



SEA CHANGE

October 20 - December 9, 2017

Aurora Robson: The Tide is High

Chris Jordan: Midway

h HALSEY INSTITUTE
OF CONTEMPORARY ART
at THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

 South Carolina
Aquarium

SEA CHANGE

Artists often compel us to look more deeply at the world around us, and challenge us to critically examine the underlying structures that give rise to certain issues. The challenge of reducing the flow of plastics into our oceans will require a sustained engagement, international cooperation, and, most importantly, individual commitment by all of us to realize our own culpability and enact behaviors that literally change the sea.

Chris Jordan and Aurora Robson are two of the most prominent artists working at the intersection of art, science, and environmental activism today. Both have created meaningful works that have advanced our thinking and enriched our conversations about environmental topics. It is with pleasure that we partner with the South Carolina Aquarium to bring these two artists together in Charleston for a joint exhibition and series of educational events around ocean plastic pollution. We are also pleased to have the full support of the College of Charleston, the Coastal Conservation League, the Donnelley Foundation, and the Surfrider Foundation to help enlarge the circles of impact for this exhibition.

Concerning his nearly decade-long project on the island of Midway in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, artist Chris Jordan offered the thought that the name “midway” was oddly appropriate, and might be taken metaphorically. His documentation of the effects of our mass consumption and over-use of plastic led him to this tiny speck of land that has become emblematic of our global obsession with plastic. Here he has discovered some of the many unintended consequences of our disposable culture in one of the most unlikely of locations. He said that we may perhaps be “midway” to self-destruction. Some may take a more sanguine view and state that we are more than mid-way on that path, but Jordan is something of an optimist. Through his work, he wants us to feel both a sense of hope and a call to action.

Similarly, artist Aurora Robson has created a revolution among artists working with post-consumer plastic. She founded Project Vortex, an international collective working to bring attention to the problem of ocean plastics. Additionally, she has created a semester-long course, free to download, that provides a structure and resources for teaching students about the waste stream, and how to make art out of trash as a way to draw attention to the issue. The striking thing about Robson’s art is that it is so spectacularly beautiful to look at, yet we know the source of the material is discarded plastic. It is in this push-pull of attraction/aversion that her message is clearly delivered—this stuff is all around us: let’s be creative and imaginative in dealing with this challenge.

These artists invite us to confront the enormous problem of ocean plastics with intellectual rigor, interdisciplinary perspective, and individual commitment. Informed by science and technology, the creative solutions of the future will be forged by artists such as Chris Jordan, Aurora Robson, and those inspired by their actions. We would do well to heed their call.

Mark Sloan
Director and Chief Curator
Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art





Chris Jordan, *Midway*, 2009.

SEA CHANGE: Art Becomes Activism

By Dana Beach, Founder, Coastal Conservation League

The exhibitions *Aurora Robson: The Tide is High* and *Chris Jordan: Midway* raise an intriguing question—does art that addresses social or political themes function similarly to art that is seemingly apolitical? Both Robson and Jordan are, in one sense, propagandists. Does that diminish the merit of their works?

A cursory sweep of the past 2,500 years of art and ideas shows that art is often intertwined with the pressing issues of its time. From Sophocles to Wole Soyinka, from Shakespeare to Steinbeck, from David to Picasso, great artists have often been inspired by injustice, by abuses of political power, or by inhumane social conditions.

It seems to me that the question of artistic merit should, at least, stand apart from the social content of the work. But I would even go a step further and say that turbulent political and social circumstances have consistently given birth to the world's greatest artistic achievements.

Jordan's artwork was previously featured in a 2010 Halsey Institute exhibition called *Running the Numbers*. These images depict familiar objects, (disposable cigarette lighters, for example), in unfamiliar arrangements—stark, hypnotic, revelatory—visual manifestations of the refuse of a society that is wasteful almost beyond comprehension.

This selection of Jordan's new work reveals one of the most heart-rending consequences of our profligate use and careless disposal of plastic consumer items. The contamination of the world's oceans results in the gruesome deaths of Laysan albatross chicks on remote Midway Island in the South Pacific.

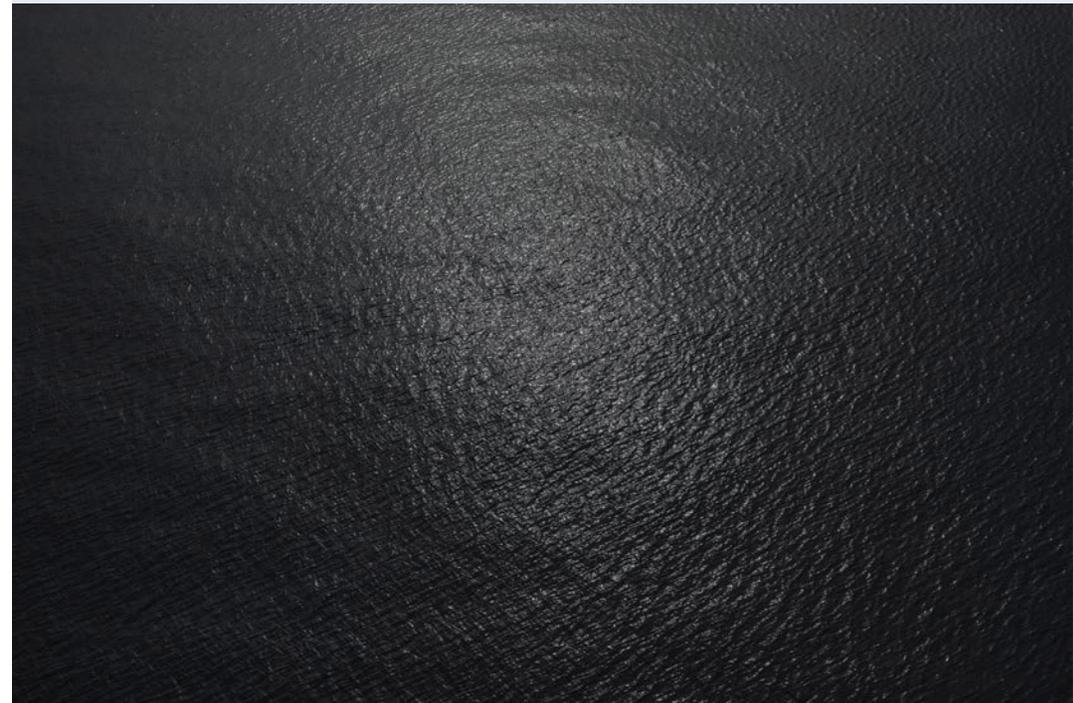
Aurora Robson's large and imposing sculptures are complex, beautiful, and seemingly organic; and they are constructed of plastic waste of endless variety. Her pieces are reminiscent of the exotic and wonderful lifeforms of the Burgess Shale that appeared during the "Cambrian explosion"—the pulse of evolution that drove a flowering of life 300 million years ago. The paradox, of course, is that something so heinous and repulsive as plastic garbage could be rendered so beautifully in sculpture.

