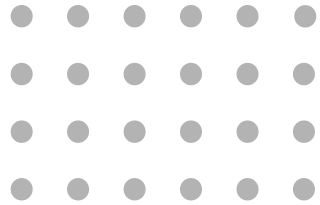




Making the Most of It

September 18 - November 19, 2007
Curated by Karen Shaw

Islip Art Museum



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Barton Lidice Benes

Zoe Brookes

Jim Dingilian

Elizabeth Duffy

Tamiko Kawata

Keith Long

Nava Lubelski

David Poppie

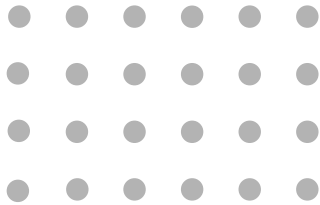
Mark Wagner

Andy Yoder



Curated by Karen Shaw

Making the Most of It



Just suppose that Pearl Paint, Utrecht and all the art supply stores in the country disappeared.

Oil paints—gone. Acrylics and mediums—poof. Canvas and pastels—pfsst.

The 10 artists in our exhibition, *Making the Most of It*, would be undaunted. All of them create the most imaginative, humorous work out of any materials at hand. They seem to make their remarkable creations out of what we would call “nothing”—the very things that most of the world throws away without a thought.

Elizabeth Duffy and **Tamiko Kawata** would do most of their gathering of materials from stationery stores. Office Depot or Staples might be the art supplier that provides the rubber bands for Kawata’s subversive paintings and sculptures, and the security envelopes, gum wrappers and pencil points for Duffy’s ingenious installations.

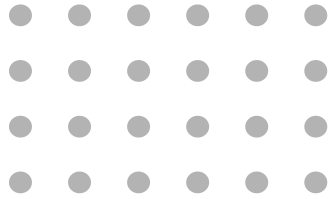
Zoe Brookes creates whimsical designer frocks from plastic bags and recycled plastic bottles.

Keith Long fashions are fashioned from furniture fragments he finds in the trash and then attaches to wooden hangers.

Andy Yoder’s installation is made from used books. His faux library shelves, with their disorganized, eclectic titles, comment on a society that can not distinguish great literature from trash—one that views books as just another design element.

David Poppie makes beautiful, spare works from matchbooks. Some pieces contain only the strikers, placed side by side to resemble flooring patterns and minimalist grids.

Mark Wagner’s intricate collages of dollar bills comes thanks to the U. S. Mint. The pieces are witty comments on the way the value of currency fluctuates, so much so that even a dollar in a heated economy could be considered trash.



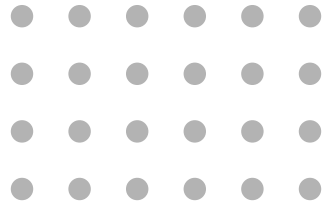
The IRS has given **Nava Lubelski** the materials she needs to fashion her intricate, lacy sculptures. In another wry take on money, she has created her work by shredding and rolling strips from her old tax forms.

Jim Dingilian makes magical pieces from smoke and empty whiskey bottles. He creates desolate scenes of parking lots and warehouses by filling bottles with smoke, then subtracting soot until a wispy, negative image of his tableau takes shape.

Barton Lidice Benes collects curious relics, both found and given to him, which he annotates and places in elaborate reliquaries—a modern-day version of medieval religious veneration.

The artists in *Making the Most of It* see the endless possibilities in trash and the potential for transformation in even the most abject material. In today's throw-away culture, they offer a lesson and an inspiration for all of us.

