

DAILY NEWS

Living

# New York-based designer Elizabeth Suda crafts jewelry out of scrap bomb metal

**Project peaceBOMB uses relics from war to help people of Laos**

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Elizabeth Suda, founder of the peaceBOMB line, is using items left from the Vietnam War to help Laos today.

Jewelry designer [Elizabeth Suda](#) is turning bombs into bangles.

The philanthropist uses scrap bomb metal, taken from undetonated bombs found in Laos, to create fashion-forward accessories — and donates part of the profits to Laotian families.



A trip to the Southeast Asian country in 2008 inspired the creation of her Project peaceBOMB.

While in Laos, she saw artisans melt American-made artillery left from the Vietnam War in homemade earthen kilns, and then recast them into spoons.

Bangles made of scrap war metal are priced at \$16 for one, \$38 for three. Part of the profits go to farmers and artisans.

“Seeing ‘rocket mortar’ written in English across a piece of shrapnel and watching the artisans transform deadly pieces of history into spoons, something useful, I felt this story had to be told,” Suda says.

“And really, in an instant, I thought of making a bracelet. It was just one of those moments.”

Project peaceBOMB is a division of Suda’s charitable foundation, Article 22, which urges consumers to know where, how and with what their products are made.

By purchasing a single \$16 bangle, customers can help raise awareness and fund clearance of the tons of unexploded bombs that litter the Laotian countryside. The money also helps farmers and artisans provide for

their families.

Before founding Article 22, Suda worked in the merchandising department at Coach Inc. The job involved lots of quality-assurance meetings to keep tabs on overseas production. That's when her interest in the link between Eastern production and Western consumption was sparked.

"I saw product tag after tag read: Made in India, Made in China, etc.," she says. "Occasionally I'd see Mandarin scrawled in the tag margins, which got me thinking about where our products come from, how they are made, and by whom. The more research I did, the more questions I had."

With Project peaceBOMB, which is a collaboration with her designer sister Wallis, Suda's single bangle evolved into a line of more than 15 products, including necklaces and spoon novelties, all made by Laotian artisans from scrap military ordnance.

Project peaceBOMB donates enough funds to clear 1 to 15 square meters of land for every item sold.

In 2011, peaceBOMB donated the cost of clearing the equivalent of 10,000 square meters of bombed land, Suda says.

The jewelry income has also allowed "families to pay for simple, basic needs like soap, medicine and school uniforms to more long-term investments, like purchasing a cow," she says.

It doesn't hurt that the peaceBomb line looks good.

"We strive to design fashion that people want to wear, not just that they wear to help," Suda Says.

"It's about creating well-designed products with added social values. We want to make it easy for New Yorkers to do what they already do – shop, look good and share the story."

Online: [www.peace-bomb.com](http://www.peace-bomb.com)

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