

Paper nOr Plastic

Sketches 3

opening reception: Saturday, May 9, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Exhibit on display through June 7

Jacob Foyer

Every day, even several times a day, we are faced with choices that make a difference in our ever-changing world.

Question: Paper or Plastic?

Answer: "Neither, I brought my own bag. Thank you."
Your choices make a difference!

"Paper nOr Plastic" will be an exhibit at Gualala Arts Center, opening with a reception on May 9, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. and running through June 7, 2009.

The exhibit is co-curated by textile designer Harmony Susalla (harmonyart.com), a pioneer in the field of printed organic cotton and quilter Jan Carter, President of the Pacific Piecemakers Quilt Guild, who challenge the notion of the shopping bag as disposable landfill-fodder.

The shopping bag may seem the ultimate icon of run-away consumerism, but this exhibit assigns it new value. "I dream of living in a place where people carry functional works of art throughout their daily shopping routine," says curator Harmony Susalla.

A highlight of the exhibit: two large pieces by internationally renowned artist Chris Jordan (chrisjordan.com) from his series entitled, "Running the Numbers." These provocative pieces illustrate disturbing environmental findings. "Paper Bags, 2007" depicts the 1.14 million brown paper supermarket bags used in the US every hour. "Plastic Bags, 2007" depicts 60,000 plastic bags, the number used in the US every five seconds. These huge works invite the viewer to walk up close and see every detail as a symbol of the crucial role of the individual in hypermodern society.

A statement from Chris Jordan:

The pervasiveness of our consumerism holds a seductive kind of mob mentality. Collectively we are committing a vast and unsustainable act of taking, but we each are anonymous and no one is in charge or accountable for the consequences. I fear that in this process we are doing irreparable harm to our planet and to our individual spirits.

As an American consumer myself, I am in no position to finger wag;

but I do know that when we reflect on a difficult question in the absence of an answer, our attention can turn inward, and in that space may exist the possibility of some evolution of thought or action. So my hope is that these photographs can serve as portals to a kind of cultural self-inquiry. It may not be the most comfortable terrain, but I have heard it said that in risking self-awareness, at least we know that we are awake.

Chris Jordan is an internationally acclaimed photographic artist whose work explores the detritus of American mass culture. His work is exhibited widely in the US and Europe, and has been featured in magazines, newspapers, weblogs, documentary films and television programs all over the globe. Prints of Chris' work are held in more than two hundred public and private collections worldwide.

The Green Bag Lady is making a guest appearance at the show opening May 9th, 5-7pm! Teresa VanHatten-Granath, aka The Green Bag Lady (greenbaglady.org), is flying in from Nashville for the event. She will be at the opening giving away her numbered bags. At last count, this inspiring woman has given away over 3,300 handmade fabric bags, the catch is you have to promise to use the fabric bag instead of paper or plastic.

A statement from the Green Bag Lady:

I am an artist. I make bags. I will give you a FREE handmade fabric shopping bag at Green Bag Lady Events if you promise to use it instead of paper or plastic. Your name, city, country and bag number will be recorded on this site. The use of these bags worldwide is documented. Send me your pictures, your stories, and your extra fabric. Let's start a revolution . . . one bag at a time!

Artists make limited editions of pieces, number them and sell them. In this case, I am making editions, numbering them and give them away, also get the audience completely involved with the art piece. I am hoping that people will start making bags in their own communities and start giving them away...just as long as they start using them.

With the creativity of the local coastal artists entries, submissions flown in from around the globe, Chris Jordan's internationally known photography pieces, and a celebrity appearance from the "the Green Bag Lady" this exhibit opening is one not to miss!