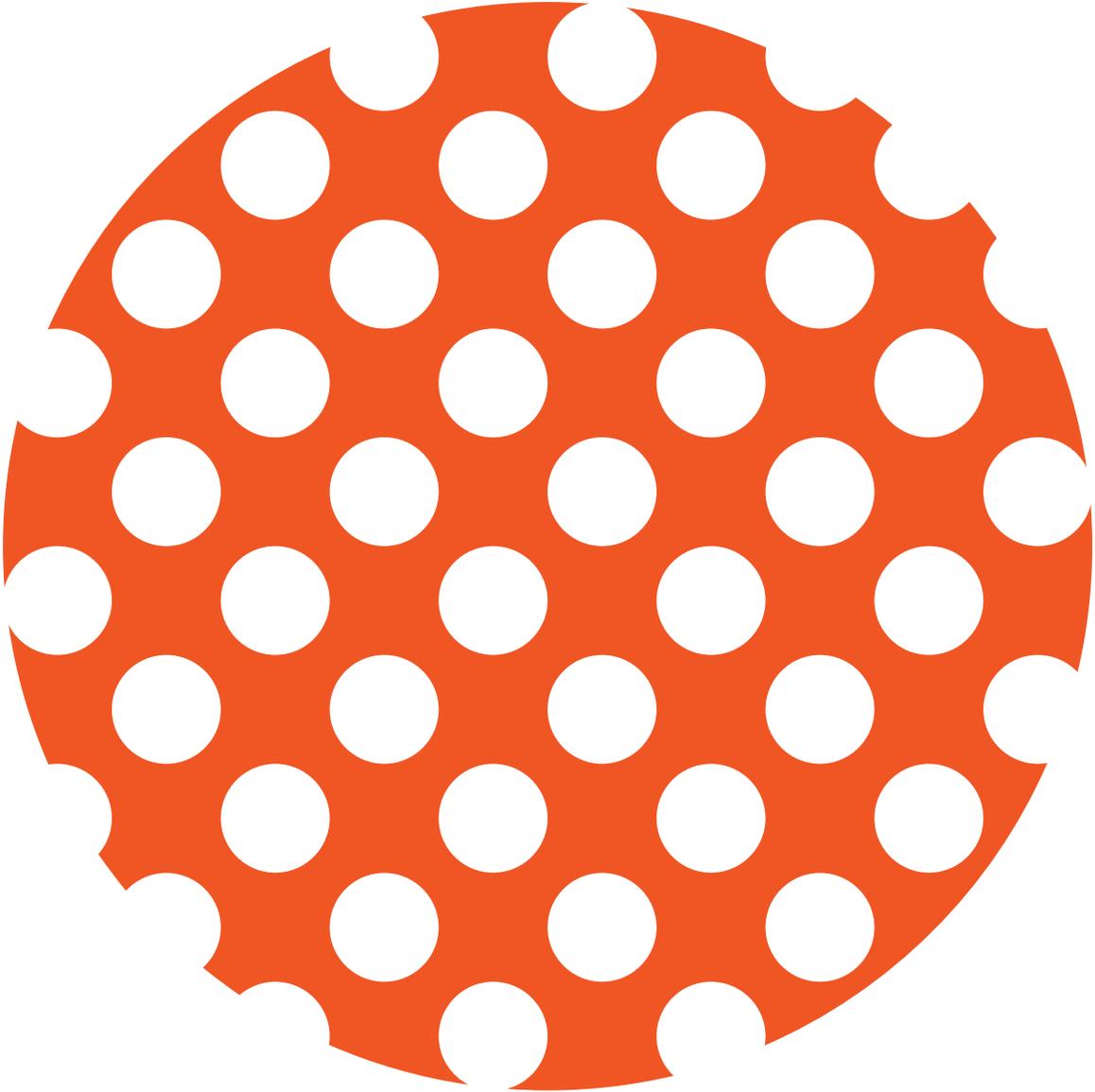
Publication



Shumka Centre for
Creative Entrepreneurship

Career Development +
Work Integrated Learning

How to Find Materials For Cheap



How to Find Materials for Cheap

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Do you have trouble gaining access to the items you need to complete your projects? Don't know where to look to find materials for cheap and reasonable prices? A wide range of materials and equipment are available for artists and designers, varying from heavy duty items such as lumber, wood and metal, to fine art pieces like paper and plastics—you just need to know the ways to find and approach them.

