

Plastic Entanglements

Ecology • Aesthetics • Materials



FEBRUARY 13 – JUNE 17, 2018



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Anger



Stockholder



Marx

THE ENTANGLED PRESENT 7

Fetishized consumer objects also find their way into the work of Canadian First Nations artist **BRIAN JUNGEN**. His carved—or more accurately, incised—gasoline jug titled *Our Lives* (2012) features a pattern reminiscent of designs found in the indigenous practice of birch bark biting. Steeper of gasoline, the jerry can can be found across Northern Ontario, a petroleum-rich landscape where gas stations iconically are few and far between. The title of this modified found object—with its allusions to native cultures, modern manufacturing, and the transience of petroleum industry—references the steps made through forests for mining and gas exploration.

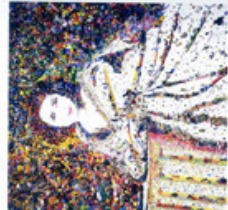
Internationally recognized artist **JESSICA STOCKHOLDER**, now based in Chicago, makes no apologies for her unabashed use of brightly colored plastic, whether in her site-specific installations or her more intimate wall pieces crafted in the studio. Plastic—both found (used) and fabricated (new)—is integral to Stockholder's postmodern arsenal of materials as she boldly disrupts expectations about the very nature of both painting and sculpture.

ANN TARANTINO, based in Pennsylvania, is also known for her site-responsive, mixed-media installations. In *Lights Camera ...* (2017), she makes creative re-use of discarded plastic theatre gels, soon likely to become a thing of the past in the wake of new lighting technologies. Working with laser cutters as well as an industrial-strength sewing machine on occasion, Tarantino delights in the sturdiness of the plastic gels, finding them easier to manipulate and more durable than fragile bits of paper. The remarkable colored shadows cast by and through her plastic “fabric” wall pieces regard their visual presence and nobly command the space around them.

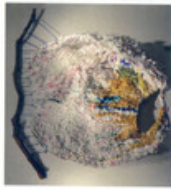


Cohen

DIANNA COHEN, an artist and activist based in Los Angeles, similarly recycles a hallowed, even sacred form in her postconsumer mandala (2001). Using her own leftover plastic shopping bags, complete with brand names and logos, Cohen meticulously hand-stitched this mandala as a practice in meditation, asking us, in turn, to ponder how we literally “buy into” the worship of profit, power, and the accumulation of things.



Anjala



Anjala

The Nigerian-born artist **IFEMA U. ANJALA** insists we acknowledge that the intricately woven materials in her monumental sculptures are discarded 100% or non-biodegradable plastic. Using a non-conventional “post-yarn” technique, Anjala draws on traditional hair painting (theading), basketry, and textile weaving as she transforms colorful plastic bags into surprising objects that are at once deeply connected to the past yet entangled in the present.

Our consumer-driven fascination with inexpensive, colorful plastic items has lulled even in Brazilian-born **VIVIANE SERRA** (2010). An unassuming remake of Peter Nasir's 1984 photograph of the colonial French artist, the opposing colors of her dresses in the thousands of plastic bottles suspended with thousands of plastic threads in the tension between the vertical longevity of plastic and the horizontal of both a thread and a ceiling.

8 THE ENTANGLED PRESENT