



"THEY LAUGH AT
FIRST, THEN THEY
STOP AND SAY 'WAIT,
IT'S NOT FUNNY! IT'S
A PROBLEM!'"

—MARINA DEBRIS

This volume groups Marina Debris' attention-grabbing artworks in a limited edition artbook. These 50+ pages aim to reinforce the recent environmental crisis of marine pollution that is caused by the overuse of single-use plastics.

Marina Debris, named after "Marina Debris", is a conceptual artist, graphic designer who fights for the end of single-use plastics and the consequences of marine trash on the ecosystem. After her first trashio

show, she had the opportunity to meet various activists working on marine pollution, which pushed her to do more. More events, fashion shows and exhibitions led Marina to become internationally. To her concept, the message she spread for was also brought to the audience.

MARINA DEBRIS

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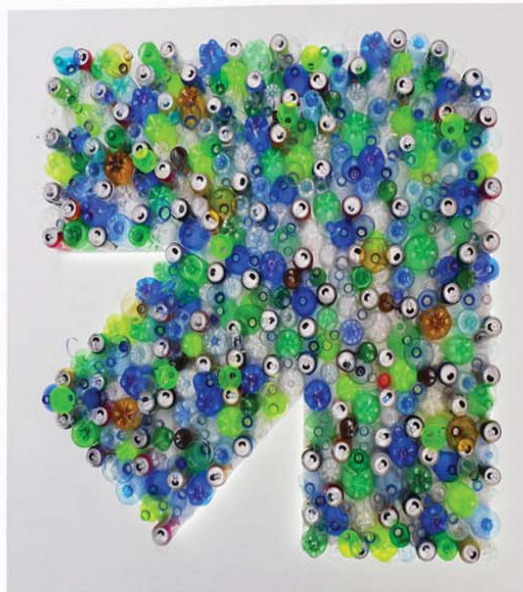


Fig. 1 Marina Debris, all single-use bottles & caps retrieved from myFOODie Australia return & earn machines.

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INTRODUCTION

ARTIST MARINA DEBRIS' MATERIALS AREN'T OIL PAINT OR CLAY, BUT PLASTIC BAGS, FISH-SHAPED SOY SAUCE CONTAINERS, DISCARDED SOFT TOYS, DOG-CHEWED TENNIS BALLS AND OTHER RUBBISH SHE FINDS LITTERING BEACHES IN THE EASTERN SUBURBS. SHE TAKES THE DETRITUS AND TRANSFORMS THEM INTO WEARABLE ARTWORKS SHE TERMS "TRASHION".

"I aim to get people to think about the consequences of our consumption," says Debris, who works under a pseudonym and started the project in 2009. "I don't understand why we don't value things. How can you buy something, use it once and throw it out? That really boggles my mind."

While she has no formal fashion training, the artist has found her creations to be an effective way to remind others of the devastating results of ocean pollution. "When people see it from far away they think it's high couture. And then up close you can actually see where it's come from," says Debris. "My favourite quote, which I've heard several times [from viewers], is that's beautiful - and disgusting." Sydneyers can see the artist's works on live models strutting down a catwalk for a "trashion parade" at Bondi Pavilion at 11:30am and 1pm today. The show is part of the final day of the inaugural Bondi Ocean Lovers Festival, which was launched in response to the environmental crisis. Also on the program is an eco market and expo, art exhibition Waste No More, Surfside Grommet competition and the Ocean Lovers Film Festival.

Marina Debris thinks there is no better time for the festival's urgent message of conservation. "The time is now. We have run amok really in so many ways towards the environment and ultimately towards ourselves. If we don't get serious about it, we're facing a huge potential collapse." We are at the snack bar of the Culture Summit 2017 (COSR) at Manarat Al Saadiyat in Abu Dhabi, picking up a few bites before sitting down for an interview, when the staff offer Marina a set of single-use cutlery. Politely turning down the offer, Marina smiles as she taps the little pouch that dangles from a clip attached to her back pack. "I carry this around with me wherever I go," she says. Inside the pouch is a set of wooden cutlery - a knife, fork, spoon and a metal straw. "I usually take along my cup as well but I forgot it today in my hotel room," she says, a tad downcast. Dressed simply in a pair of drainpipe trousers, a T-shirt and a jacket, Marina is an environmental artist and designer who reuses marine trash to raise awareness about beach pollution. Working in Australia and the US, the passionate artist is one of the invitees at the international summit in the capital that earlier this month brought

together state leaders and changemakers from the world of the arts and the media to discuss the role culture can play in addressing some of the most pressing challenges of our time. "My mission is to leave as small a carbon footprint as possible," says Marina, running her fingers through her platinum blonde hair, a few locks coloured green and blue. "But I still have a pretty large one, I guess."