Karen Shaw
Curator

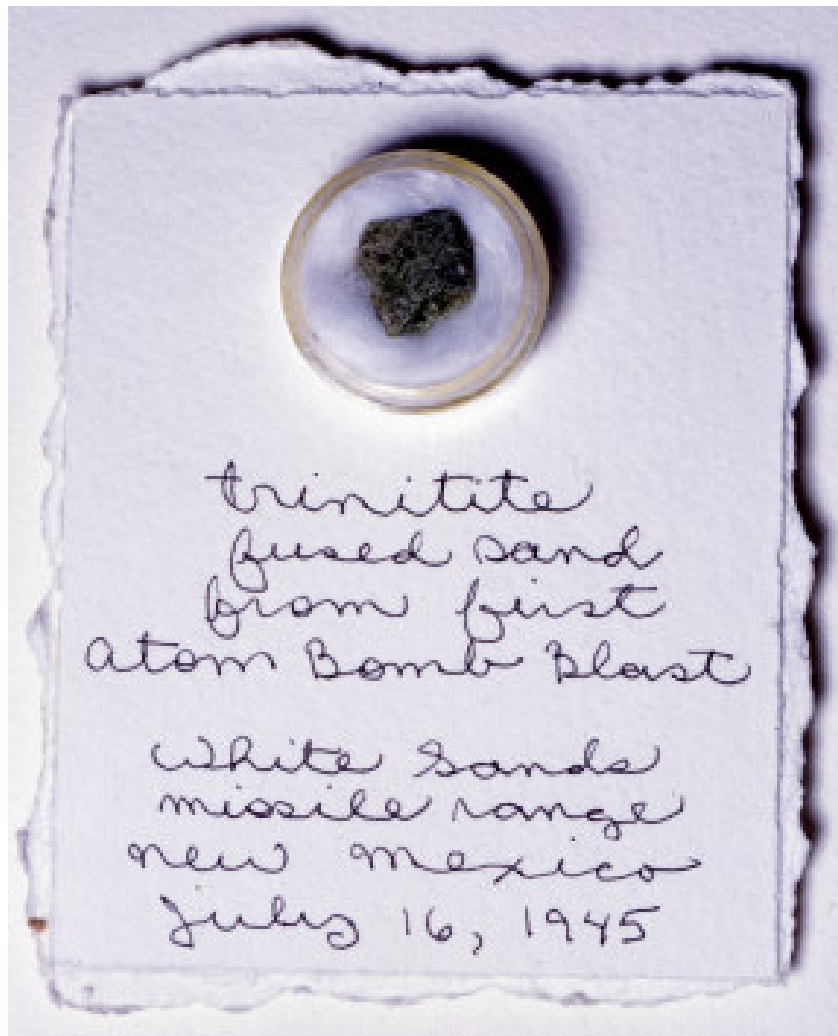


Artists Statements

Barton Lidice Benes

All of this started in 1963 when I stole a bone from the catacombs in Rome. I was very interested in relics and reliquaries. I no longer snatch the relics. Now there is a whole network of people that send me stuff instead. Everyday some kind of relic arrives in the mail sent by such a diverse group of people, like Millie the Hollywood manicurist to the stars who sent me Frank Sinatra's fingernail clippings, Vaclav Havel who saw my show in Prague and sent me his hair, etc., etc.

Each relic has a wonderful story that goes with it, and the relics are all real and documented.



Barton Lidice Benes
Sticks and Stones 2005
(Detail)
Hair, objects, paper, plexiglas
40" x 40"

Zoe Brookes

I make wearable costumes from trash. My first dress was inspired by the vast pile of Stop & Shop bags I amassed from just a week's groceries. Since then, I've turned a range of ready sources of trash into something to wear: take-out cartons, detergent bottles, toilet rolls, aluminum foil, or old car seat covers. Everything apart from the odd piece of tape or thread would otherwise have been thrown in the garbage.

Bag Lady Ball Gown is a design for a dressy ball gown made entirely from plastic grocery bags. I love how it swishes when you walk. My favorite materials are Target bags, but I am experimenting with others.

Donut Trash Babe is a much-worn favorite. I love the gaudy colors of Dunkin Donut trash, and, of course, you can find it anywhere.

Plastic Gladiator was a community project. Friends and neighbors donated all the containers and children helped to color the panels at a workshop in New Haven, CT.

I was born in England, but have made the US my home. I live in New Haven, but will be moving to the Philadelphia area in 2008. My training is in engineering—hence the fascination with new materials—and I've been making my own clothes since I was a child.

Professionally I am a community arts leader. My projects focus on bringing people together through visual and performance art and dance. My recycled costumes are intended to inspire others to try experimenting.

I also develop costumes for the New Haven Community Circus, which I direct. In our workshops and shows we encourage performers to think creatively about how materials, space and sound can be used for entertaining effect.



Zoe Brookes
Bag Lady Ball Gown
Target bags

Jim Dingilian

Much of my work involves the modification of found objects which function as indicators of history, chance and memory. I draw, etch, or erase images onto the surfaces of these mundane objects, resulting in fragile or ephemeral works of art that never obliterate their practical origins.

