



Tire became sushi at The Earth Tire Foundation launch. *Courtesy of The Earth Tire Foundation.*

## Tires turn to art for the environment

by Jacob Bressler

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A suburban Chicago couple uses art to extend the life-span of tires – and creatively improves the earth along the way.

Dr. Mars Lans and his wife Margarita launched The Earth Tire Foundation, a Highland Park-based non-profit that transforms tires into artistic wall decorations. The hope is that this repurposing will reduce the negative environmental impact associated with the disposal of used tires.

The operation began on Earth Day and involves picking up discarded tires at local dealers and designing them to fit a specific theme – such as sushi rolls for a Japanese restaurant.

“We use the tire as a whole, and we reconfigure it to suit and complement various businesses,” said Lans, a retired dentist.

Lans and his wife, with the help of eco-friendly paints and other green materials, have created tire displays for Harley Davidson dealerships in North Carolina, in addition to samples showcased during the launch and presented to local officials.

In the future, companies that participate in the program will be asked for donations to help pay for the decorating process. The environmentally beneficial aspect of the venture could entice companies to participate by displaying the tires in corporate offices or branches.

“We think it’s a great way for people to kind of get into the environmental scene,” Lans said. “If they see something that attracts them, we think that the businesses will be more apt to consider having these displays in their establishments.”

According to Peter Gray, representative for the Environmental Law and Policy Center, tires can be a “tricky thing to dispose of.” The burning process during recycling, he said, can be harmful because of the emission of chemicals used to make the tires, especially petroleum.

“The environment, if anything,” Lans said, “will become more and more important as time goes on.”