

A RECORD
OF AN EXHIBITION
OF
ART
Entitled
beached
with
Field Notes
By
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A thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for
The degree of Master of Fine Arts
School of Art and Design
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FIELD NOTES for beached

Thursday, January 23

I approached Ron Jones, the manager of the food court of Pratt to let him know that I am in great need of all discarded plastic. He immediately instructed two employees to put the waste being disposed of in the plastic waste bins into a small carrier truck just outside the building. I assured him that I would pick it up daily. He asked me three times to let him know when I have enough and would like them to stop. I thanked him and emailed him my contact information.

Bianca Hildenbrand brought in a large bag full of bags from her apartment.

Placed ad in Brooklyn Free-Cycle asking for any clean, discarded plastic including grocery bags.

My partner, Ashley Larsen is pregnant with our first child. The due date is May 9th and I must complete my thesis exhibition and statement early so that I may be with my family at least 30 days before this date. I also must find someone to take over my living quarters and move all my stuff into a shipping cube. The pressure is on.

Friday, January 24

I went to Target in the Atlantic terminal in search for as many grocery bags as I could carry. I took 3 large clear recycling garbage bags to carry them in. The G train led me outside of BAM with a very cold bite on my face. Target is only 2 blocks away with no problem. Target has multiple containers strictly for dropping off used grocery bags. I peered in about five different recycle bin to only find a few bags. I went to the information desk to ask if I could speak to the manager. They pointed at a gentleman passing. His name is Carlton. I asked him if someone comes to pick up the used

grocery bags for recycling. He replies, "I don't know where it goes, we just compact it with the rest of the trash. No one knows where it goes". I could only think that I need to come back with my camera and get that on video.

I leave Atlantic Terminal. This is the first experience that I had feeling like a homeless person looking for salable trash. My wife says that I should have brought my blue quilted pea coat since it makes me look like a bum. Then she said that I typically look like a bum; I agreed. While walking, I don't look at many people in the eye. I became fascinated through the act of playing a role. What would I do when someone treats me like a bum? How are homeless people treated? I think they are just ignored. But it turns out, as I walked down the sidewalk in my shredded Levi coat, a passing look became a stare. This is when I realize that I should just become the trash sifter that I was destined to become by going through the garbage piles on the street.

Collected some bags from Christopher Verstegen.

Collected bottles on Lafayette and Hall - Brownstones & mountains of waste from co-op apartments. Also walked down Myrtle Avenue – collected clean plastic from restaurants like Zaytoons.

The food court left only one bag in the carrier truck for me to pick up. It had very little plastic in the bag mixed with food. I went through it and rinsed the plastic clean while rinsing out other containers collected tonight. This is my Friday night!

Saturday, January 25

Collected bottles on Dekalb between Hall and Classon. It was nice that it was across the street from my studio. I was able to throw the bags over a short gate just outside a window from the Pratt Studio Basement.

No bags left from the food court.

Sunday, January 26

Met Carl Zimring and Jen Potter through a yahoo group, Brooklyn Free-Cycle. Jen responded from an ad that I placed asking for clean plastic waste and grocery bags. She was ecstatic to help out and informed me that her husband, Carl, is a professor in the sustainability department. Jen left when I arrived and Carl spent twenty or thirty minutes of his time discussing the project, his knowledge of plastic use and giving me references of people at Pratt that would love to support it. He said to stick to the streets west of Pratt, as "the rich throw away more".

Canning: Waverly and Willoughby. Washing out the bottles with milk and orange juice is not a fun task. I am surprised to find out that so many people are conscious of rinsing out the plastic containers.

No bags left from the food court

Tuesday, January 28

Linda Francis calls her husband and leaves a voice mail to get him to go to their local market to collect plastic for me. I asked her to ask him to save the voice message that she left on his phone so that I could use it in the video documentation.

Met with Carolyn Schaeberle in CSDS at Pratt and also met Laura Lighty a student with much support. She started to collect bags from other students.

I went to the Emerson to get some drinks with the peers and ran across the street to Tepango Restaurant to order a take out burrito. I asked if they happen to have a waste just for plastic. They didn't so I didn't want to bother them further but Lorenzo insisted on going around the place pointing at containers to ask if that is what I am

looking for. I said yes to everything. He said he will put it all in a bag and I said I would be back in a week: Tuesday. He said ok. I left with much hope for the world and a large hidden smile in my eyes.

No bags of plastic left from the food court.

