



Trashmagination Podcast #81 – Recycled Art Sculpture Trails

Welcome to Trashmagination, a podcast about reimagining trash. I'm Carla Brown.

Today we'll talk about a great community building idea and marketing idea for your town. It is called a recycled art sculpture trail. Instead of hosting an arts festival in one area, people experience art along a trail – maybe in a downtown area or along a hiking trail. Maybe hearing about these trails, you will be inspired to make one in your area. It certainly got me thinking about what local botanical garden I could convince to let me build giant recycled art sculptures!

One interesting point about hosting a recycled art sculpture trail is that you need to protect the work from weather and vandalism. The sculptures have to be designed to be strong enough to last. Here are five ways these events tackle this:

- 1) They host the trail in busy places – spots with heavy foot traffic even at night – so someone is always able to keep an eye on the sculptures.
- 2) They host the trail in parks, botanicals gardens or on museum grounds where the gates can be closed at night.
- 3) They build sculptures that would be difficult to damage, such as those built from wood or welded metal.
- 4) They make sculptures that can be moved inside at night.
- 5) They offer the trail only a very short time like one or two days.

Another interesting point about these trails is that some are made by lots of artists while others are made all by one artist. So whether you are part of a community organization or whether you are an individual artist, there is more than one way to make a recycled art sculpture trail.

And today I'm going to focus on sculptures made from recycled plastic, wood and metal. There are trails that recycle natural materials on art trails, which is very cool. But I'll focus on plastic, wood and metal today.

Trails and Vistas (Nevada, USA)

I first became acquainted with the idea of showing art along a trail through an organization called Trails and Vistas which hosts annual art hikes in the Lake Tahoe area [<https://www.trailsandvistas.org/>]. I met the founder Nancy Tieken Lopez in 2010. The Trails and Vistas hikes take place over two days in September. All along the trails there are artists creating magical moments – musicians, dancers, people wearing incredible costumes as well as visual art pieces. In 2019, it's happening on September 6 and 7. They also do a huge concert and a field trip program for third graders called Dreaming Tree. This event is not focused on recycled art sculptures but I wanted to mention it because it was the first time I heard about showing art on a trail, and many of their past costumes were made from recycled materials.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cDvZUCHHLs> – Dreaming Tree program

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyfJLuHa6VQ>

Sculpture By the Sea (Bondi & Cottesloe Beaches, Australia)

The next sculpture trail I'll talk about is called Sculpture by the Sea [<https://sculpturebythesea.com/>]. It is the world's largest free public sculpture exhibition and it has been happening since 1997. It takes place in two parts of Australia currently. Each October and November, it is at Bondi (Bond-eye) Beach near Sydney. Then in March, it is in Cottesloe (Cot-is-slow) near Perth in Western Australia.

Most of the sculptures are not made from recycled materials, but here are my favorites made from recycled materials.

The first is by Georgina Humphries called Groundswell. She collected tents and nylon fabric at festivals, then sewed them into a series of pyramid shapes, all attached together. She hangs them on a hill going down to the beach. When the wind blows up the hill from the ocean, it causes the pyramids to stand up tall. When the wind blows down the hill, it causes the pyramids to all point down. This sculpture is very colorful and always moving

[\[https://youtu.be/cKV151Yohc4\]](https://youtu.be/cKV151Yohc4).

The next is a sculpture by Sherry Paddon. She built a tent out of stuffed toys that she gathered from “op shops” – that is what Australians call thrift or secondhand shops.

The next is a sculpture by Kerrie Argent called Over-Consumption. She built five sculptures from plastic caps all connected with zip ties. They represent the huge gyres in the ocean where ocean currents have swept huge amounts of plastic trash. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNVUNs1Xr84> She also made a sculpture called Homeless from recycled textiles that looked like a series of five patchwork tents.

Here’s an idea from this event that you might consider if you organized a similar event. They host Tactile Tours, which are tours for people with visual impairments or other challenges who would benefit from touching the sculptures [\[https://sculpturebythesea.com/tactile-tours-at-sculpture-by-the-sea-bondi/\]](https://sculpturebythesea.com/tactile-tours-at-sculpture-by-the-sea-bondi/). Most trails don’t encourage people to touch the sculptures to reduce damage, although I’m sure it happens all the time because it is the nature of these trails that they are not always supervised.