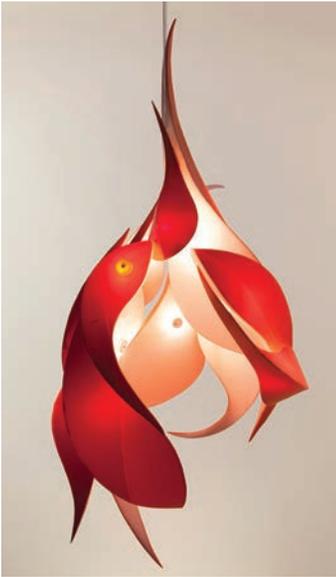
Plastic pollution is a perplexing global dilemma. A recent study reveals that modern industry has produced approximately one ton of plastic for every person living on the planet. Another study, by the World Economic Forum, projects that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean, by weight, than fish.

What more do we need to know to take radical action to reverse this destructive trajectory? Nothing, I think. If the above projection and other evidence are not enough, what else could possibly motivate us to clean up our act and our planet?

Solving the plastic crisis means acting on a dozen fronts at the same time. We must change our personal behavior and reject plastic in all of its nonessential forms. But developing more responsible habits is not enough. We need governmental action as well—bans on the production, sale, and distribution of unnecessary plastic items; taxes on the use and disposal of plastic; stronger anti-dumping laws locally, nationally, and internationally; and rigorous enforcement of laws already on the books.

Chris Jordan, *Pacific* (detail), 2016.





We need to boycott countries and companies that violate anti-plastic pollution protocols. We need trade provisions that penalize countries that fail to pass their own anti-plastic laws and take forceful action against polluters. We need accelerated research and development of products that are truly reusable and biodegradable. And, as is the case with every important social initiative, we need heroic leadership on the local, state, national, and international stage.

Encouragingly, the movement against plastic pollution is rising like the birthday balloons we hope will no more hover over our coastal beaches. Musicians, movie stars, artists like Jordan and Robson, and, most importantly, hordes of citizens have taken up the banner of reform.

The most common target of citizen action has been single-use plastic bags. These all too familiar items take one second to produce, are used for about 20 minutes, and then take up to 400 years to degrade. If there was ever a logical product to eradicate, it is the single-use plastic bag.

In South Carolina, two towns—Isle of Palms and Folly Beach—have passed laws banning single-use plastic bags. By the time you read this, Beaufort County may be the first county in the state to enact such a ban.

Across the globe, citizens are insisting on action. After Bangladesh banned all lightweight plastic bags in 2002, other countries followed suit, including Rwanda, China, Taiwan, Macedonia, and just this year, Kenya. France banned single-use plastic bags in 2016 and the European Union is also considering action.

Bag bans are important symbolically, practically, and educationally. Alone, they are not enough; but these bag ordinances illustrate that we are capable of collective action. They can also help launch the additional measures necessary to rid the planet of this tsunami of toxic refuse.

This work will not go smoothly. The plastics industry is aligned against reforms, lobbying furiously in state legislatures across the country to outlaw local bag bans. As with DDT, cigarette smoking, and climate change, industrial interests are spending vast amounts of money to block, undermine, and delay steps to reduce plastic consumption.

But momentum is building on the side of the environment. It may take 10 years, as it did to ban DDT after the publication of *Silent Spring*, a 1962 book by Rachel Carson on the detrimental effects of pesticides. Or it may take longer. But the power of people who care about the life on Earth and the future of the planet is irresistible. Jordan and Robson's art reminds us of what is at stake, and it inspires us to make the long-term commitment that will be necessary to preserve our planet. **h**



Aurora Robson, *The Tide is High* (detail), 2017.

In Plastic We Trust

Aurora Robson in conversation with Katie McCampbell, Curatorial Associate, Halsey Institute

Katie McCampbell: When did you first start working with plastic? What led you to this material? Beyond the environmental component, what interests you about plastic?

Aurora Robson: I started working with plastic in 2004. I was initially seduced by the ubiquitous nature of this material. It is inexpensive, if not free, which makes experimenting with it less of a financial consideration. In a sense, the material becomes immaterial from the onset, which is liberating from a creative standpoint. Plastic comes in a variety of great shapes that are constantly in flux. This gives plastic an organic aspect that I find extremely compelling.

I love that plastic is so pliable a material. It bends so well to our whims. A sculpture material that is so versatile should be seen as an asset for artists and designers everywhere. I am surprised that so few artists are focused on exploring its potential in safe and sustainable ways since it lasts so long in the natural environment. It is merely displaced abundance that should be handled with more care. Really, no more virgin plastic should be created. There is enough plastic in our landfills to power every car in Los Angeles for a year, as petroleum is a primary component in most plastic.