Wednesday, January 29

DuShawn Dumas un-packaged his paintings to hang them in the Pratt Studio Gallery for a private viewing. He had tons of bubble wrap and was talking to security to see where he could put it for recycling. I was walking by with eyes wide. "I'm helping you out and you're helping me out." We had a great conversation as usual with Mr. Dumas.

Canning on Hall Street: I collected two large bags of plastic then the garbage truck came. One man attempted to throw my plastic in the truck as I said "I'll take that bag".

"What, you going to throw it in the truck?"

"No, It's mine,. I'm collecting plastic"

The other guy carries a questionable face.

The first guy says to the other guy, "I don't know, he's crazy".

Pratt security was weirded out when I flashed my student card. She thought I was maintenance cause I kept walking around with garbage bags.

No bags from Pratt's cafeteria. It's not worth asking Ron to see why they only left one small bag.

Someone left a large bag full of clean and dry water bottles with rubber bands around groups of them as if used for a project.

Ye Ji and Yipei Wen left much plastic at my studio door.

Thursday, January 30

Columbine Zamponi dropped off more bags.

Alexia Cohen-Tortoledo said she would collect from the jewelry students.

Jessica Adams continues to collect plastic in her apartment.

Ann Messner just gave me a funny look when I asked if she would bring in her plastic bags. She said she has her own "internal recycling program" (one time re-use by putting garbage in them).

Bianca drops off a large amount of grocery bags. She mentioned that she placed a box in her building asking for residents to deposit. I adapted the idea and duplicated it in my apartment building that night.

Emailed Christopher MJ Ruggieri, Assistant Director of Residential Life to ask for permission to go through the dorms, knocking on doors to ask for any grocery bags that any one is able to get rid of.

Called Felix at Five Star Carting-company that picks up Pratt's trash-I was told by facilities that they separate the trash. Felix said all they do is compact the garbage for the Department of Sanitation, DSNY, and then they separate it. He said he couldn't help me with my project.

Emailed Ms Eadaoin Quinn at SIMS Recycling to ask if she could contribute to the collection of plastic. She became interested in the project and desired to support it.

She said that I could come pick some up but it has all been compacted and is typically very dirty and smelly. She said to contact Ana at Sure We Can, Inc., for bottles and Christina Salvi at Grow NYC for plastic bags.

Friday, January 31

Ashley's flight from New Orleans to Atlanta got cancelled and somehow worked in a twenty-six hour layover to JFK, on her way to SLC.

Saturday, February 1

Ash helped me make rope in my studio.

Sunday, February 2

Superbowl Sunday - Thom invited me to an old people party in a twenty-seven floor building in Soho. His Mother infused Rum with banana and peppercorn. I got full from guacamole, chili, apple crisp pie, and chicken wings. Phillip Seymour Hoffman is found dead in his bathroom. Thom's mother once dated him when he first started his acting career. It was a nice break from the streets.

Monday, February 4

Went to Tepango, like I said I would, to pick up plastic. Lorenzo gladly collected some to fill up a garbage bag full. After a twelve hour school day, I was exhausted and hungry as I didn't eat anything the entire day, well other than a cup of coffee and tons of water. I joined the after school party at the Emerson with my burrito and set the collected plastic outside on the side walk. I went in, ordered a beer and whiskey shot, sat down by my peers and ate my burrito. I couldn't have been longer than 30 minutes but when I left the Emerson, my bag was gone. I suppose the street workers swiftly collected all garbage on the street. I was sadly disappointed and filled with emptiness - an overwhelming sensation of fear and loss. I will do anything to protect my findings. Although I am not getting all out of street trash, it is becoming a daunting task.

Wednesday, February 5

Got a key to another studio, PSB#3, to store the plastic, which I never used.

Thom help scavenge through garbage. We filled 8 bags of plastic. I fed him bourbon and his mother's leftover chili; It's very cold outside.

Thursday, February 6

Christopher in Residential Life approved my access into the Pratt dorms so that I may ask each apartment for grocery bags. I went through 3 floors of Willoughby Hall Dormitories and left with two massive bags full of bags. I have much hope that the project is actually attainable.

Friday, February 7

Left for Florida to meet Ashley

Sunday, February 9

Emailed David Sharps at The Waterfront Museum to ask if he would like to participate in assisting the whale float down the East River so that I could get video footage. He said it wasn't likely and that I should talk to Alison Hughes at the Brooklyn Bridge Park to install it on the shore. He also said Carter Craft of Outside New York might be able to help with the river video.

Monday, February 10

Picked up large amounts of bags from Miriam Medina at Brooklyn High School of the Arts. She responded to my Brooklyn Free-Cycle ad.

