

Garbage Barge Revisited: Art From Dross

June 13- September 2

Curated By Karen Shaw



Recycle, Reinvent, Reuse, Cara Enteles

The decision to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of that infamous barge prompted an invitation for artists to participate in the Islip Art Museum's Annual Open Call and Invitational Exhibition. Receiving proposals from one hundred and fifty artists representing the United States, Europe and Israel made the selection difficult. So much of the work was exciting and innovative but space considerations forced us to winnow the list down to about fifty works.

Using recycled materials has long been a medium for artists to work with. This artistic upcycling, recycling and repurposing is not new to the world of art think of Picasso, Rauschenburg, Johns and Nevelson to name a few.

In 1987, Islip Town became infamous when a barge containing tons of commercial trash from the town was forced to sail along the Atlantic coast for 3 months in search of a landfill for the waste. As a result, Islip Town paved the way for the nation to reduce, reuse and recycle. Although great strides have been made with reducing our ecological footprint we are far from a sustainable economy. The problem of waste disposal continues to be a heavily discussed issue. Artists have always been on the forefront of refashioning the dross of everyday life into something magical.



Pupsi, Barbra Lubliner



Big Top, Oliver Peterson

Artists repurpose materials for a variety of reasons and motivations. Art supplies are expensive so using what is at hand saves a budget. Discarded objects may be beautiful in their own right through artistic eyes. This fresh look will help an artist repurpose what was once trash, into an aesthetically pleasing art piece. And, many artists are just environmentally conscious and just want to create something.

As the viewer will see in this exhibit the artworks are created from a myriad of materials: pizza boxes, dried up paint brushes, tea bags, envelopes, shredded paper, broken

glass, plastic bottles, plastic bags, lids, packaging materials, scraps of wood, found pieces of rebar, paper bags and discarded toys. These objects did not start off as art, some never seemed as if they could be art, but here we have it—something out of nothing.

- Karen Shaw, 2012

