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2023 Exhibition Information Packet

On view through December 2023

Featuring artworks by
Natalie Kuenzi
Krystle Lemonias
Sharon Pierce McCullough

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1. Exhibition Information

*Upcycled* features works made by artists who repurpose commonplace, discarded, or unexpected materials to make detailed and surprising works of art.

Conservation has become an important topic when discussing ecological preservation, protecting the Earth’s natural resources, and adopting a more sustainable lifestyle. This exhibit explores how artists can upcycle everyday materials to not only promote sustainability and conservation within their artistic practice but also enhance the concepts embedded in their work.

The artists included in this exhibition reuse materials ranging from secondhand clothing, corrugated cardboard, pieces of plastic collected from city streets, and a variety of found objects. By using their skills to upcycle these objects, they create artworks that bring new life to what might otherwise be considered trash. The artwork on board the VanGo! denies the viewer’s expectations of fine art and opens a new world of possibilities!

Accompanying the artwork will be activity stations that offer students the opportunity to explore how they can repurpose objects they encounter in their daily lives and learn about different movements in Art History.

Beginning in March and ending in December of 2023, this exhibit will travel to schools and community events throughout the region onboard the VanGo! Museum on Wheels!
2. Natalie Kuenzi

Natalie Kuenzi is an interdisciplinary artist and educator based in Philadelphia, PA. Her work explores traditions of craft and art making that celebrate the artist and viewer as agents for radical change, transforming how we make and consume through reclamation, material innovation, and the liberating power of imagination.

(Note: This image is from a prior installation. *We the Flower Field* will be appear differently onboard the VanGo.)

Natalie Kuenzi

*We the Flower Field*, 2018 – 19

Reclaimed plastic and porcelain
Her work consists of plastic bags crocheted into bold abstractions and expansive landscapes, depicting earth, water, space, and text. She takes an environmentally hazardous byproduct of consumerist convenience and reimagines it for a new practical purpose with optimistic potential. By repurposing discarded materials, Kuenzi aims to disrupt attitudes of taking-and-wasting and offers opportunities for creative reuse and expression.

(Note: This image is from a prior installation. *We the Flower Field* will appear differently onboard the VanGo.)
Kuenzi’s family has a long history of creative craft processes such as weaving and crochet, and she honors her family tradition by incorporating them into her artistic practice. By crocheting discarded materials to create her pieces, Kuenzi challenges the hierarchy of fine art over craft and the expectation that art is only made using costly and exclusive materials.

(Note: This image is from a prior installation. Portal may appear differently onboard the VanGo.)

Natalie Kuenzi

Portal, 2019

Reclaimed plastic
3. Krystle Lemonias

Krystle Lemonias is an interdisciplinary visual artist, labor activist, and art educator, based in New Jersey. She uses found materials, fabrics, printmaking methods, and iconography to stitch together themes of class, gender, citizenship, and domestic labor with personal narratives.

Krystle Lemonias

*Go deh my girl!, 2023*

baby clothes, the artist’s clothes, upholstery fabric, produce mesh, relief print on upholstery
After moving to the United States from Jamaica, both Lemonias and her mother eventually took positions working in other families’ homes, often caring for their children. She repurposes discarded clothing from the children they cared for, as well as her own, to draw attention to individuals who perform domestic work.

She aims to tell the story of Black immigrant women’s work, which is often unseen and untold, and to highlight the important role their labor plays in today’s world.
4. Sharon Pierce McCullough

Sharon Pierce McCullough is a multidisciplinary artist based out of Cashtown, Pennsylvania, whose practice includes painting, drawing, and sculpture. She is an ecologically conscious artist, and her work is constantly evolving through her experimentation with recycled and natural materials.

Sharon Pierce McCullough

*Shades of Blue, 2021*

recycled cardboard, paint, glue, reverse side of a found wooden frame
“Experimentation is at the forefront of my mind during the creative process. My practice thrives on the juxtaposition of incongruent colors and materials, often working intuitively with recycled and natural materials.”

- Sharon Pierce McCullough

These pieces offer two different methods of transforming an everyday material into a work of art. Whether she peels away layers from a recycled cardboard box to reveal the corrugation, a part of the object that is not often seen, or she flattens it and adorns the surface with vibrant and colorful paints. These pieces demonstrate how discarded materials have much more potential beyond the landfill.