Plastic also has archival integrity built into it. Obviously, this is terrible for the environment, but it is well suited to a work of art. We have an illogical bias towards plastic: we think of it as disposable trash—yet our consumption of it continues to grow. It isn't bio-degradable, so it isn't going away. Plastic is the antithesis of disposable; we are confused as a society. Most plastics take hundreds to thousands of years to break down; when they do they only become more insidious toxic pollution—micro-plastics.

I also find our intimate relationship with plastic endlessly compelling. Why do we trust it, love it, covet it, and then abuse and ignore it, imagining that it just disappears like a star-crossed lover? We put this material in our mouths and bodies and in our babies' mouths and bodies. This degree of intimacy coupled with the fact that we generally know so little about what the chemical compositions of plastics are and what kind of adverse effects such chemicals and plasticizers have on human health makes it all pretty worthy of inquiry from my standpoint. In plastic we trust.

KM: Could you describe what it was like to work with plastic, in the way that you do now, for the first time?

AR: The first time was pure play. My curiosity added an element of seriousness as I started to see more and more potential. My process has been and continues to be experimental, with no rules and no real historical precedent, so it can be a little scary at times. I had no sense of how big and timely of a topic I'd inadvertently landed in with my work by embarking on this romantic inquiry into plastic. It still surprises and intrigues me endlessly, which makes my practice challenging but fertile. I never get bored or uninspired, but there are days I wish I could unlearn everything about plastic in terms of its negative impacts on health, coastal communities, and all of the defenseless animals we share the planet with.

KM: With the globe facing so many environmental issues, why focus on plastic?

AR: Plastic pollution is something we can actually fix. Religion, economics, and a number of other often divisive vitriolic factors don't impact this particular issue. Of all the conversations we can have about the environment, this is one we can all participate in solving directly as individuals. Every single person can have a profound impact on reducing their plastic footprint. It makes sense to people young or old, rich or poor, who take a moment or two to think about whether or not plastics are sustainable.

Communities around the world need help to develop strategies to intercept their waste streams in order to eradicate the health and environmental problems associated with this non-biodegradable material. They need help to create or tap into available infrastructure that can transform the waste that has accumulated already in their vicinities into abundance. Plastic pollution is all over the planet—even camels are dying from accidentally ingesting it in the deserts of the Middle East. The MacArthur Foundation released a study last year that stated by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans. Considering that we already have video documentation of plankton ingesting micro-plastics and approximately 50% of the oxygen in our atmosphere comes from plankton, you can imagine a whole other tipping point in the future based on the MacArthur Foundation's projection.



Aurora Robson, *The Great Indoors* (installation view), 2008. Photo: Nash Baker.

This is a problem that is not going to fix itself without adequate awareness and without individuals reflecting on and embracing their personal power. I see a path to help fix this and I feel a sort of duty to persevere, especially at this point since I am a mother and have a little bit of an audience recognizing my work as relevant. As sentient beings, I think we can use creative stewardship, among other routes, to circumvent this potential disaster. Then we can enjoy life on Earth for generations to come and not rob our children of an exquisite life on this planet.

KM: You're installing a work in the Halsey Institute's Deborah A. Chalsty Gallery. As an artist, do you find yourself experiencing your work in a different way when you install in a new space? How are you thinking of the viewer during this process?

AR: I really like to respond to the architecture of a given space with my work. For that, site visits are essential. When I visited the Halsey Institute's Chalsty Gallery, I was struck by its meandering nature and the many interesting vantage points it offers. I love that there are so many nooks and corners. I wanted to give the viewers opportunities to enjoy all the different places from which they can experience the piece. I hope that people will enjoy the work while taking some time to reflect on what it means, how it is offering a service to them, and why I am making this work. I think of the viewer as a fellow traveler who, like me, needs respite and inspiration from time to time. I hope that the work can provide that while showing that there is light, even in the darkest of circumstances.

CHRIS JORDAN: MIDWAY



Chris Jordan, *Midway*, 2009.

On Returning to Beauty

Chris Jordan in conversation with Bryan Granger, Manager of Exhibitions, Halsey Institute

Bryan Granger: How did you get interested in our problematic relationship with plastic?

Chris Jordan: The dark underbelly of our culture of mass consumption has fascinated me for many years, and when journeying into that territory, one can't help but come up against plastic. It is such an iconic material, symbolic of the insanity of the human world: we know of its multileveled toxicity, and yet we use it to contain our food. It is made to last forever, yet we form it into things that are meant to be thrown away after a single use. And plastic has a kind of sterile perfection to it that I think makes us unconsciously seek it out as a way of avoiding the messy reality of life. Millions of people prefer to drink water from a clear plastic bottle than from a cup filled at a tap, even knowing that the tap water is cleaner, and even if the bottled water costs 2,000 times more. Maybe it is not too much to suggest that in one way, plastic serves as a kind of unconscious manifestation of our fear of death.

BG: How did you get started with your trips to Midway?

CJ: After about a decade of making large-scale photographic works about consumerism, I craved a way to face the issue on a more personal level. It can be overwhelming trying to grasp the enormous magnitude of global consumption in terms of things like plastic, oil, cars, computers, and so on. I wondered if there might be a way to experience ocean plastic pollution on a more comprehensible and personal scale. I had been studying the Pacific Garbage Patch, and I learned from a biologist friend about the tragedy that is happening on Midway. As soon as I heard about it, I felt this magnetic pull to go there and experience it personally.

BG: Why is the story of the Albatrosses on Midway an important one to tell?