Tips for Finding Materials for Free and Cheap

1. Always ask shops if they offer a student discount.

Don't be afraid to ask, even if you think they don't have a student discount. Oftentimes it's a requirement or a store policy but it's not advertised to the public.

Even if they don't have an "official" student discount, shop workers can sometimes figure out a way to find cheaper options. If you explain to the employees what you're doing for your project, it makes it easier for them to help you find exactly what you need, or point you in the right direction.

2. You can ask at businesses and jobsites for off-cuts, scraps, roll-ends, mistints, or expired products.

The things you need from them may not be on display, so ask someone who works there. It is important to grasp the language you can use when you're asking about things that might not be presented right in front of you—make sure to explain who you are, what your project is, and what items you need.

In a lot of ways, when you utilize an uptake system for scrap materials, you're actually helping a company out by accepting materials that are unusable otherwise.

Tips for Finding Materials for Free and Cheap

3. Look for places that are fabricating, manufacturing and working with materials.

Start exploring and familiarize yourself with the industrial areas of the city—packaging and print shops especially tend to produce a large amount of waste and are highly likely to have ends of pieces they cannot use. Some examples of such areas include:

- Construction sites
- Film production locations
- Manufacturing sites and light industrial areas
- Print shops
- Packaging companies

4. Reach out to specific groups, craft guilds, circles or maker spheres in the city as they usually have access to an extensive range of materials.

Send an e-mail out asking if group members own any of the materials you're looking for, or if they know anyone that might. People can't help you find items if they don't know you're looking for it!

You can also post on websites like craigslist or use social media to request materials.

5. Be professional.

You will find people are generally very generous if you approach them in a professional manner. Finding the right person to talk to and asking appropriate questions will lead to productive outcomes.

Some Common Barriers

There are a few obstacles to taking advantage of free materials—think of these situations in advance so you can have time to prepare. Some common barriers include:

1. Not knowing when materials will be available or how to get in touch with the people who have them.

Reach out to people ahead of time so you can begin collecting what you need early on and are not scrambling to find items when it's too late. You can always ask for an approximate time estimate on when the items are going to be accessible.

Give contact information for when materials become available and make sure you are reachable.

2. Not having a way to move materials when they become available.

Think of all the possible options for moving materials around—will you have access to a vehicle? How large is (are) the item(s) and will you be able to carry them on your own?

3. Not having anywhere to store materials until you're ready to use them.

If you have a big project coming up where you're going to need a bunch of materials, arrange storage space ahead of time.

When you're aware of prevalent situations and occurrences, it becomes much easier to take advantage of things that come up that follow a timely schedule. A good example is the moving season, which takes place in April. During this time, you can find an abundant amount of items left behind in alleys and on the street.

A Note on Worksites

Construction sites and fabricators tend to produce leftover pieces.

At active worksites, there are often safety or liability concerns about visitors entering a work site and/or handling materials. Some concerns may not be immediately visible to you—for example, unseen nails or sharp objects in stacks of lumber. **Make sure you don't enter or handle anything at a construction site until you've been given permission.**

Sometimes, it may not be up to the person that is there on site when you visit that can give you permission to enter or the consent to give you the materials. You might have to wait for an okay from a site manager or somebody else - don't put pressure on the people there.

Local Resources

For General Supplies:

Bunz Trading Zone

Bunz Trading Zone contains a vast catalogue of items, from clothing and furniture to art and design supplies. You can set up an ISO (“in search of”) to narrow down your results.

Everything is trade based only! No monetary transactions can be made here.

Craigslist

Craigslist is similar to Bunz Trading Zone, except you can trade money for goods.

You can set up alerts for specific keywords and can receive e-mail notifications when someone makes a post with that keyword.

Urban Source

3126 Main Street

Urban Source has a weird and wonderful mixture of scrap materials from the industry—acrylic, plastic, wood, cardboard offcuts, shapes, punch outs, paper, and more. Many of the items are small pieces such as bells, sequins, markers, etc.

You can fill up paper bags with as much material as you can fit in. A small bag costs \$7.45, a medium is \$11.45, and a large costs \$21.75. According to Jenny Rossignolo, the owner of Urban Source, the hardest part about running the company is keeping track of the influx of items that come into the store! Many people and companies who want to get rid of their stuff turn to Urban Source—this means there are more items that need getting rid of than space at the store.

For Wood, Lumber & Construction Materials:

Habitat for Humanity Enterprise ReStore

7977 Enterprise Street

Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization that develops housing.

They resell building material (often called the “Value Village for building supplies”) with deeply discounted equipment and items.

