'SHORE-THEMED ART INSTALLATION'
PROPOSAL FOR THE SIMONS CENTER ARTS PROGRAM,   STONY   BROOK UNIVERSITY

Paul Jay   artist/writer/musician   School of Visual Arts '72

Our civilization creates among other things plastic pieces with specific functions that are part of something else, a machine or a toy or a piece of decoration. When this designed and manufactured thing falls apart, through no fault of their own these plastic pieces may be washed away by a storm, or simply pop up from the deep-sea garbage dumps, and turn into flotsam in an entropic disjunction (-) (/). Computer-designed, formerly functional, they float, because they are lighter than water. Along the high tide marks of Long Island Sound, where I look for them, they wash up and collect in the sand and reeds. I walk along the beaches where these little treasures of no value are hidden among the straw, and collect them based on whether or not they have interesting properties: color, texture, size, shape, occasionally meaning (as in a character), symmetry, asymmetry, patterns, topology and material. Mainly they are meaningless and of no value, but usually have acquired a sanded, weathered texture.. The forms are unique, infinitely varied, and have never been seen in nature, but whatever they might mean or be, I find them interesting and end up with a bagful before I head for home in my kayak or small sailboat. After cleaning them I create art pieces of (X) value by combining them with glue into discrete objects that hang on the wall, practicing neg-entropic conjunction (+) (**x**).. Hopefully, out of things of zero value I create value, at least in my eye, so I try and create as much value as possible by making an interesting piece out of interesting pieces. The better the combined piece, the greater the gap between the value of the components (Y) combined and the value of the finished art work (X). AX|X>Y would be the formula for art. In this particular process Y=0 so I don't have to add much value to make art
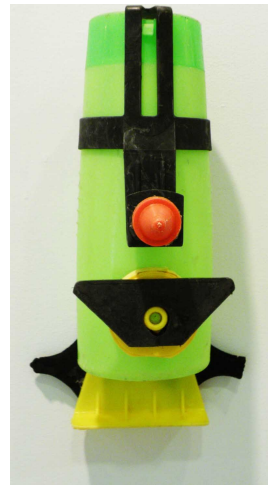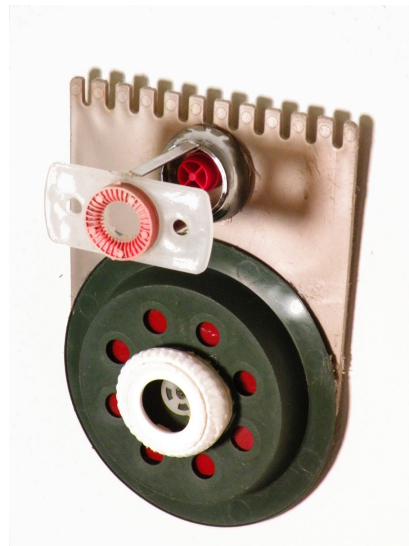
In terms of scale, bigger pieces support smaller ones. Scale creates interesting dynamic between structure (large) and ornament (small). The larger the piece, the less likely it is to be ornamental.

Plastic crap is not all the shore has to offer, I also find beauty:

inspiration:

n

and ugliness:

Walking along a beach becomes a part of my professional life and getting to the beach becomes a necessity, which I accomplish by paddling or sailing. I do for work what other people do for vacation, like a professional surfer, but this ideal situation only happens when the art acquires value to people other than myself. I've sold a number of pieces, so this ideal has been attained to a modest extent.
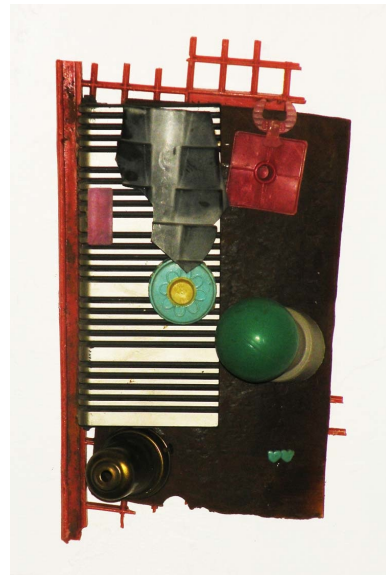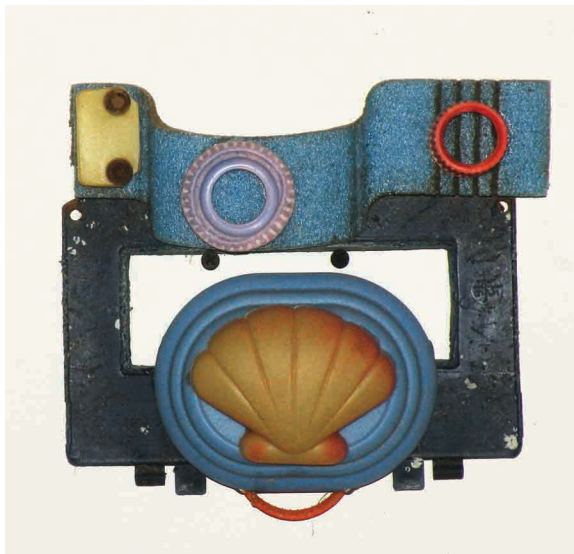
SHOW: I would like to bring the shore inside in creating a multi-media installation which includes the sculpture, the photos, some straw, even some beer cans. The pieces would be arranged so that they crowd the wall but give each other space to breathe. They should only be seen from the front, since the backs of the pieces are just the unseen ways the pieces can hang securely on a drywall screw. Some of the plastic is translucent, and lighting is important, perhaps recalling the setting sun. The pieces range in size from one to two feet high. Included would be a set of 4 photographs taken from the kayak. These mounted prints are 13" by 19" and complement the sculptures. I include this as a reference to the water on which the flotsam floated, water which reflects the sky and conceals its denizens and transforms banal plastics into art material.

Many photos would be slideshows on USB photo displays, and it all would be embedded in straw attached to the wall..

 The shoreline is undergoing transformations which are getting more coverage because of global warming and superstorms. I'm reporting on these changes through my art. A larger installation could include interior transformations via backhoes and asphalt trucks, reflecting an over-mechanized society and the future of Long Island.

About me as an artist :
As it says on my website clevernonsense.com I work on a project usually until that point when money is required to proceed, at which point I switch to another project that doesn't require money (writing, recording, song writing, art-making, musical practice..) Beachcrap Art is perfect in this respect because I can proceed without money, and have been for many years. Digital photography is also like this, since one can proceed without spending on film, processing and prints. Artistic success often comes from working within limitations like the sonnet form or the rectangle, and finding materials by foraging is this kind of limitation and is very inspiring. The pieces have forms that I would never have imagined on my own, and that stimulates me and tickles many instinctive urges. Hopefully that comes through in the art, and informs all the variety of work in the installation..

PAUL JAY: Studied fine art at SVA under Vito Acconci, Brice Marden, Joseph Kosuth, Mel Bochner, Robert Ryman, Sol Lewitt, Carl Andre, Elizabeth Baker, Dorothea Rockburne....
 Group exhibitions (for Beachcrap Art):
Huntington Art League Oct. 2010 "The Lively Eye"
C.W. Post Schwartz Library Sept. 2009 "Best of Long Island"
paulmjay2@yahoo.com