Teignmouth Recycled Art in the Landscape or TRAIL (South Devon, UK)

The next recycled art sculpture trail is in the UK, and it’s called the Teignmouth (TIN-muth) Recycled Art in the Landscape [\[https://www.trailart.co.uk/\]](https://www.trailart.co.uk/). If you take the first letter of each word in that name, it spells the word “trail.” This event has been happening for 15 years in South Devon. Like Sculpture by the Sea, the sculptures are on a trail along a sea front. The trail is open from July 27 to September 1 and in addition, there are gallery exhibits. The trail incorporates visual art, performance pieces and fashion and the whole event ends in an arts festival. This year they made a giant fish out of discarded fishing rods, an old swing set and chicken wire called Rodney Gobbler. People put single-use plastic bottles inside his mouth to be recycled. You can vote for your favorites online [\[https://www.trailart.co.uk/vote-here/\]](https://www.trailart.co.uk/vote-here/). My favorite is the Teignmouth (TIN-muth) Horse by Steve Yeates. It is metal horse that gallops when the wind blows [\[https://www.trailart.co.uk/steve-yeates-matthew-blount/\]](https://www.trailart.co.uk/steve-yeates-matthew-blount/). The legs of the horse are attached a wind turbine made from a recycled metal oil drum [\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYNo5EzqtYk\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYNo5EzqtYk).

The next two recycled art sculpture trails are on the east coast of the US and they are happening this summer!

Aglow by Aurora Robson (Philadelphia, PA, USA)

The first is by one of my absolute favorite plastic creative reuse artists, Aurora Robson. She is Canadian-American like me! Her sculptures involve taking plastic trash and shaping it into abstract shapes. This summer until August 24, she has an exhibit called Aglow at the Schuylkill (SKOO-kil) Center for Environmental Education near Philadelphia, PA [\[http://www.schuylkillcenter.org/art/?ha_exhibit=aglow-aurora-robson\]](http://www.schuylkillcenter.org/art/?ha_exhibit=aglow-aurora-robson). These sculptures light up at dusk.

Birds on Broadway (New York City, NY, USA)

In New York City, there is an exhibit by Nicolas Holiber called Birds on Broadway: The Audubon Sculpture Project [\[https://www.nicolasholiber.com/birdsonbroadway\]](https://www.nicolasholiber.com/birdsonbroadway). It opened in May 2019 and will continue until January 2020. This trail is presented in partnership with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation and NYC Audubon. It features ten huge wooden sculptures of birds. These bird species all live in New York City or fly through it on their migratory routes, and they are all impacted by climate change. He built them from reclaimed wood from shipping pallets found around New York City. When I was in New York in June, I saw one of the sculptures. They are all located along Broadway starting at 64th Street all the way to 157th Street. That is a five-mile walk. [\[https://youtu.be/oxR30SjlwZ8\]](https://youtu.be/oxR30SjlwZ8)

Thomas Dambo (Copenhagen, Denmark; Chicago, USA; Mexico City, Mexico and MORE)

If you love the birds on Broadway made from reclaimed lumber, then you must get acquainted with the recycled art sculptures of Thomas Dambo. I have mentioned him in many previous episodes – I am a super fan! He builds huge wooden sculptures all over the world from reclaimed lumber. Two of his sculpture trails are in his home country of Denmark or at the Morton Arboretum in Chicago [<https://www.mortonarb.org/events/troll-hunt>]. In both places, he built a series of sculptures hidden in the vegetation and rocks, and you can search for them.

The trolls in Denmark are called the Six Forgotten Giants [<https://thomasdambo.com/works/forgotten-giants/>]. Thomas was hired by the municipalities of west Copenhagen to build the giants in more hidden areas of local parks to encourage people to explore. These sculptures were not the first wooden giants he had built. He had built giants around the world. But this was the first time he made a trail of them. Later the Morton Arboretum hired him to build six trolls (not giants) and they now have a similar experience until January 2020. One of my favorites is throwing giant rocks on an old car.

Besides building trails with giants and trolls, Thomas has also built a garden in Mexico City from plastic flowers and creatures called The Future Forest. There is a trail through this garden. This is one of my favorite sculptures of all time. Thomas makes a lot of videos of how he builds the sculptures, and he is hilarious, so I highly recommend his Youtube channel when you have a few hours.

