Title: Building Community around Sustainable Style

Company/Organization: RECOVERGIRL / Project Upcycle

Type of Organization: Not for profit

Number of Employees: <100

Category: Nonprofit

Challenge or Opportunity: I am the founder and co-creator with 3S Artspace of Project Upcycle, a sustainable fashion competition for emerging designers from around New England. The problem is the many sins of fast fashion, over consumption, and textile waste. The solution is complex but is born out of a community of people who have talent, industry experience, and a desire for change. We are building that community.

Approach or Solution: Project Upcycle is a 2-day competition ending in a live runway show. The 2022 challenge asks designers to create a New England street style look using excess and deadstock material from New England companies like Emerson Fry, April Cornell, Angelrox, Vans, American Roots, etc. For several days 3S Artspace is a center for risk taking, creativity, and thought provoking conversations. We plan to build on these relationships with additional events throughout the year like panel talks and workshops.

Impact: With each competition we grant prize money to the top three designers. $1,500 for first prize, $1,000 for second prize, and $500 for third prize. This prize money helps emerging designers invest in themselves. In addition, we introduce designers to each other and to industry leaders. We've seen friendships form and collaborations be born. The power of this growing community is building and we look forward to nurturing the connections.