I have used candle smoke in the past to create faint drawings on silver trays. My work with empty glass bottles is the latest iteration of this process and adds even more challenge to working with this delicate medium. The drawings are created inside the bottles by first coating the inner surfaces with the smoke. I then use brushes and small implements mounted on the ends of dowels to reach inside and selectively erase certain areas. The smoke which remains on the glass forms the image.

The miniature scenes I depict are of locations on the edge of suburbia which seem mysterious or even slightly menacing despite their commonplace nature. The bottles add to the implied narratives of transgression. When found by the sides of roads or in the weeds near the edges of parking lots, empty liquor bottles are artifacts of consumption, delight, or dread. As art objects, they become hourglasses of sorts, their drained interiors now inhabited by dim memories.



Jim Dingilian
Lowly, Slowly 2006
Smoke, empty bottle

Elizabeth Duffy

In my work themes of transience and transformation resurface in objects and drawings made with labor-intensive methods. My sources are things we use in our daily routines—the overlooked remnants of our lives. Business envelopes, cleaning products, lint, straws and office supplies are accumulated and manipulated to bring out their alternate lives and to draw attention to what we use and discard.

I have always lived in urban settings and my neighborhood has been my art store; in its dollar stores, hardware and stationery stores I have found ways to create a parallel experience that echoes the transcendence the natural world bestows. Maps have become webs, straws beehives, pencils haystacks. My work encompasses sculpture, installation, and works on paper.

Since 2005 I have been collaborating with the artist Brian Miller. Our current project, *A Series of Minor Miracles*, explores everyday objects' particular power and resonance and links the domestic world of the 15th century to the present day through Jan Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*. Van Eyck paints his world with meticulous delicacy and reverence, infusing every article with meaning. The sculptures and photographs we are creating seek to recreate the intensity of that world within the contemporary reality of our own lives.



Elizabeth Duffy
Last Chance
Security envelopes, plastic line
(Installation detail)

Tamiko Kawata

Experiment and develop

To create works that are unknown and unseen

To search for my soul in depth

And communicate with others

I like to use hidden or unrecognized, valuable but overlooked things from our daily life for my works. I often choose materials that relate to my life closely.

My work often uses repetition and I like to create energy, sometimes chaos, within quiet stillness.



Tamiko Kawata
Secret Ederer 2007
Shredded paper
(Installation detail)

Keith Long

My work for the past few years has at times been figurative in content, or perhaps I should say, in preoccupation. By this, I don't mean that the forms of the finished pieces closely resemble exterior forms of the human body (although sometimes, surprisingly, this has been the case) but rather that my concerns at the time of form-making have focused themselves on the condition and status of the human individual.

Humans have always fashioned extensions to themselves in order to interface with the world as they perceive it or want it to be. My work is simply an attempt to actualize some of these desires and attitudes as I see them. The same might be said of many artists.

Part of this approach is also decidedly auto centric. I have been increasingly preoccupied with my inner workings – mental and physical. I have always felt a strong familial propriety towards my work; perhaps these pieces are progeny, born at least somewhat in my own image.

My compositional format for many years had been a kind of biological symmetry. I found that I could control the relationship of viewer to work in a way that I could not in an asymmetrical situation. Within such a format, small changes became strong visual and emotional tensions. This approach was so ingrained that now, when I am breaking the symmetry, it feels like a truly audacious thing to do.

I am drawn to using materials with tactile qualities that exhibit their own history. Building them into a sculpture allows them, phoenix-like, to rise again and add another chapter to their existence.