CJ: For me, the story that is coming from that island is a message from Earth herself. It is like a parable or a fable, with layers of symbolism that carry the power of mythology. For starters, the location of the island is key. If there were birds filled with plastic near a landfill in Detroit, or on an island off the coast of Bangladesh, that would have a different meaning. Midway is the furthest place from a continent anywhere on Earth, and its extreme remoteness carries an iconic significance.

And of the hundreds of different kinds of seabirds that could be bringing us this message, it is the albatross, a creature whose mytho-poetry already runs deep in the collective psyche. They are known as the most legendary of all birds, with a thousand-year history in our poetry and literature as carriers of messages, harbingers of changing winds and shifting fortune. Even if we haven't read "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, we all know there is something dark and punishing about an albatross being hung around our neck. From a storytelling point of view, it is hard to imagine a creature that would be better suited to deliver an urgent message to humanity about our broken relationship with the natural world.

And then there is plastic. Of all of the kinds of environmental pollution that the albatross could be reflecting back to us, there is something incredibly macabre about seeing our cigarette lighters, dental floss handles, and bottle caps resurfacing inside the stomachs of their dead chicks. Compared to substances like pesticides that are measured in the ocean in parts per billion, plastic is so clear and visually iconic, gut-punching us with the grotesque triviality of our throwaway culture. And with some environmental problems (such as the poaching of elephants for their tusks or sharks for their fins) there are individual bad actors who can be singled out; but we all use plastic, and we are all more-or-less equally part of the problem.

On the other side of the equation is the majestic gorgeousness of the hundreds of thousands of albatrosses living together in this remote paradise, as they have done for millions of years. Midway has one of the highest concentrations of wild creatures left anywhere on Earth. Many of the albatrosses are dying from the plastic, but they are not all dying; in fact, their population appears to be increasing, at least for now.

Beholding an ecosystem of magnificent wild beings can be a transformational experience, and so I devoted most of my film to this more uplifting side of the story. It is important to know that the plastic-filled birds are not the whole picture; in fact, the plastic is a relatively small part of the story of the albatross, one that can be solved and healed if we collectively decide that we want to.



Chris Jordan, *Pacific*, 2016.

BG: Your Midway images often evoke a visceral response. Is this important for your work to succeed? How do you expect viewers to react?

CJ: I don't think very much about how people should respond to my work. For me the important thing is to keep the attention focused on the subject, aiming my effort at honoring its complexity and depth as much as possible, and letting go of how people will receive the work. In the case of the plastic filled birds, there is deep multi-layered horror there, and I know from my own experience how hard it is to face that head-on. Standing over the dead birds brings a mixture of feelings that is difficult to contain; at the same time the scenes were always held in an envelope of exquisite beauty and a kind of indescribable stillness. I don't know how much those factors are evident in the images, but for me the experience was always nuanced and complex.

It has been surprising to see the response that people have to my Midway work. I imagined that this subject would be too difficult for most people to look at, and so the project would be mostly ignored and lost to obscurity, as happened with my Katrina series and my Kenya work of dead elephants killed for their tusks. But the Midway work has reached a much larger audience than anything I have done previously, and the positive response to the film *Albatross* has been astonishing so far. In this way, I am learning something about people's desire and capacity for facing the truth of our times, and for me that is a real source of hope.

BG: Where did the idea of making a film come from?

CJ: Originally I went to Midway only to photograph the plastic inside the dead birds. On the first trip, I was there at a time of year when the live birds were all out at sea, so I never saw a living albatross. It was only when I returned to Midway the second time and that I met the live birds. Finally able to behold their grace and elegance and sentience, I realized that to know them, you have to see them in motion. I wasn't

a filmmaker at the time and had never considered making a film, so I didn't know where to begin. But it became clear that a film was called for, so that started the learning process.

BG: Did the film turn out the way you imagined it to be? Have any aspects of it surprised you?

CJ: Not knowing anything about how films are made, I think I made mine quite differently from how others tend to work. I started with an intentionally clean slate, without any story or agenda or particular scenes in mind. The idea was to hold a container for the story to emerge on its own, in a way that might be more vibrant than what would be created via thinking and planning. So my team and I just filmed everything that seemed interesting in an open-ended and spontaneous way, without judging in advance whether any particular shot would be used in the film.

I stayed with this philosophy all the way through eight trips to Midway, which was difficult because my funders wanted to know what my story was going to be, and why I kept needing to go back to the island when I already had enough footage to make a documentary. Holding open the story in this way produced a lot of anxiety, and I lost a few supporters during these times, as I had to fiercely protect the integrity of my process when it didn't make sense to them.

But despite the open-ended aspect of the story, right from the beginning there was a particular feeling toward the project, something that I knew would be the heart of the film. For me the essence of the experience on Midway was relational rather than observational; my job was empathic, to experience the albatross on their terms, from their perspective, and to tell their story as much as possible. I knew the end result wasn't going to be an informational documentary; I was more drawn to shape it like a poem, or a medicine ceremony. That's how it felt to be on the island, and that feeling guided the editing process.



Chris Jordan, *Pacific*, 2016.

BG: You've required that the film be screened without admission fees. Why did you make this decision?

CJ: For me that feels like an ethical choice that is mandated by the tragedy of the plastic. I can't justify profiting from footage about a horror that I personally contributed to with my own consumption. And in another way, the story of the albatross came to me as a gift, and if I am going to pass that along to others, it needs to be transferred in as close as possible to the same form as I received it. Treating my film as a public artwork carries a particular kind of energetic imprint that feels more true to the experience of the island.

BG: Can you tell us about the *Pacific* series and how you got started with it?

