MARNI STUART, JUNE 2021

# UNSUITABLE REPLACEMENT

## NON-TRADITION RESEARCH EVIDENCE

## *See and Seaing* Exhibition Booking Page

Melbourne Design Week Website

https://designweek.melbourne/events/see-and-seaing/

This page was hosted on the Melbourne Design Week page. It allowed vieweds to book into one of the five timespots available to see the exhibition online.

This page provided a brief synopsis for the exhibition and a list of participating artists.

## *See and Seaing* Exhibition Overview Page 1

During the 5 day event this page was available for viewing. The central image is the work Unsuitable Replacement.

By clicking on the image you are guided to view the image, didactic and video recording.

Sean Ryan's written text reflects upon Roland Barthes' critical essay on the miracle of plastic, as it was experienced in the 1950s, in the light of our present predicament.

Emma Blackmore looks closely at the practices of a community of friends to remind both them and us just how much plastic we consume in a short amount of time. Two weeks' worth of use and material collected amounts to a great many sequins and much decoration!

Angela Finn moves further to explore the juxtaposition of decoration and waste, investigating how we might bring value to making by drawing upon the traditional techniques of fashion design making to embellish garments with plastic.

Marni Stuart takes the plain single-use plastic bag and plants this amid the marshy landscape of her home on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, to remind us of the damage that is done to the environment by this material.

Jenny Bannister uses plastic bottles and containers, cutting and shaping them into fringing and using a skilled hand and eye to reshape this as a decorated, plasticated mini dress. Bannister sees the tops of bottles as particularly appealing and often uses this technique in her 'upcycled' garments.

A trip to Brazil in 2017 to visit Sao Paulo Fashion Week and to meet local fashion designers, craftspeople and educators has led to an ongoing friendship between S!X and Regina Bramos and her collective Brasilis. Both of us share a common interest in using craft and design to rethink and reshape how we might reuse discarded single-use plastic bags.

Across two continents and the sea between us, Brazil and Australia, both Southern hemisphere countries, face similar difficulties with the preservation of our natural environments, both on land and in the sea.

Each has challenges with the health of its river systems and oceans, Australia's personified by the decline of the Great Barrier Reef and in the case of Brazil its great Amazon river.

This mutual dance across continents and seas prompted S!X to invite others into the conversation, to express their thoughts on these issues through making. Our invitation was to ask them to create precious objects with the intention of shedding light on how the wasteful use of plastic has impacted our natural environment. And we aim to ask you to think twice before you lazily discard the plastic bags and packaging in which we are currently drowning, and to share your ideas about possible ways in which we might reconnect with and reform plastic waste and how we might transform it into items we might treasure as practitioners and consumers of fashion and design.

This group is small; we see it as a community of friends that will grow to include others who will also be encouraged to work with and question humble plastic within their future projects.

The projects in See and Seaing have taken on many forms. Participants were set a brief to respond to the theme of Melbourne Design Week 'Design the World you Want', with an emphasis on promoting sustainable living and design and on 'seaing' waste as a luxury.

The work of the Brasilis collective focuses on their shared experiences of plastic and its impact upon their immediate environments, and how this reflection has changed their making practice. Drawing upon ancestral memory, the piece gives us an insight into the poetry and power of words and stories to bring textiles to the foreground and to give us the space to respect them.

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S!X have collected shopping bags from past trips to France, Brazil, Tokyo and around Australia, as well as asking friends and family to donate what they have in their cupboards and sheds for us to reuse and recut.

We have traded in plastic rubbish from Brazil and exchanged theirs for ours, as a challenge to each other to transform this waste into items of luxury, things to be kept and not discarded.

The collection of images in Sea and Seeing includes plastic bags from Angelina's Tea Room, Galleries Lafayette, Tati, and Paul Boulangerie, all in Paris; Comme des Garçons, and Dean and Deluca, in Tokyo; and those traded with our Brazilian friends. The project has been ongoing since 2017-18 and was first shown during Melbourne Fashion Week at the National Trust property Tasma Terrace for the exhibition *The Sea Between Us*. This new iteration investigates different uses of plastic to decorate and transform garments. Some bags have been cut into motifs and bonded to a cloth base, others are combined with foil and stitching. Bags have been recut and collaged to shoes and some jewelry has been crotched using plastic.

S!X would like to thank the film and image makers that have contributed to this project: Dani Black for her thoughtful film piece capturing the SOS signal of RMS Titanic before its sinking, a shrilling sound to remind us all of the desperate situation in which we find ourselves; and Tiahane Frederic for capturing the repurposed plastic bags as shoe decoration. We are thankful for the expertise of Jira Models @jiramodels; the amazing creations of Simon Setter for hair @dukeofsetter; and makeup art by Bianca @biancakarena_mua whose creative works appear in images from the S!X runway show at Melbourne Fashion Week.

In particular, we wish to thank Angela Finn for her continued zest and support, and to all the artists and designers who have contributed to the project. S!X awaits the next chapter, in which you are all invited to participate.

SEE & SEAING

Overview Contact

Unsuitable Replacement
by Marni Stuart

The plastic bag dances in the wind on the sand dune. It is patterned with plants endemic to these sand dunes; Spinifex, Pigface, and Snake Vine.

The plastic bag takes space where once wildflowers flourished. It's form imitates what once was, but it's not the same. It's distracting us from our reckless destruction in the name of progress.

We once fought to protect these sand dunes. We now fight to protect our convenience.

Instagram: @marnistuart

## See and Seaing Exhibition
Artwork and didactic

After clicking on the Unsuitable Replacement image on the overview page, the viewer is directed to the artwork page that first shows the photograph and didactic.

## *See and Seaing* Exhibition
Overview Page 2

The curators shared a video message and written overviw of the ethos of exhibition and how each artwork addresses this.

***See and Seaing***
**Exhibition**
Video recording

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysIuTNm63Ks&t=3s

The base of the artwork page featured the video recording. The recording depicts the bag moving in the breeze and runs for 32 seconds.

## Evidence of previous practice

Marni Stuart is a surface pattern designer and design lecturer, her practice depicts the endemic plants of her Sunshine Coast home.

1.
**Golden Beach Container Cafe 2019,**
Cafe container painted in collaboration with Thomas Stuart

2.
**Coastal Banksia Towel 2019,**
Souveneir Towel created for the Sunshine Coast Council

3.
**Biocup design, 2020**
Design chosen as part of the of the Biocup Artist Series for environmentally focused artworks