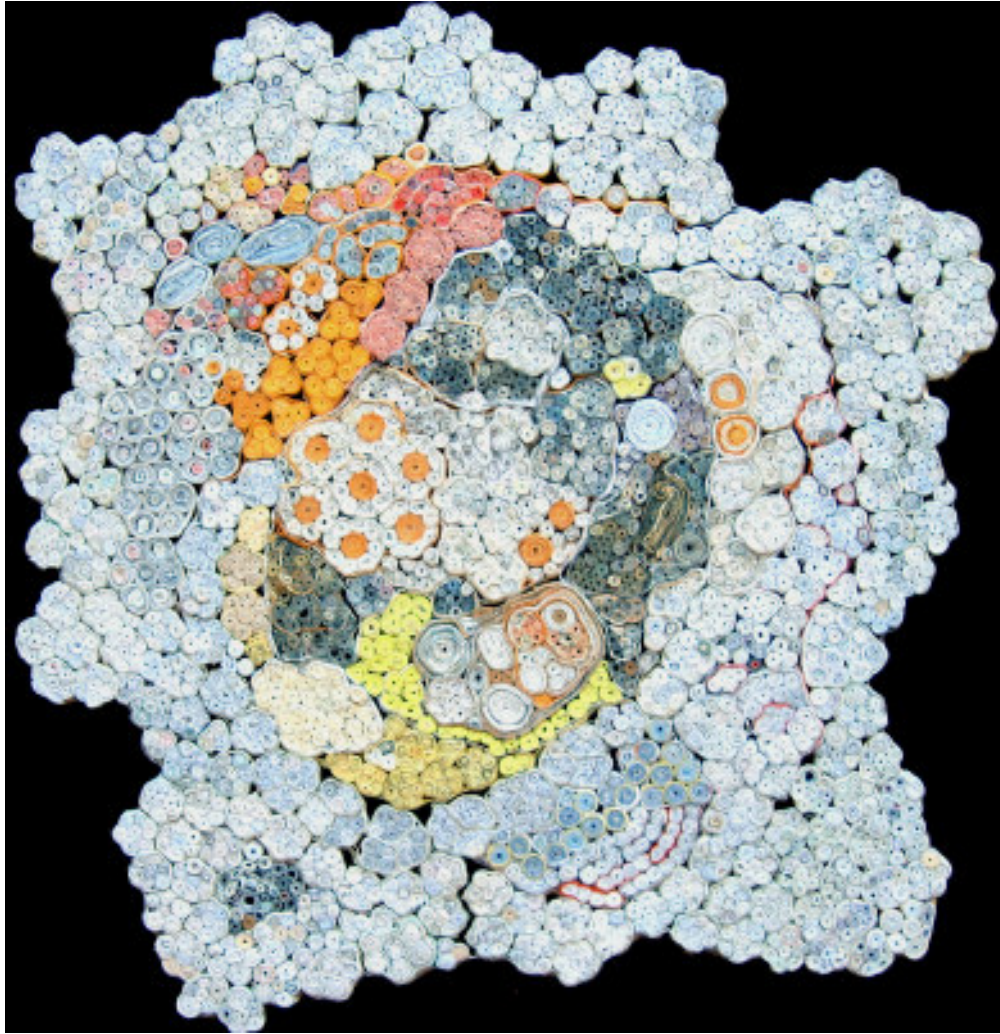
Keith Long
Ready to Wear
(Junior Miss Collection)
Found Wood
(Installation detail)

Nava Lubelski

My shredded paper sculptures, such as *Tax Files*, reconfigure a mass of paper that is grouped via the written content, into flat, coiled segments, reminiscent of tree cross-sections where the climate of a given year, and the tree's overall age are visible in a single slice.

In this case, information about a year can be read in the colors and clusters of bank deposit slips, pay stubs, receipts and tax forms. The manila envelopes, in which the records have been stored for seven years until shredding, are included. The cellular coils grow outward as they are glued together into a slab, the overall size of which demonstrates the quantity of paper according to a new yardstick, allowing direct physical comparison with other such units.

The re-use of paper, as well as the attempted "repair" of the long-lost tree, is an examination of feelings of despair about waste and sustainability. Simultaneously, the exercise of translating numbers back into a comprehensible, physical manifestation is an attempt to develop a tool for managing overwhelmingly large tallies, such as those we encounter regularly in reports on war or climate change.

