

Ouno started with pair of bored shoppers

From L8

"Because I have a background in graphic design, I'm always used to taking some sort of shape and really stripping it down to the essence," she says.

This potential guessing game only adds to Nettie's appeal as art you can pet — what Lukey calls "living art."

Both the modern graphic design and colour palette have also added something else to Nettie's appeal: gender neutrality.

Lukey says it's been an "awesome surprise" to discover that men seem to be particularly fond of her wares.

"It's easy to look at, and it's not too cutesy," she figures.

OUNO DESIGN

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Longtime friends Lindsay Brown and Sarah Gee both had a passion for "warm modernism" — a decor philosophy borrowed from Japanese, Scandinavian and ancient design that takes the simplicity of minimalism and softens it up with a dash of coziness and sensuality. But reality just didn't produce the elements they imagined.

"We felt that there was the traditional arts and crafts on the one hand and there was this very cold modernism on the other," says Brown.

Meanwhile, Brown harboured more of a "Dr. Zhivago, Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon kind of obsession."

So Brown and Gee, who live a



Vancouver's Ouno Design fashions pillows, throws, blankets, floor cushions, room dividers and wall hangings from vintage fabrics such as old coats.

stone's throw from one another in Strathcona, created their own version of design perfection. Ouno (www.ounodesign.com) is a line of pillows, throws, rugs, blankets, room dividers, wall hangings and oddities fashioned from vintage fur and fabrics.

The duo roots through rag houses, salvaging things like carpets, upholstery, curtains, sheepskin and fur coats. These are the materials that transform into Ouno's adven-

turous and durable products.

"The stuff that we're getting from the '60s and '70s is so heavy. It's got a hand-woven quality. The newer machines simply can't reproduce that," says Brown.

Plus, it provides an opportunity for the fur-curious to wade into guilt-free territory, since all of Ouno's fur creations come from discarded old coats.

"You might as well honour it until it's really used up," explains Brown, who fully acknowledges the moral questions raised by fur in our modern culture but believes that we can't erase past cruelties. A section of Ouno's website is dedicated to the issue.

Some of the pieces — like a mink lifejacket that wouldn't have done much good aboard the *Titanic* — are just for display. Others, such as a throw constructed from multiple jackets (the underside is a patchwork of original linings and labels) are fully functional. And one of Ouno's best sellers is the playful fur ball (\$85).

The pieces are available in select stores and at private sales.



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