

ARTSPACE MACKAY
24 JAN - 19 APR 2020

HERVEY BAY
REGIONAL GALLERY
1 MAY - 7 JUN 2020

KICKARTS
CONTEMPORARY ARTS
6 AUG - 26 SEP 2020

UMBRELLA STUDIO
CONTEMPORARY ARTS
13 OCT - 15 NOV 2020

DISQUIET: ECOLOGICAL ANXIETIES & TRANSFOR MATIONS

A necklace made of driftwood and rope, with a yellow rope loop at the top and colorful braided sections.

BARBARA DOVER + ROBYN GLADE-WRIGHT

THE KNOWLEDGE THAT, EVERY YEAR, MILLIONS OF TONNES OF PLASTIC ARE DISCARDED INTO THE ENVIRONMENT, AND THAT THIS PLASTIC IS FOUND EVERYWHERE FROM DEEP OCEAN FLOORS TO HIGH MOUNTAIN RANGES, GIVES US RISE TO FEELINGS OF ANXIETY, ANGUISH AND GRIEF.



TOP LEFT: Barbara Dover, *Plasticky sea urchin*, 2018, 20 x 30 x 30 cm; TOP RIGHT: Barbara Dover, *Discards: Specimen 3*, 2018, 15 x 30 x 15 cm

The touring exhibition, *Disquiet: Ecological Anxieties and Transformations*, initiates consideration of and conversations about challenging questions regarding our use of natural resources, emissions and consumption as well as how waste is processed or discarded and how these practices impact the environment. We use plastic marine debris that has been found washed up on the beaches of far north Queensland to create works of art which amplify and raise questions about the pollutants' resulting destruction.

Most of the plastics ever produced still exist in some form because they do not biodegrade; they simply break into smaller pieces.¹ Small plastic particles accumulate in the oceans forming an underwater "smog" that enters the food chain when it is ingested by plankton and marine creatures.² The brightly coloured, spiky work of art by Dover, *Plasticky Sea Urchin*, constructed from used and discarded plastic packaging tags, suggests that marine creatures might one day be composed of plastics. Glade-Wright's *Plastic Time*, a glass timer containing small particles of plastic smog in place of sand, evokes the idea that the human impact or footprint can be measured over time by the ever-increasing quantity of plastic in the air, land and sea. Large pieces of plastic are swept by rotating currents, winds and tides into enormous gyres such as the Great Pacific garbage patch, a mass the size of France and Spain combined.³

It is difficult to comprehend the volume of plastic waste in the ocean, and it is even more concerning to discover that waste is illegally dumped. This concern is referenced in the work *Dump* by Glade-Wright, where ghostly silver boat structures metaphorically carry a toxic plastic litter payload out to sea. Glade-Wright's *Coast*, created from three hundred and thirty discarded cigarette lighters collected by volunteers from international marine debris removal and prevention initiative *Tangaroa Blue Foundation*, are arranged to form a map of Australia. Its shape indicates that our pristine beaches are now sullied by plastic waste.

Research shows that by 2050 the weight of plastic in the ocean will be greater than the weight of all marine

creatures.⁴ Plastics harm turtle species, as lamented in the work *Hatchlings* by Dover.⁵ These small deformed turtles, made from hard hats and assorted plastic fragments which have floated great distances in the ocean, expose the damage caused by their spoiled marine environment. The reality of sea creatures living in polluted environments is also represented in works such as Dover's *Decoy*. The sea creature is formed from plastic and metal lures (hooks used by the fishing industry to catch squid) that have drifted hundreds of kilometres in ocean currents, finally being carried onto Queensland's coasts.

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The intricate symmetry of the specimen also unsettles and confronts given the suggestion that ocean creatures might be composed of discarded plastics and metal waste. In the series *Choke* by Glade-Wright, the physical weight of plastic pollution symbolically hangs around the neck. The jewel-like beauty of the necklaces is contradicted by the horrid nature of the material from which they are fashioned.

Research indicates that microplastics are found in most foods intended for human consumption. According to research released in 2019, humans ingest around 5 grams—



TOP LEFT: Barbara Dover, *Suffocate*, 2018, 26 x 26 x 45 cm; TOP MIDDLE: Barbara Dover, *Discards: Specimen 1*, 2018, 15 x 30 x 15 cm & *Cape Specimen*, 2018, 15 x 30 x 15 cm; TOP RIGHT: Barbara Dover, *Plasticene hatchlings*, 2018, 20 x 20 x 40 cm each [15 "hatchlings" total]

or the weight of a credit card—in plastic each week.⁶ Ingested plastics cause harm because they contain toxic chemicals, which can cross the placenta and blood brain barrier, amass in the brain, liver and other tissues altering genes and, potentially, affect the central nervous system causing cell death, reducing fertility and lowering rates of survival.⁷ Glade-Wright's perturbing *Catch of the Day* implies that the fish we net have ingested plastic and this plastic might form a part of our next meal: the throw-away plastic knives and forks have become our food too.