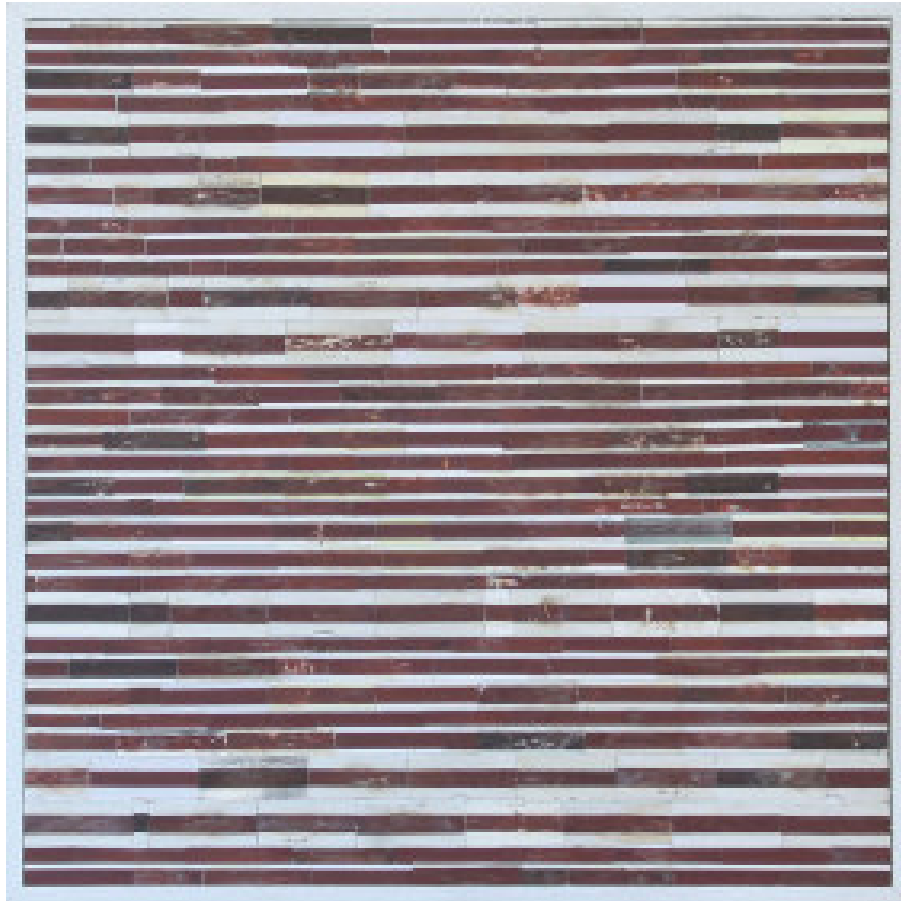


Nava Lubelski
1997 Tax File 2007
Shredded financial documents and glue
1/4" x 20" x 19"

David Poppie

My recent work involves the reclaiming of disposable objects in mass to create two and three dimensional works. Pieces can involve tea bags, matchbook strikes, plastic cutlery, etc. These items are generally discarded and ignored by the everyday person. Through the gathering of the discards of contemporary culture, I ask the viewer to reconsider the function and value of these objects. I also reassign their value by re-contextualizing them, and by creating a piece of art from them.

Besides utilizing the formal issues that interest me, based in the Minimalist school, I also am making a commentary on the disposable nature of contemporary culture.



David Poppie
(ec)static II 2006
Mixed media collage
12" x 12"

Mark Wagner

The one dollar bill is the most ubiquitous piece of paper in America. Collage asks the question: what might be done to make it something else? It is ripe material: intaglio printed on sturdy linen stock, covered in decorative filigree, and steeped in symbolism and concept. Exacto and glue transform it—reproducing the effects of tapestries, paints, engraving, mosaics, and computers—striving for something bizarre, beautiful and unbelievable...the foreign in the familiar.

My creative production includes work in many media, from writing and artist bookmaking to drawing, collage and assemblage. Though varied, this work is far from eclectic—forming several discrete bodies that both stand on their own and link in nature and theme to their counterparts.

In whatever media employed, I have a tendency toward meticulous production and solid geometric presentation. Usually fantastic, occasionally surreal, and often interdisciplinary—I am satisfied only when concept and craft meet on equally firm footing.



Mark Wagner
Girl with a Pearl Necklace 2006
Currency collage on panel
20" x 20"

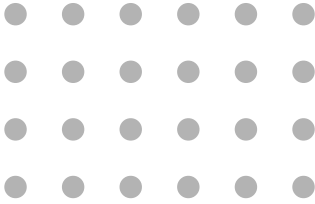
Andy Yoder

Many people take great comfort in the bathroom towels being the same color as the soap, toilet paper, and tiles. It means there is a connection between them and an environment of order. Home is a place not only of comfort, but of control. This sense of order, in whatever form it takes, acts as a shield against the unpredictability and lurking chaos of the outside world.

My work is an examination of the different forms this shield takes, and the thinking the lies behind it. I use domestic objects as the common denominator of our personal environment. Altering them is a way of questioning the attitudes, fears and unwritten rules which have formed that environment and our behavior within it.



Andy Yoder
Tall Shelves 1993
Found books, steel, wood, light



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Slate of the Arts



NYSCA

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