The Forgotten Giants - <https://youtu.be/NjmR2zueoYg>

Troll Hunt - <https://youtu.be/L6Bx4Lxpqik>

The Future Forest - https://youtu.be/XTC8ie_HB5c

Patrick Amiot & Brigitte Laurent (Sebastapol, CA, USA)

Another recycled art sculpture artist with a big sense of humor is Patrick Amiot. He's another Canadian who moved to the United States just like myself and Aurora Robson who I already mentioned. Patrick and his wife Brigitte Laurent make very large metal sculptures [<http://patrickamiot.com>] in Sebastapol which is in northern California. My favorites are the ones that were clearly influenced by Patrick's Canadian heritage such as the Mounties and the Toronto Maple Leafs goalie. In 2001, Patrick put his first giant sculpture on his front lawn. He knew it was likely someone would come and tell him to remove it. But instead his neighbors loved it, and since then, he has made a series of huge sculptures for each of his neighbors' lawns. Now their street has become a tourist attraction. For three blocks on Florence Avenue, people can see the many hilarious recycled art sculptures made from all kinds of metal including car parts, pots, irons, giant metal cans and more. Patrick builds the sculptures and Brigitte paints them.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5uL4WFoD2o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wgej0AvyCsc>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BkT5cmAgS8F/> - Mountie

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BmPm8kbFWza/> - Toronto Maple Leaf hockey player

Washed Ashore (Many locations around North America)

The most impressive recycled art sculpture trail I have ever visited in person is called Washed Ashore. These are very large sculptures of ocean wildlife all made from trash that washed up on beaches [<https://washedashore.org/>]. I first talked about this work in episode 42 which was about Beach Trash. The artist behind this trail is Angela Haseltine Pozzi (Pote-see). This exhibit is currently showing in many zoos and other facilities around North America, including Arkansas, Oklahoma, Ontario, Oregon and Utah. The pieces have travelled all over.

PBS Newshour Report - https://youtu.be/wNEJhPj_yUY

Creating Equilibrium Exhibit (Lake Tahoe, NV, USA)

Other recycled art sculpture artists focus on the theme of wildlife also. Gilles Cenazondotti (SEN-a-ZON-do-TEE) [https://www.contessagallery.com/artist/Gilles_Cenazondotti/works/7136] also makes wildlife sculptures with plastic he finds at the beach. In 2017, his work was displayed in an area near Lake Tahoe on a recycled art sculpture trail as part of an environmental festival called Creating Equilibrium [<https://creatingequilibrium.com/village>]. To make his sculptures, he first sculpts a piece of polyurethane foam and then covers it with plastic pieces found on the beach.

Gilles sculptures - <https://youtu.be/Y0h9rddBahs>

Feline sculptures - <https://www.instagram.com/p/BYMnwRmBQKT/>

Remarkable Recycling Gala (Beeston, Nottingham, UK)

Michelle Reader [<http://www.michelle-reader.co.uk/>] makes animal sculptures from plastic and I first heard about her work this month when her sculptures were at the Remarkable Recycling Gala [<https://remarkablerecyclinggala.weebly.com/>] a few weeks ago in Nottingham in the UK. According to her website, the sculptures are now featured at local sites such as the Marwell Zoo [<https://www.marwell.org.uk/zoo/>]. Michelle sculpts many items beyond wildlife including a car from Nespresso capsules in 2017. I'll have to add that to my Pinterest board for creative reuse of coffee packaging!

Badger - <https://www.instagram.com/p/BzkhXbZh--p/>

Meerkat - https://www.instagram.com/p/BluZxC_AiXQ/

Her account - <https://www.instagram.com/michelle3duk/>

Overview of Michelle's work - <https://youtu.be/J2Gz0JqGzkk>

Recycled Sculpture Trail (Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland)

In the town of Paisley in Scotland, there is an animal-themed sculpture trail built by Kevin Cantwell [<https://paisleyfirst.com/project/animal-recycled-sculpture-trail/>]. Paisley is located west of Glasgow. It looks like most of his sculptures are made from recycled tires, including a panda, a bumblebee on a thistle and a ladybug.

Scottish Deer - <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bvzjx8kHqvi/>

Catskill Interpretive Center (Mt. Tremper, NY, USA)

The last recycled art sculpture trail is at the Catskill Visitor Center in New York [catskillinterpretivecenter.org]. It includes a hilarious sculpture by Adrian Landon of a dung beetle pushing a giant sphere of trash. In the sphere there are plastic shopping carts and lots of other trash. I love a recycled art sculpture with a sense of humor! Adrian said the sculpture was about how this sculpture represents "humanity's need to recycle¹." I hope this dung beetle and all the wildlife sculptures I mentioned today have inspired you to recycle!

Dung Beetle Sculpture - <https://www.instagram.com/p/BVOC9EEnqiy/>

Thank you!

Thank you for listening! Please let me know about any more recycled art sculpture trails by contacting me at trashmagination@gmail.com. Until next time – may you see recycled art sculpture trails as a source of art in your life!

¹ <http://www.sculptureforleonia.org/about-us/education/>