Disquiet: Ecological Anxieties and Transformations interrogates the ecological conundrums, concerns and issues of marine and coastal plastic pollution. The exhibition provides a space for deliberation and discussion in response to the pressures on the ecology of the planet wrought by plastic pollution. The works of art convey and express the impact of plastics on the marine environment by using the actual discarded marine debris as construction material. We live in critical times in terms of preserving the ecology of the earth, including the plant life and animals with whom we share the planet. With its increasing threat to human and ecological health, cleaning up toxic plastic waste and finding new biodegradable materials which can replace plastics has become pressing. As with our efforts in this exhibition, the changes that individuals make form a collective, uniting with populations of regions and countries, to transform the current ecological disquiet.



BOTTOM LEFT: Barbara Dover, *Decoy*, 2018, 35 x 35 x 25 cm; BOTTOM MIDDLE: Robyn Glade-Wright, *Choke: Floats IV*, 2018, 80 x 25 x 5 cm; BOTTOM RIGHT: Robyn Glade-Wright, *Choke: Mandala*, 2018, 90 x 25 x 5 cm

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All photography by Michael Marzik

COVER IMAGE: Robyn Glade-Wright, *Choke: Floats II*, 2018, 150 x 50 x 5 cm

BACK COVER WATERMARK: Robyn Glade-Wright, *Choke: Floats I*, 2018, 150 x 50 x 5 cm

DISQUIET ECOLOGICAL ANXIETIES & TRANSFORMATIONS

TOURING EXHIBITION 2020

BARBARA DOVER

<i>Deep Light</i>	2019	160 x 80 x 80 cm	Squid hooks, chain, electric light
<i>Plasticene Hatchlings</i>	2018	20 x 20 x 40 cm each 15 "hatchlings" total	Plastic debris collected from far north Queensland beaches, nylon, tape
<i>Decoy</i>	2018	35 x 35 x 25 cm	Squid hooks collected from far north Queensland beaches, metal, glue
<i>Plasticky Sea Urchin</i>	2018	20 x 30 x 30 cm	Plastic packaging tags collected from far north Queensland beaches, metal
<i>Predacious Blue, Predacious Green</i>	2019	35 x 35 x 35 cm each, 2 pieces	Plastic debris collected from far north Queensland beaches, wire
<i>Suffocate</i>	2018	26 x 26 x 45 cm	Found plastic rope collected from far north Queensland beaches, found marine charts, glass bell jar, cast resin
<i>Discards: Specimen 1</i>	2018	15 x 30 x 15 cm	Glass dome, found paper, plastic debris collected from far north Queensland beaches
<i>Cape Specimen</i>	2018	15 x 30 x 15 cm	Glass dome, squid hooks collected from far north Queensland beaches
<i>Discards: Specimens 2 & 3</i>	2018	15 x 30 x 15 cm each, 2 pieces	Glass dome, found plastic tuna tags collected from far north Queensland beaches
<i>Bird of Paradise</i>	2019	60 x 30 x 30 cm	Found objects, - metal bird cage, glass dome & plastic debris collected from far north Queensland beaches
<i>Undercurrent</i>	2019	150 x 250 x 5 cm	Video, found plastic floats collected from far north Queensland beaches
<i>Ocean Mix</i>	2019	16 x 155 x 8 cm	Found objects, Perspex, plastic pieces ("underwater smog") collected from far north Queensland beaches
<i>Marine Bloom</i>	2018	220 x 175 x 175 cm	Plastic thongs collected from far north Queensland beaches, found fishing rods, found metal stand

ROBYN GLADE-WRIGHT

<i>Red Tide</i>	2016	110 x 80 x 80 cm	Found plastic buoy and rope washed up on FNQ beaches, pastel, light
<i>Coast</i>	2016	300 x 180 x 5 cm	330 discarded cigarette lighters found washed up on FNQ beaches, perspex
<i>Plastic Time</i>	2018	54 x 13 x 13 cm	Glass vases, found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, nylon, glue
<i>Dump</i>	2018	90 x 90 x 12 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, palm seed cases, paint
<i>Catch of the Day</i>	2019	100 x 40 x 10 cm each, 3 pieces	Plastic cutlery, glue, spray paint
<i>Lampton's Soup</i>	2019	120cm x 160 cm	12 Digital Images
<i>Choke: Floats I</i>	2018	150 x 50 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Floats II</i>	2018	150 x 50 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Rope</i>	2018	90 x 24 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Floats III</i>	2018	90 x 25 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Mandala</i>	2018	90 x 25 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Floats IV</i>	2018	80 x 25 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Spades</i>	2018	50 x 20 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Infinity</i>	2018	50 x 20 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Bottles</i>	2018	50 x 20 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Plastic Sediment</i>	2018	50 x 20 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Tops</i>	2018	50 x 20 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Floats V</i>	2018	80 x 20 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope
<i>Choke: Net</i>	2018	250 x 20 x 5 cm	Found plastic debris washed up on FNQ beaches, rope

