

Recycled Art In Celebration of

EL ANATSUI

Learn about artists who re-use materials as their media.
Beautiful, inspiring, interesting—and good for the Earth!





El Anatsui

The sculptor El Anatsui, born in Ghana in 1944, has said that “artists are better off working with whatever their environment throws up.” And that is exactly what he does. Most recently, El Anatsui has been using discarded metal objects like bottle tops and printing plates that he has gathered in and around his hometown of Nsukka, Nigeria. Once he has gathered his materials, El Anatsui and his team of assistants in Nigeria bend, twist, and reshape the bottle caps, then punch holes in them and knit them together with metal wire. The result is a richly colored and textured metal tapestry which combines Ghanaian, Nigerian, and contemporary Western influences.

Detail of *Intermittent Signals*, 2009. Found aluminum and copper wire, 11 x 35 ft. (335.3 x 1066.8 cm.) The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica [Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY] Photo by Michael Agee



HA Schult

HA Schult has become world-famous for turning trash into 1,000 life-size “trash people” which have been installed in many locations around the globe. His “trash people” have appeared in Rome, New York, Barcelona, Brussels, Cairo, Peking, Moscow, and even the Arctic! (How do you think the polar bears reacted?)

Schult has long been interested in using trash to comment on society’s out-of-control consumption and waste production. He has said, “We are living in a time of garbage. We produce garbage and we will be garbage. I created a thousand sculptures of garbage. They are a mirror of ourselves.”

Do you agree with Schult? Why or why not?



Trash People, Cairo, 2002

[via](#)



Trash People, Antarctica, 2011

[via](#)

Tim Noble and Sue Webster

British artists Tim Noble and Sue Webster are fascinated by light and shadow. At first, their “shadow sculptures” look just like big piles of trash. Then, when the rooms are darkened and spotlights are projected onto the piles, the resulting shadows reveal strikingly clear silhouettes. In *Dirty White Trash*, for instance, the shadow casts a portrait of the two artists leaning against each other, back to back, one drinking wine and the other smoking a cigarette. The trash consists of everything the two artists needed to survive during the six months it took to create this work. It certainly is a new kind of self-portrait!



Dirty White Trash (with Gulls), 1998

via



Miss Understood and Mr. Meanor, 1997

via





Soyeon Cho

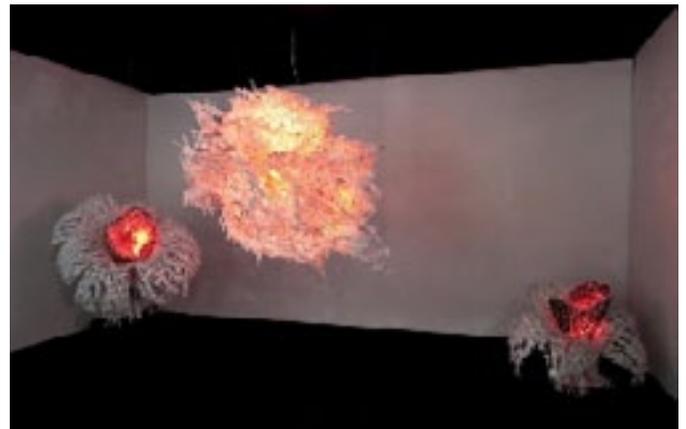
Soyeon Cho uses disposable materials to make delicate, dreamlike environments filled with light, movement, and color. By revealing the “hidden magic” in the most trivial things, Cho hopes to make people stop and think about the things they consume and discard so carelessly. Most of us don’t see much beauty in white plastic forks—it may take an artist like Cho to show us the possibility of beauty.

Soyeon Cho’s work is on view at our Kidspace gallery at MASS MoCA through September 5, 2011.



Cinderella Revealed (detail), 2008

via



Volta New York, 2010

via

Yong Ho Ji

Yong Ho Ji uses tires to create sculptures of animals—but these aren't animals that we can find in the real world. These are grotesque, monstrous, “mutant animals.” One sculpture, for instance, looks like a horse but has the hind legs of a cow and the tail of a chicken! These mutants may look scary, but they are actually vulnerable and insecure creatures that have trouble adapting, surviving, and reproducing in the existing environment. The fact that Yong Ho Ji uses tires, an industrial material, to create these mutants leads us to the question: Is he trying to warn us about what could happen if we continue to disrespect our environment?



Shark 6, 2008

via



Deer Head 3, 2007

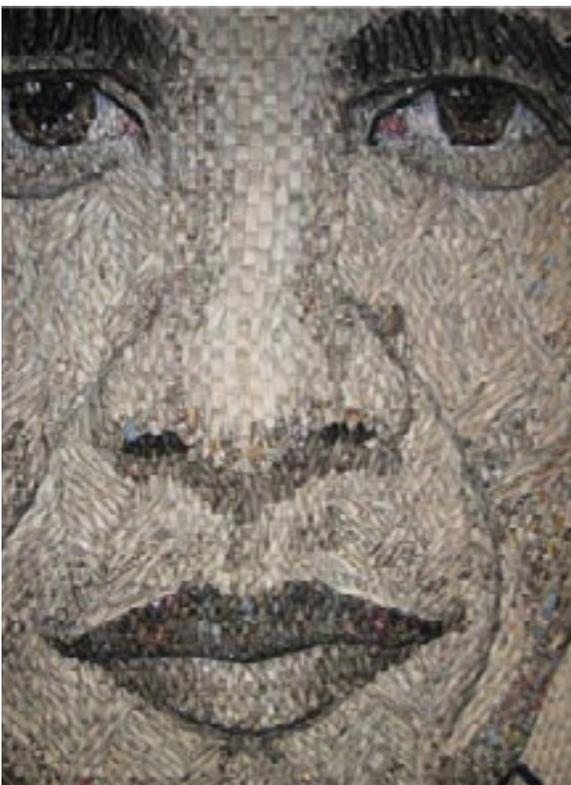
via





Gugger Petter

Gugger Petter has been using newspaper to make her artwork for the past 20 years. She doesn't think of the newspaper as trash, and has a profound respect for the medium, calling it "the diary of our lives." She usually uses the papers to create large-scale images of daily life, and each piece holds all of the world/local news from that particular time. So each newspaper is like a diary, a historic documentation of life, but the entire piece becomes a diary as well.



Obama

via



Woman with Small Brown Dog

via

At Home

What would YOU make?

Think about the objects around your house that will probably be thrown away or recycled. How could you use these things to create a work of art? Send your idea(s) or a photo of a piece you've made to [the Clark](#) with the subject line "El Anatsui Art Project," and we'll share your ideas on the [Clark's blog!](#)



All borders are details of *Intermittent Signals*, 2009. Found aluminum and copper wire, 11 x 35 ft. (335.3 x 1066.8 cm.) The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica [Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY] Photo by Michael Agee