



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (September 15, 2009)

Plastic Planet at AFS Gallery

Plastic Planet Group Exhibition, September 26th – October 24th 2009

Opening Reception on Saturday, September 26th 5:00 pm-7:00 pm

Panel Discussion- “How Did My Cell Phone End Up in China?” Friday, October 9th, 5:30 pm- 7:00 pm

AFS Gallery 302 East Cota St. Santa Barbara, CA 93101

AFS Gallery Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday: 10-2, Thursday 10-6.

CONTACT: Art From Scrap Artistic Director, Holly Mackay: (805) 884-0459 ext. 15 or EMAIL:

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SANTA BARBARA: On Saturday, September 26, the group exhibition *Plastic Planet* opens at the AFS Gallery with a reception from 5:00 pm-7:00 pm. According to Holly Mackay, AFS Artistic Director and curator of the exhibit, “*Plastic Planet* will explore through art some of the uses, reuses, abuses, and excesses of plastic in the environment. *Plastic Planet* celebrates the beauty and versatility of plastic while also hinting at its pervasiveness. The proliferation of plastic has had a profound effect on us all; facilitating beneficial creations and causing massive pollution problems on land and sea.”

The 16 artists participating in *Plastic Planet* are: Alver, Phil Argent, Michael Blaha, Jane Callister, Dianna Cohen, Emily Emanuel, Julia Ford, James Gilbert, Kimberly Hahn, Penny Mast McCall, Mary Price, Keith Puccinelli, Joan Tanner, Dug Uyesaka, James Van Arsdale, and Jen Vanderpool.

Mackay says that the artists in *Plastic Planet* are “a diverse group. Some of them work predominately in plastics, like James Gilbert and Dianna Cohen. Others, like Alver, Mary Price, and Dug Uyesaka use recycled, reused, and reclaimed materials. Julia Ford is a primarily a fiber artist. Michael Blaha works in collage and painting. These artists will no doubt inspire environmental exploration and creative

transformation of this omnipresent material. I'm interested in all of the different ways that they have incorporated plastic into their work.”

Many of the artists in the exhibition expressed ambivalence about using plastic as a medium in their art. Assemblage artist Dug Uyesaka notes that plastic is, “sadly, all too available in our throwaway society.” Photographer Kimberly Hahn, says, “It is a material that I must use as a photographer and which allowed photography to become more widespread and accessible to the masses. The thought of a "Plastic Planet" horrifies me, yet as plastic is such a part of our lives, the duality of its beneficial and negative uses does not escape me.”

Michael Blaha's piece, *Polymer Grid*, is “a large wall sculpture composed of a few thousand small plastic pieces.” Blaha explains, “The art I have made from plastic tends to have elements of humor, but handling and studying the myriad small pieces (ranging from parts of toys, to food and product containers, to small parts fabricated and molded for agriculture, construction and medicine) has helped allow me to realize just how serious and omnipresent it is.”

On the evening of Friday, October 9th, at 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm, as part of the *Plastic Planet* exhibition, AFS Gallery will host a Panel Discussion, “How Did My Cell Phone End Up in China?” Eric Lohela of the City of Santa Barbara Environmental Services and Russ Cutler of MarBorg Industries will speak about where our recycled materials go once they leave our recycle bins. Admission is free.

Mackay wants to acknowledge Marborg Industries, the primary sponsor of Plastic Planet. “We're extremely thankful for the generous financial support from Marborg that has made this exhibition possible. Plastic Planet is also sponsored in part by the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission and the Allergan Foundation. Our art programs need funding now more than ever. We are always grateful to our sponsors.”

About Art From Scrap: Art From Scrap is Santa Barbara's Environmental Education and Art Center. The AFS Gallery is located upstairs at Art From Scrap. Rotating shows hang throughout the year bringing together art lovers, collectors and local artists.

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