Local Resources

Home Depot

Home Depot offers student discounts—don't forget to ask at the check-out.

They have an open off-cut and mistint paint bins and provide truck and vehicle renting to help you transport items at various sizes to your home, school or work site.

Jack's New and Used

Jack's New and Used have acquired an assortment of pieces such as cinder blocks, lumber, and scrap material.

Consists of sorted building and renovation material—including toilets, radiators, lamps, and miscellaneous architectural material that have been pulled out of renovated buildings.

Windsor Plywood

Windsor Plywood has student discounts and an off-cut bin with various types of wood.

For Textiles:

Dressew

337 W Hastings Street

Dressew is a huge store that sells fabric for cheap. Deadstock and discounted fabrics can be found on the basement floor!

FabCycle

268 Keefer Street 4th Floor

Social enterprise/non-profit organization that functions as an up-take system for stock from the industry—sells scraps, off-cuts, deadstock and end of rolls.

Our Social Fabric

270-1725 Venables Street

Our Social Fabric resells recycled fabric from the industry, with items in cubbies sorted by colour. Keep in mind that Our Social Fabric is cash and credit card only.

They have 2 open sales per month.

Local Resources

For Art Supplies:

Kroma Artist's Acrylics

1649 Duranleau Street

Sells mistints in a bin available to customers.

Michael's

Always has a 40% off one item coupon online, with discounts reaching as high as 55% off an item. Coupons can be used once per day.

Opus Art Supplies

Opus holds an annual garage sale in April with various items sold at cheap prices. Many supplies have a fiscal year-end sale in March or April where they try to sell items in advance for the budget year.

For Electronics:

Lee's Electronic Components

4131 Fraser Street

Lee's Electronics receives used electronics and takes them apart to sell pieces separately. They also source electronic components, tools and parts from around the world.

Vancouver Hack Space

1601 Venables Street

Provides workspaces and tools for electronic crafts, 3D printing, casting, sewing, art supplies, and more.

Other:

1000 Parker Street Studios

1000 Parker Street

Consists of artist studios and all kinds of different fabricators. They have a scraps bin for woods and other kinds of offcuts.

Associated Plastics

1104 Franklin Street

Provides all types of plastic material such as plexiglass, lexan, polycarbonate, delrin, plastic tubing, acrylic sheets, corrugated plastic, plastic sheets, acrylic plastic, acrylic sheets, acrylic tubing, foam board, plastic rods, and more, with materials available in an off-cuts bin.

Local Resources

Granville Island Theatres

Many of the theatres have wood scraps bins consisting of offcuts and scraps from set.

Great Northern Way Scene Shop

281 Industrial Ave #101

Produces for the film industry, with scrap materials available to the public in an off-cut bin.

Appendix

This document is based on the Skill Up Session delivered by **Laura Kozak**, Research Associate in Fall 2019. Skill Up Series are co-hosted and co-produced by Career Development + Work Integrated Learning Office and the Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship at Emily Carr University of Art + Design. These resources are produced with the generous support of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training.

Laura Kozak is a design researcher and cultural organizer. As a Research Associate with Emily Carr University of Art + Design's Shumka Centre, she has played a key role in advocating and advancing opportunities for emerging artists and designers in British Columbia. A core interest in collaborative design of the urban environment, grounded in values of stewardship, care, incremental change and place-based knowledge, informs her research and teaching practice. Past publications include *Superimpositions* (SFU, 2019), *Infinite Mappings*, with Rebecca Bayer (Access, 2015) and 'Open Source City', in *Now Urbanism: The Future City is Here* (Routledge, 2014). Laura holds a Master of Advanced Studies in Architecture (UBC, 2012) and teaches in the Jake Kerr Faculty of Graduate Studies at Emily Carr. She is President of 221A Artist Run Centre Society.

The Career Development + Work Integrated Learning Office connects students and alumni with local, national and international employers in the creative industries and beyond. We offer career advising, clinics and strategy sessions, drop-in and individual advising, access to work integrated learning opportunities such as co-ops and internships, co-curricular programming, and industry networking events, as well as the Arts-work career portal.

The Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship launched in 2018 to create programs and partnerships that help artists and designers realize their ideas in the world. The Centre is a place where creative practitioners can find the community, knowledge, and resources they need to launch, fund, and organize projects across the spectrum of contemporary art and design activities- products, projects, curatorial initiatives, platforms, companies, organizations, and more. We believe that tactical support specifically designed for the needs of artists and designers is the first step in achieving a systemic change to empower creative people. The Centre is operated by Living Labs.



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