The creator of the website Washed Up: Pollution Reborn as Art, which showcases her work, Marina is a passionate advocate of the need to reduce or eliminate single-use plastics from the environment. Raised in Detroit and New York, Marina who adopted her pseudonym to reflect the kind of work she does, and admits that she 'loved the city life'. But she also loved art and design, so after dabbling in metal smithing initially, she enrolled for a course in graphic design at the Rhode Island School of Design before landing a job in New York. However, she was not one to put down her roots in a city.

"I'd been living and working in New York but I guess because I'm a Piscean, I've always loved the sea and yearned to live on a beach," she says. Her dream came to fruition when by sheer chance she happened to meet a group of Australians. "So I went visiting them and the country ... and ended up living on Bondi Beach in Sydney," she says, a shy smile playing on her face. She set up a graphic design business there but at that time "I wasn't even remotely into any environment issues," she says. That was 18 years ago. Marina, as part of her fitness routine, used to run on the beach every day and would regularly see trash being washed up on the sands. "But one day it was like a switch flipped in my head. I wondered how it became acceptable for people to throw rubbish so indiscriminately; it gets into the

water and then gets washed up on beaches," she says. Upset that marine pollution was not being talked about and discussed at any level, "at least not as much as it is now" and keen to do her bit for the earth, the designer initially started collecting the marine trash but did not know what to do with a lot of it. "Typical trash, which is universal and which washes up on the beaches, is single-use plastics - things like drinking straws, bottle caps, cigarette lighters, single-use utensils, plastic bags, toys... things that people in first world countries don't have to be using so much." She kept a few things, like doll parts, bits of foam, interesting pieces of waste, disposing the remaining trash sensibly. Then seven years ago, almost impulsively, "I decided to make art out of the pieces I'd been collecting," she says.

Marina attributes the impulse to sheer frustration. "I really didn't know what else I could do. As a graphic designer if I'm going to be creating something it's got to deliver a message. I wanted to somehow express this issue of marine pollution. That was the challenge. It sort of started from there," she says. What she also got started on was 'trashion' - a portmanteau of trash and fashion. "A lot of my art is about and from trash, and what I'm well-known for is making wearable pieces out of trash," says the artist, whose eye-catching works include fish tanks, decorative art and sculptures. "I prefer using humour to startle viewers into taking a closer look at things we usually ignore," she says.

Her 'Aquarium of the Pacific Gyne' is a case in point. Essentially a giant aquarium filled with trash collected from beaches, it was created to draw attention to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch - a system of ocean currents in the Pacific Ocean that has extremely high concentrations of plastics, chemical sludge and other debris. After filling the tank with trash, she went



FROM BAY TO RUNWAY

AMERICAN VISUAL ARTIST MARINA DEBRIS CALLS HERSELF A TRASHION DESIGNER, AS WELL AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST, AND ANTI-PLASTICS CAMPAIGNER. SHE MAKES HER "BEACH COUTURE" COLLECTIONS FROM RUBBISH SHE FINDS WASHED UP ON THE BEACHES OF LOS ANGELES AND SYDNEY. THERE'S A HISTORY OF FASHION DESIGNERS REFERENCING RUBBISH. JOHN GALLIANO'S CONTROVERSIAL SPRING 2000 HAUTE COUTURE COLLECTION FOR CHRISTIAN DIOR FEATURED NEWSPAPER PRINTS INSPIRED BY THE HOMELESS PEOPLE HE USED TO JOG PAST ALONG THE SEINE RIVER IN PARIS.

Fig. 1 white trash, modified by Hannah Kat Jones. The beached top is made from cigarette lighters, straws, single-use utensils and bottle caps that washed up on the beach.



Fig. 1 Old Glory, modelled by Hannah Kat Jones. This patriotic look is made from materials found on the beaches of Los Angeles.

Fig. 2 A Captive Audience, modelled by Hannah Kat Jones. This dress consists of fishing nets collected in the Pacific Ocean by Captain Charles Moore.



Fig. 1 Not So Merry Go Round, all the objects on the horse were found washed up or left on beaches. The horse was found on the street.



Fig. 2 Kings to riches, modelled by Ayla Love. All fabric was found washed up on the beach.

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Fig. 3.4 Captive Audience, modelled by Denise Monson. The dress is made from fishing nets collected in the Pacific Ocean by Captain Charles Moore. It was shot on Pismo del Rey beach, California.



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