CJ: I have always been in love with the undulating play of light on water. There is something mesmerizing about its flickering quality, like fire, so ephemeral, arising and passing so quickly, impossible for the eye to hold onto for even an instant. And there is something humbling about knowing that this macro vs micro duality of the cosmic dance is happening on every square inch of all of the world's bodies of water, always. I first started photographing this subject a few years back and slowly a technique emerged for capturing minute fractal patterns and fine details that move and sparkle faster than the human eye can perceive. It turns out that there is some really cool stuff happening there when you capture it at 1/4000th of a second.

And in another way, this project gives some respite from my long-term practice of looking into the dark aspects of our culture of mass consumption. I think I have needed some balance, to remember that standing in the beauty of our world can be just as transformational as facing the horror. There are forces at play in our culture right now that would like to make beauty irrelevant, and that is one reason why it is more important than ever to turn towards beauty. In fact, perhaps turning away from beauty was how we got ourselves into this mess in the first place, and turning back toward it might just be the key that opens the doorway home. **h**

SEA CHANGE EVENTS

Free and open to the public unless otherwise noted

ARTIST TALK WITH AURORA ROBSON

Saturday, October 21, 2:00 PM

College of Charleston, Simons Center, Room 309, 54 St. Philip Street

"THE TIDE IS HIGH: WHERE ART AND ACTION COLLIDE"

A LECTURE BY AURORA ROBSON

A HOLLAND LIFELONG LEARNING PRESENTATION

Monday, October 23, 6:30 PM

Great Hall at the South Carolina Aquarium, 100 Aquarium Wharf

\$10 tickets, free for students | \$5 tickets for Aquarium members

Get tickets at scaquarium.org/lifelonglearning or (843) 579-8595

"ENCOUNTERING THE ALBATROSS"

A LECTURE AND Q&A WITH CHRIS JORDAN

Tuesday, October 24, 7:00 PM

Sottile Theatre at the College of Charleston, 44 George Street

ALBATROSS: A LOVE STORY FOR OUR TIME FROM THE HEART OF THE PACIFIC

A film by Chris Jordan

Wednesday, October 25, 7:00 PM

Charleston Music Hall, 37 John Street

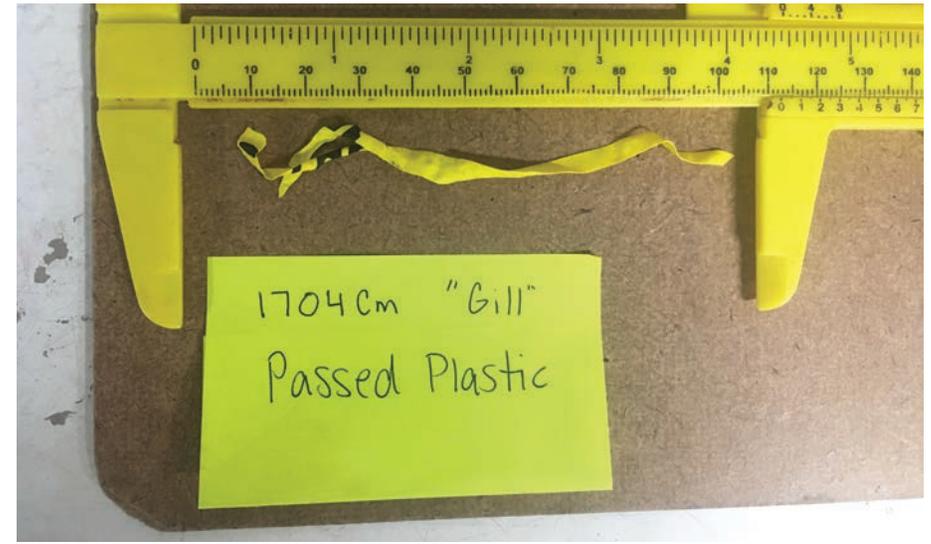
IN-GALLERY CONVERSATION WITH CHRIS JORDAN

Saturday, October 28, 2:00 PM

Halsey Institute galleries



Chris Jordan, *ALBATROSS* (still), 2017.



The Solution Is in Our Hands

The South Carolina Aquarium's Fight Against Plastic Pollution

By Kevin Mills, President and CEO, South Carolina Aquarium

Our fight begins with the story of Gill, a young turtle whose life was changed by plastic.

Gill is a juvenile green sea turtle admitted to the South Carolina Aquarium Sea Turtle Care Center™ on April 4, 2017. Upon admission, his medical assessment revealed that he was very sick. He was dehydrated and emaciated, and it was clear that he had been severely debilitated for at least a month prior to stranding.

For the next two weeks, Aquarium staff provided Gill with top-notch supportive care but saw little improvement. They were unsure why he was not responding to treatment.

On April 20, Gill passed a piece of latex balloon about four-and-a-half inches in length. If the plastic had been in his gastrointestinal tract for much longer, it could have been fatal. He is just one of 18 patients admitted to the Sea Turtle Care Center confirmed to have ingested plastic. Some cases have required surgical intervention.

After passing the plastic and receiving rehabilitative care, Gill began to improve quickly, gaining weight and swimming spiritedly in his tank. With just five months of rehabilitation, his bloodwork improved drastically, and his health was completely transformed. He was released on August 18 in the saltmarsh of Kiawah Island to rejoin our local sea turtle population.

Unfortunately, stories like Gill's are increasingly common. Of those 18 Sea Turtle Care Center patients that have ingested plastics, 13 were admitted during the last three years. In addition to more cases of plastic ingestion, Care Center staff are also seeing an increase in plastic and monofilament entanglements. It's not just a problem for sea turtles. In fact, all known species of sea turtles, at least 54 percent of all marine mammal species, and at least 56 percent of all seabird species have been affected by entanglement in plastic material.

Our Calling

More than ever, communities from coast to coast are seeking something more from aquariums. In a time of environmental decline, they are seeking a voice for conservation. They are yearning for a guide to preservation of the natural world. The South Carolina Aquarium seeks to provide this connection, making positive environmental impact possible.

