

RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY

For Immediate Release

Just one word...Plastics

July 24 – September 11, 2021

[In-gallery + Online]



Each minute [one million plastic bottles](#) are used around the world [Reuters]. “... and every minute a chance to change the world...” Dolores Huerta [labor leader, civil rights activist, and catalyst of the environmental-justice movement].

Acknowledging our concern for wildlife, planetary sustainability, and the overwhelming impact of environmental injustice – particularly low income and people of color – the Rena Bransten Gallery is pleased to announce our membership in the [Gallery Climate Coalition](#).

Inspired by ecological heroism, we present **Just one word...Plastics**, an exhibition including work by Tony Cragg, Mark Dion, Guillermo Galindo, Richard Lang and Judith Selby Lang, Chip Lord, Susan Middleton, Vik Muniz, Mansur Nurullah, Aaron Siskind, and William T. Wiley. The exhibition will be accompanied by a small shop of zero-waste, ecologically sound, common household goods. The title is taken from a line in *The Graduate* (1967), a piece of advice from the old guard encouraging a lucrative career and extolling this new material and its many promises. In retrospect we see the advice as both naïve and sinister – a foreshadowing of environmental disaster.

The works in this exhibition all operate with an underlying principle of transformation, transcending the materiality or image. Works by Richard Lang + Judith Selby Lang, Chip Lord, Susan Middleton, and William T. Wiley speak directly to environmental issues, while others reference waste or reuse abstractly. Guillermo Galindo’s *Gun shell ceremonial Aztec ankle rattle* (2015) is designed based on the rattles worn by Aztec warrior dancers, originally made either of seashells or hollow seeds. Galindo’s piece instead uses empty border patrol gun shells which are joined together with rubber from inner tires used by immigrants to float across the Rio Grande in Laredo, Texas. The sound the ankle rattles make is beautiful, like running water. Susan Middleton’s *Albatross Stomach Contents*

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(2005/2015) shows a collection of small items meticulously arranged with the sensibility of an archive, contrasted with the exquisite perfection of a pristine seascape *Kure Atoll* exploring refuse and refusal, our intentional ignorance as we continue to be lured by comforts and conveniences. Vik Muniz's *Aftermath* series juxtaposes the detritus following a festival in Rio with portraits of street children – reminding us that waste and pollution inordinately target society's most vulnerable.

Each work requires a consideration of justice and acknowledges that “Every moment of the present contains the seeds of opportunity for change.” - Dr. John Frances

[Above image: still from *The Graduate* (1967)]