I never moved the bottles into the #3 studio

I fear that the idea is not possible. I'm in over my head and feeling disgust as my life is not going out into the city for fun but going out to sift through trash. My show

opens on March 24 and I know that the project is going to take rest of my time in New York.

Tuesday, February 11

Picked up large bag of plastic containers from Lorenzo at Tepango Restaurant.

Alexia in jewelry, says that her deposit box is over-flowing and needs to be picked up.

Wednesday, February 12

Collected street plastic with Thom Shapiro, Yazz Meen and Andy Wellington.

Thursday, February 13

Rope Making: Yazz Meen, Parul Verma, Mellissa Beck & her friend Doug.

Saturday, February 15

Went to Mathew Barney's, River of Fundament screening at BAM.

Sunday, February 16

Went through the rest of Willoughby Hall with Krista LaBella for more bags. Walked away with two, very large and compact bags full of bags. Some students said they had a ton to contribute and brought out a handful. A few kind of giggled and said that it would be best to come inside the apartment. They had multiple cupboards full of bags. Also I met Claire Ledoyen, a NYPIRG affiliate. She became interested in the project and I invited her to join us making rope. She brought two friends.

Rope Making: SeoKyeong (Sky) Lee Yoon , Serry Park, Nazzanin Noroozi, Yazz Meen, Parul Verma, Claire Ledoyen, Bridget Russell, David Yanofsky, Emily Robertson (my sister) & Kylie Racker (my cousin). I bought pizza, hummus, carrots and beer for anyone to take. I have found out that I need a lot more people and a lot

more rope making nights.

Tuesday, February 18

Picked up large bag of plastic containers from Tepango Restaurant

Thursday, February 20

Visited Sure We Can and met Ana Martinez de Luco. She is excited about the project and offered to give me tons of plastic that they cannot get money for. She is even getting someone with a van to transport it to Pratt. I asked if she would be willing to talk in front of a camera and she agreed on for this coming Saturday. I left with much hope and excitement to get good footage for the video doc.

ELJ dormitory bag collection. Not too many people participating.

Friday, February 21

Sheila Pepe visits my studio. I show her my project and she smiles, raises her arms in the air and hugs me. She says, "This is what a breakthrough looks like". She also emailed me the next day with excitement about my accomplishment.

Saturday, February 22

Returned to Sure We Can to get video documentation Ana had many visitors interested in helping and getting experience of the process of sorting the recyclable goods. This is also where I met "The King of the Cans",¹ a popularized canning figure that is fully supported from collecting through street trash.

Monday, February 24

Plastic Party, Rope Making: Lots of booze, Pizza, Hummus, Whitney's ginger cookies. Whitney Ramage, Bianca Hildebrand, Alexis Fidetzis, Jessica Adams, Jes

¹ "NOW "King of the Cans" | PBS", <http://youtu.be/bYo3BXgf02Y>

Hughes, Tiffany McCullough, Lucio Lionetti, Bryan Hutchinson, Ian Swanson, Terry Huber. I advertised all over campus. A few undergraduates came in looking confused as they wanted a real party, I said it was a real party and they actually turned quickly and ran out.

The exhibition opens in one month. I still fear that I won't get enough plastic to complete it.

February 27 - March 3

Utah bound

Monday, March 3

Install in Dekalb Gallery for Symposium critique.

Tuesday, March 4

Outside Critic Christian Viveros-Fauné to critique my work.

Wednesday, March 5

Ana from Sure We Can dropped off 11 large bags full of un-sellable bottles. I gave the couple with the van \$30 for their help. Immediately afterward I traveled to Grow NYC to pick up their collected plastic bags. This is all that I need to complete the whale. Thank you Christina Salvi and Vitaliy Piltser. Christina was kind enough to answer a few question over a camera.

Friday, March 7

Completed the crochet of the whale.

Monday, March 10

Picked up plastic from Jen Potter. I am utterly exhausted and getting ill.

Tuesday, March 11

Emailed Carter Craft of *Outside New York*² to ask if he would be willing to participate in the whale floating down the East River, or even up near Hudson. Carter said he would be willing to talk but his boat doesn't hit the water till April.

Saturday, March 15

Placed the whale skin on a scale and came to 82 lbs. 67 bags weigh 1 lbs. Whale skin has approximately 5,494 bags. Dropped the whale skin in the Steuben Gallery space.

IT DOESN'T FIT. WOOOHOO!

Wednesday, March 19

Andrew Wellington and Parul Verma help install all plastic into the whale.

² <http://outsidewyork.wordpress.com/about-carter-craft/>