The most urgent and actionable way to save our water, wildlife, and wild places is to solve the ongoing problem of plastic pollution. In July 2017, a groundbreaking study by Roland Geyer, Jenna R. Jambeck, and Kara Lavender Law in the peer-reviewed journal *Science Advances* provided the first global analysis of all plastics ever made. Of the 8.3 billion metric tons of plastic that have been produced, 6.3 billion metric tons have become plastic waste.

Recycling is not enough to solve the problem. Currently, 300 million tons of new plastic are produced annually, but less than 10 percent of that plastic is recycled. This is either because it is currently not possible to recycle, individuals don't take it to be recycled, or local authorities don't accept it. For many companies, it's not cost effective to process recycled plastic, so they sell it to other countries, where it often is landfilled or incinerated. The solution will require a greater commitment than recycling alone.

By 2050, our oceans are projected to contain more plastic than fish. We see this problem reflected in animals like Gill that are admitted to the Sea Turtle Care Center, debilitated and near death as a result of ingestion of or entanglement in plastic. It's time for innovative alternatives to single-use plastic to become the standard everywhere we go—not just at our homes, but also at our offices, our public spaces and the businesses we support. For the future of our sea turtles, our oceans and ourselves, we must address the crisis of plastic pollution.

By the Numbers

- Less than **10%** of the plastic produced annually is recycled.
- **18** patients have been treated for ingestion of plastic at the Sea Turtle Care Center™.
- **8 million** metric tons of plastic enter the ocean each year.
- Americans use **500 million** plastic straws every day.
- **6.3 billion** metric tons of plastic waste exist in our world.



Our Commitment

The South Carolina Aquarium has committed its resources to reduce the amount of plastic debris in our waterways. Internally, the Aquarium has eliminated plastic bags from its gift shop and replaced plastic drinking straws and utensils with biodegradable alternatives in its snack bar. By 2020, in partnership with 18 other top U.S. aquariums, the South Carolina Aquarium will eliminate all single-use plastics, including plastic water bottles, within our facility. Events hosted by the Aquarium utilize only recyclable and compostable materials to generate zero waste. Through these initiatives, the Aquarium leads by example in environmentally sustainable business practices.

The South Carolina Aquarium also offers its expertise and resources to the community to drive change away from single-use plastic consumption. Aquarium representatives provided expert testimony to the city councils of Folly Beach and the Isle of Palms in support of plastic bag ordinances. In partnership with the Charleston County Public Library, the Aquarium distributed 20,000 reusable totes to replace plastic bags in circulation at the city's libraries. To drive conversation on a global scale, the Aquarium hosted *Breaking Down Plastic*, a summit to generate long-term solutions to plastic pollution, in March 2017.

In Our Hands

The Aquarium holds the firm belief that the solution to plastic pollution is in our hands—that each individual can make choices daily to determine the future of the ocean. We ask our community to think about how plastic pollution affects the habitats and animals that surround you and what steps you can take to use less single-use plastic. From small to large there are many actions that will make a difference such as joining a local litter sweep, utilizing reusable bags instead of single-use plastic bags, skipping the plastic drinking straw and sharing this important message with friends and family.

SOUTH CAROLINA AQUARIUM

Additionally, individuals are empowered to make a difference with the new South Carolina Aquarium Citizen Science app, an innovative tool to contribute to environmental research projects. Available within the app, the Litter-free Digital Journal enables individuals to contribute data about the litter they remove from the environment to a public database, where they can then analyze their own impact, and researchers can better understand the impact of plastic pollutants on our state's communities and habitats. Search for South Carolina Aquarium Citizen Science app for a free download from the App Store or Google Play.

The solution to plastic pollution is in our hands, and you can take action to make a difference. Learn more by visiting scaquarium.org/plastic



The Tide is High

The South Carolina Aquarium invites you to explore the connection between art and natural conservation by viewing a key piece of Aurora Robson's work, *The Tide is High*, in the Aquarium's galleries alongside the sea turtles that are so profoundly affected by plastic debris.

The Tide is High is a breathtaking ring resembling a crashing ocean wave, made from recovered Tide detergent bottles. In contrast with the tanks teeming with marine life, the sculpture provides a visual answer to the startling question: "What if the ocean had more plastic than fish?"

Robson's work is a provocative addition to the South Carolina Aquarium's collection, forcing visitors to think about how their consumption of plastic affects the animals that they wish to conserve and protect. The sculpture encourages Aquarium guests to engage in dialogue about plastic's growing impact on marine environments and to consider how they can reduce their own use of plastic. Ultimately, we hope that *The Tide is High* will compel viewers to be a part of the solution to plastic pollution by choosing reusable alternatives to single-use plastics.



Present this exhibition brochure to receive \$10 off your South Carolina Aquarium general admission ticket.*

**Valid 10/20/17 – 12/9/17 only. Not valid with any other offer. Restrictions apply.*

This partnership is made possible by the South Carolina Aquarium's generous sponsors: the Pearlstine Family Fund, Paula R. Feldman, and Tom and Kathleen Wright.



Sustainability—as defined by the QEP—is the ability to integrate economic, social, and environmental systems in ways that allow for individual, institutional, community, regional and planetary resilience. And it is the objective of our QEP to enhance student learning by helping students acquire sustainability literacy. This means having the knowledge and skills to advocate for resilient social, economic, and environmental systems.

At the College, all of our community members—students, faculty and staff—must develop an understanding that environmental, social, and economic sustainability are not independent of one another, but rather they are inextricably linked.

For additional information about the Quality Enhancement Plan, visit sustain.cofc.edu

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN AT THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

The College's new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is *Sustainability Literacy as a Bridge to Addressing 21st-Century Problems*. This initiative seeks to endow our students with the tools and knowledge they'll need to address 21st-century problems such as climate change, social injustice, and economic inequality.

