



Red Hook Bracelet benefits The Artist Volunteer Center

(Los Angeles, CA, October 15, 2013)

[Miki Tanaka](#) is an artist and jewelry designer who lives and works in Red Hook, Brooklyn. She is also a dear friend. When Hurricane Sandy hit, Miki was in Japan visiting family. Over four feet of toxic water flooded her home and workshop. When she was able to return to Red Hook nine days later, she and her husband walked into a disaster site that was once their home.

We, at [ART from the ashes](#), thought of Miki immediately when we decided that we needed to jump in and do something to help Red Hook. She is one of the very compelling reasons that we



do what we do: We channel creative energy to transform physical objects, which in the process also transforms psychological objects (human beings). By working with materials salvaged from natural disasters, artists are able to let their experience and emotions flow through their work and back into the traumatized wood, metal or glass.

We asked Miki if she might consider creating a piece of jewelry to support her community in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. She didn't hesitate. The original prototype of the Red Hook Bracelet was forged from copper, which was pulled from the Sandy water that flooded Miki's home.

Proceeds from the sales of the Red Hook Bracelet will benefit [The Artist Volunteer Center](#). Born of the aftermath of Hurricane

Sandy, The AV Center was founded by Brooklyn artist [Jason Maas](#). Jason funneled his life changing experience into a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a forum to witness, present and participate in artwork that is derived from direct engagement with socially conscious issues.

About the Red Hook Bracelet Project, Miki says:

Being part of this project with AFTA opened my mind about my Hurricane Sandy experience and its impact on my life and work. It provided a catalyst to begin again and 'create' something out of this time. The design process involved problem solving and being inspired by rawness. I wanted to create something very simple, comfortable, timeless and natural.

I used copper wire, which had been submerged in Sandy water in my studio, to make the first hook models for the bracelet. The nautical tie-downs seen all around Red Hook inspired the rope and knot for the bracelet. I have a great deal of respect for the strength of these materials, even as they are exposed to the elements over time.

The Red Hook Bracelet is made of red bronze, brass and 100% natural cotton rope. It comes in a color choice of either natural cotton or hand indigo dyed rope. To purchase, go to: <http://artfromtheashes.org/2013-hurricane-sandy-red-hook-recovery/>

Miki's story:

My husband and I chose this little neighborhood to live and work in 2010. Red Hook is not like any of the other neighborhoods where we have lived. People are smiley, you can smell the salty ocean breeze in the air, there is a little main street where you can find small businesses and from the shore one can see the skyscrapers of Manhattan.

When the storm hit, we were in Japan visiting family. Flying back right away was not a possibility. Over four feet of water flooded the inside of our home and workshop. All our furniture, bookshelves, machinery, and tools... everything was soaked in oily sewage water.

It was painful and frustrating not to be able to be there. Our incredible friends and landlords jumped in to salvage whatever they could, but I couldn't help thinking about our workshop and all our iron tools, which were now rusting in the floodwater. I collected my tools gradually over 16 years. Some had a long history and sentimental value.

When we returned home and saw the damage for the first time, it froze my head. Familiar things were all moved around, covered with sand and dirt and soaked in storm water. It took me a while to comprehend what was happening to us, and also to the whole neighborhood. It was hard to know where to start. I was scared and anxious about being able to work and create without having the place that I loved working in.

I felt that our lives stopped for a while without a home and a place to work. I felt dislocated and lost. We lived out of suitcases for 5 months while we sorted through what was salvageable. Friends, family and even strangers supported us tremendously, both physically and psychologically. Their words, physical labor and donations made us stronger and kept us going. We couldn't have done it without them.

This experience definitely gave me the opportunity to contemplate larger questions and values. Starting from scratch takes a lot of work and patience. The only thing that we could do was keep at it with a positive attitude.

One year from Sandy, although we are still salvaging and organizing, I finally feel that I am back on my feet. I hadn't originally intended to write down my story into words, but after thinking about it in the context of healing together with my community; I wanted to share my story with people who might still be suffering or having similar experiences. The importance of home and a place to work where we function freely is something we all cherish.

We still chose to live in Red Hook. We love it here.

For more information about the Red Hook Bracelet, visit ART from the ashes at <http://artfromtheashes.org/2013-hurricane-sandy-red-hook-recovery/>

Miki Tanaka

www.mikitanaka.com

The Artist Volunteer Center

<http://avcenter.org/>

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