At the College, we acknowledge that our world faces steep challenges, and that these are global in magnitude and complexity. Whether it's diminishing resources, human-induced climate change, economic inequality, or some other pressing concern, our society has arrived at this point precisely because of the way we think and how we behave. If we wish to change both our thinking and our actions, we will first need to change the education we deliver. That is the central notion underpinning the QEP and the impetus for the partnership of SEA CHANGE.

Within this initiative, it is the responsibility of our campus community to provide our students the sustainability literacy they will need to be effective problem solvers for the 21st century. SEA CHANGE presents a unique opportunity for our students to participate and learn via interdisciplinary programming.



THE OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY AT THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

The Office of Sustainability is a hub for sustainability and sustainable development with a focus on applied research, experiential learning, operational management, and public engagement on campus and in the greater Charleston community. The Office of Sustainability has a high profile on campus and in the community, where it can be accessed by, and have influence on, all members of our campus community.

This standing represents an exciting step forward for the College of Charleston, and signals a new chapter in our esteemed history. Join the Office of Sustainability in establishing the vision, cultivating ideas, and strategically implementing those ideas and vision toward a Sustainable CofC.

As a hub for operational management, applied research, and experiential learning around sustainability, the Office of Sustainability recognizes their mission as generating new knowledge; but more importantly as engaging through principled praxis in the application of that knowledge to empower individuals and enrich society in a socially transformative manner. The Office of Sustainability strives to provide opportunities for the College of Charleston community to apply their acquired knowledge towards the development of sustainable, multi-scale solutions.

For additional information about the Office of Sustainability, visit sustainability.cofc.edu

LOCAL RESOURCES

In addition to the South Carolina Aquarium, and the College of Charleston's Office of Sustainability and Quality Enhancement Plan, the following is a list of some of the local organization that actively work to preserve Charleston's environment, including preventing the spread of plastics in our waterways.

CHARLESTON CHAPTER OF THE SURFRIDER FOUNDATION

The Charleston Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation is a local, grassroots, volunteer-run nonprofit that works to keep the Lowcountry beaches and waterways clean and pristine. This is accomplished through a variety of conservation programs and campaigns including litter sweeps, advocacy, environmental programs, and data collection. Since its inception in 2000, the Charleston Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation has held more than 200 litter sweeps, removing hundreds of pounds of trash from our environment, fought against plans that were detrimental to the environment, and battled for the right to public beach access. Additionally, our team of volunteers has brought to fruition programs meant to create a healthier environment such as the Ocean Friendly Garden program, and the Ocean Friendly Restaurant Program. Since we are a volunteer organization, we are always looking for community members interested in making a difference.

Website: Charleston.Surfrider.org · [Facebook.com/CharlestonSurfrider](https://www.facebook.com/CharlestonSurfrider)

Contact: chair@charleston.surfrider.org

CHARLESTON WATERKEEPER

Charleston Waterkeeper's mission is to protect and restore Charleston's waterways for our community and for future generations. We do this through a mix of boots-on-the-water programs and data-driven advocacy campaigns designed to protect the public's fundamental right to clean, healthy waterways. Our vision is a Charleston where all local waterways and the marine life they support are healthy and fully protected by an engaged community of waterway stewards.

Website: CharlestonWaterkeeper.org

Contact: info@charlestonwaterkeeper.org · (843) 607-3390

CITY OF CHARLESTON DEPARTMENT OF PARKS KEEP CHARLESTON BEAUTIFUL

Keep Charleston Beautiful (KCB) is an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful and PalmettoPride, and therefore works with other national and state organizations to promote a clean and beautiful environment for all Americans. KCB is also a division of the City of Charleston Department of Parks and is dedicated to promoting the cleanliness and beautification of the City of Charleston through education, public awareness, and community involvement.

KCB's school-based education programs focus on teaching Charleston's youth to live litter-free lives while encouraging environmental awareness and volunteerism. In addition to what is considered normal litter, KCB has targeted two prominent, yet often ignored, forms of litter with its Pick Up After Your Pet Program and My City Is NOT Your Ashtray Program. Keep Charleston Beautiful works year-round with groups of any size to clean up local parks, marshes, or urban settings. Cleanup events average 2 hours and all supplies are provided.

Website: [Facebook.com/KCBSC](https://www.facebook.com/KCBSC)

Contact: Jamie Gillette · GilletteJ@charleston-sc.gov · (843) 579-7501

LOCAL RESOURCES

COASTAL CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Since 1989, the Coastal Conservation League (CCL) has worked with communities, businesses, citizen groups, and people like you to protect what we love about South Carolina.

From sandy beaches, healthy marshes, freshwater swamps to pine savannas, they protect natural habitats and the wildlife that depends on them. CCL supports the communities they live in by ensuring we have clean air to breathe, fresh water to drink, and sustainable energy to power our homes and places of work. Most of all, they strive to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the same spaces and quality of life here that we do today.

This future includes smart, sustainable, economic growth that maximizes the potential of our community. This future ensures the availability of natural resources and opportunity for our children to enjoy those resources. This future has good policies and protection in place so we do more than fight an endless series of battles against an endless series of threats.

Our vision is a future in which we strive for common ground and the balance of nature and community.

Website: CoastalConservationLeague.org

Contact: info@sccl.org · (843) 732-8035

CONSERVATION VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Conservation Voters of South Carolina (CVSC) advocates for our air, water, land, and energy through political action. We are bipartisan and pragmatic. CVSC holds South Carolina legislators accountable for their conservation votes and actions. Check out our website, especially our Take Action area where you can contact your legislators. With your help, CVSC will protect the South Carolina you love.

Website: cvsc.org/action

Contact: (803) 799-0716

5 GYRES INSTITUTE

5 Gyres empowers action against the global health crisis of plastic pollution through science, art, education, and adventure. Beginning in 2010, 5 Gyres spearheaded a series of scientific firsts by researching plastic in all five subtropical gyres, as well as the Great Lakes and Antarctica—sailing a total of 50,000 miles in the process. In 2014, the organization convened eight scientists around the world to publish the first global estimate of plastic pollution in our ocean: 5.25 trillion particles weighing in at 270,000 tons of “plastic smog” worldwide. 5 Gyres works on plastic microbead pollution in the Great Lakes that inspired a two-year campaign that culminated in a federal ban on microbeads, which President Obama signed into law in 2015.

Website: 5gyres.org · [facebook.com/5gyres/](https://www.facebook.com/5gyres/)

Contact: info@5gyres.org · (310) 428-9045

LOCAL RESOURCES

FRIENDS OF COASTAL SOUTH CAROLINA

Dedicated to preserving the ecosystems and wildlife of the South Carolina coast for future generations; Friends of Coastal South Carolina supports Waccamaw, Cape Romain and E.F. Hollings ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuges, and the Francis Marion National Forest. Their work includes providing science learning and environmental stewardship programs to thousands of kids along the South Carolina coast each year, supporting species and habitat management projects on our refuges and forests and most importantly, engaging citizens in stewardship of these critical resources. Our coastal forest and wildlife refuges are as important to people as they are to wildlife. In addition to providing amazing opportunities for recreation they are critical to protecting our air and water quality.

Website: SCCoastalFriends.org · [Facebook.com/SCCoastalFriends](https://www.facebook.com/SCCoastalFriends)

Contact: info@SCCoastalFriends.org · (843) 697-7535

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Each year, tens of thousands of pounds of trash is collected from South Carolina's beaches. Much of this debris is plastic originating from recreational use of the beach and coastal waters. Through the Adopt-A-Beach Program, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control engages the power of concerned residents and visitors to collect and document debris and help protect the fragile beach environment. Volunteers use DHEC's free MyCoast mobile app to report clean-up data directly to coastal managers, who then analyze the results and develop targeted educational and prevention efforts.

Website: mycoast.org/sc

SCDHEC.gov/HomeAndEnvironment/Water/CoastalManagement/MyCoast.org/SC

Contact: Liz Hartje · hartjeen@dhec.sc.gov · (843) 953-9237

SOUTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER

The Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) uses the power of the law to champion the environment of the Southeast. Our team of more than 70 dedicated attorneys stands up for all the things you love about this special region—clean water, healthy air, mountains, forests, and the coast. SELC believes that everyone in this region deserves to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live in a healthy environment. This nonprofit organization gets consistently impressive results because they know how to work effectively in all three branches of government—and at the national, regional, state, and local levels—to create, strengthen, and enforce the laws and policies that determine the beauty and health of our environment. They work to prevent and stop environmental abuses through our offices in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and right here in Charleston, South Carolina.

Website: SouthernEnvironment.org/About-SELC

Contact: SouthernEnvironment.org/About-SELC/Contact-Us · (843) 720-5270

SEA CHANGE SPONSORS



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First Year Experience · Quality Enhancement Plan · School of Sciences and Mathematics

School of the Arts · Division of Marketing and Communications · Geography Program

THE SOUTH CAROLINA AQUARIUM

The South Carolina Aquarium is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization whose mission is to inspire conservation of the natural world by exhibiting and caring for animals, by excelling in education and research, and by providing an exceptional visitor experience. The Aquarium leads the way to address the critical issue of plastic pollution through solutions-oriented initiatives including educational lectures, community forums, litter sweeps and distribution of alternatives to single-use plastic. The Aquarium is home to the Sea Turtle Care Center™, a world-class medical facility that aids sick and injured sea turtles, many of which are affected by plastic entanglement or ingestion, to help ensure that these species have a future in our oceans.

The South Carolina Aquarium is open daily from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (last ticket sold at 4:00 PM). The Aquarium is closed Thanksgiving Day, half day December 24 (open 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM) and December 25. Admission prices are: Toddlers (2 and under) free; Youth (3-12) \$22.95; Adults (13+) \$29.95. For more information, call (843) 577-FISH (3474) or visit scaquarium.org.



HALSEY INSTITUTE
OF CONTEMPORARY ART
at THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

HALSEY INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

LOCATION:

The Marion and Wayland H. Cato Jr. Center for the Arts
161 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401
halsey.cofc.edu

PARKING:

Available in the St. Philip St. and George St. garages

GALLERY HOURS:

Mon. – Sat., 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM during exhibitions, or by appointment
Open until 7:00 PM on Thursdays

CONTACT:

(843) 953-4422 or halsey@cofc.edu

BLOG:

Join the conversation at halsey.cofc.edu/learn/edu-blog

GUIDED GROUP TOURS BY APPOINTMENT:

Free tours are led by knowledgeable and experienced guides and can be adapted to various time lengths, group sizes, and ages. Contact Lizz Biswell at BiswellL@cofc.edu or call (843) 953-5659.

MISSION:

The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art at the College of Charleston School of the Arts provides a multidisciplinary laboratory for the production, presentation, interpretation, and dissemination of ideas by innovative visual artists from around the world. As a non-collecting museum, we create meaningful interactions between adventurous artists and diverse communities within a context that emphasizes the historical, social, and cultural importance of the art of our time.

Cover: Chris Jordan, *Pacific* (detail), 2016.



HALSEY INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART



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COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Present this exhibition brochure to receive \$10 off your South Carolina Aquarium general admission ticket.*

**Valid 10/20/17 – 12/9/17 only. Not valid with any other offer. Restrictions apply.*

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