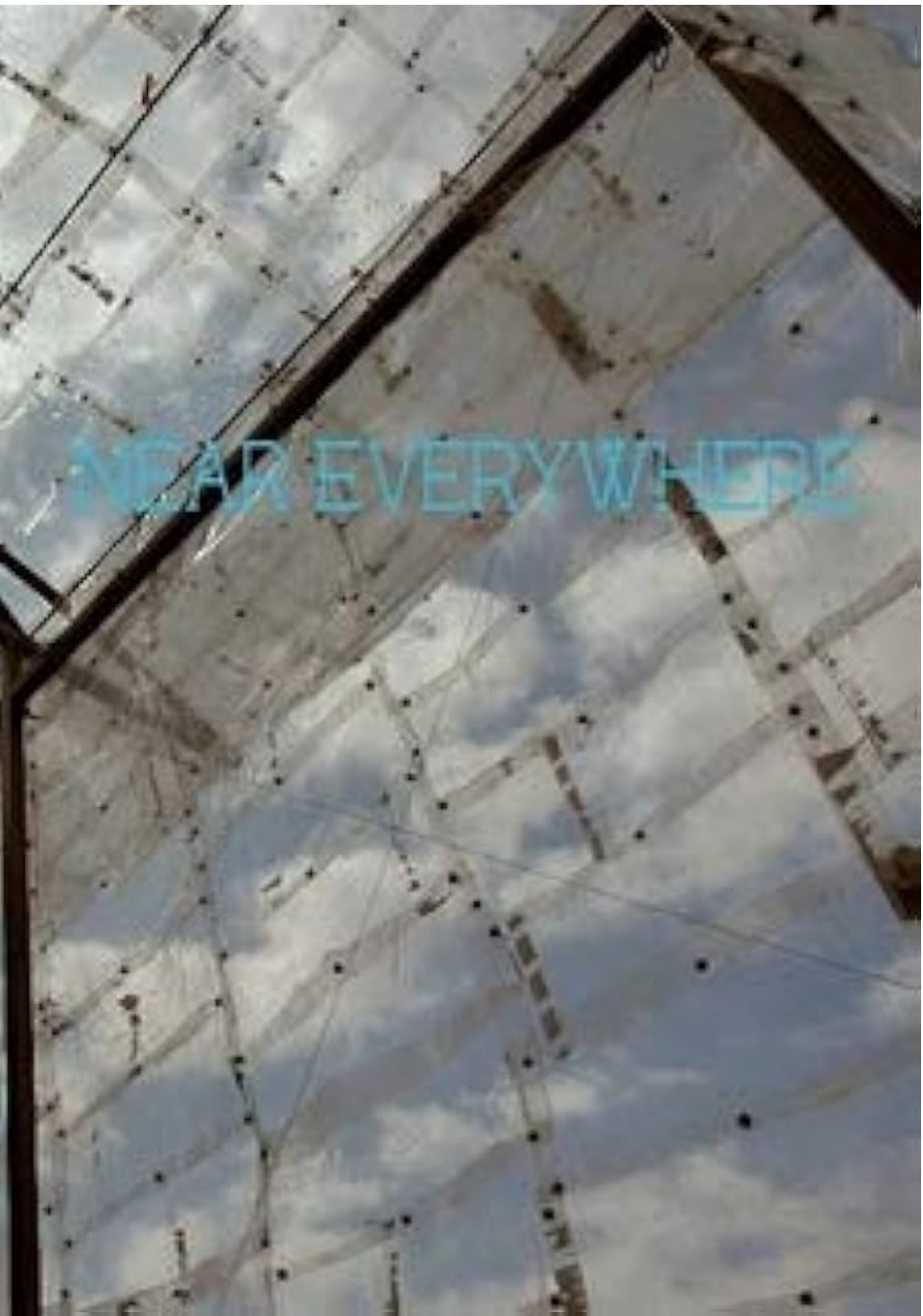

NEAR EVERYWHERE

Near Everywhere

Curated by
Ellen Driscoll

at
GASP
Brookline, MA
March 27th - May 2nd, 2009

Featured Artists

Troy David Ouellette
Deb Todd Wheeler
Marguerite Kahrl
Jane D. Marsching
Ellen Driscoll
Adriane Colburn
Vivan Sundaram

Near Everywhere

by Ellen Driscoll

Intimate acts of day-to-day living have far flung consequences on climate, on economic disparity, on the shape of the built environment. We rarely, however, imagine what the "butterfly effect" of such local acts might be. Yet in today's world, everything really is getting closer, and smaller--and we end up being "near everywhere." The inundation of the 24-hour news cycle bringing, us this news, can numb us. Instead of creatively interrupting the circuitry of consumption and waste, overload can actually reinforce the status quo. A paradigm shift, in which we can more creatively imagine the metastasizing energy binding local to global, through attention to provocative, and sensuous detail, is suggested by the grouping of works in this exhibition.

Near Everywhere brings together the work of seven artists from four countries, all of whom use a reconfigured poetics of landscape to bring global issues into intimate range through precise use of detail. In Jane D. Marsching's "Future North" (collaboration with Terreform), the great cities of the world have detached from their original sites due to rising waters, and have all clustered together in a "New North". In Adriane Colburn's "For the Deep" elaborate digitally mapped soundings of the Arctic have been flattened, and painstakingly reconstructed in paper by hand, as a way of touching, and bringing close---the unimaginable shift of this majestic landscape due to climate change.

Adriane Colburn
For the Deep, Phase One.
11' x 6 ' Paper 2008

Cover: Troy Ouelette
Fog Factory (interior)

This page and opposite page:
installation view of Near Everywhere
GASP, Brookline, MA
Next Page : view of exhibtion
from Boylston Street

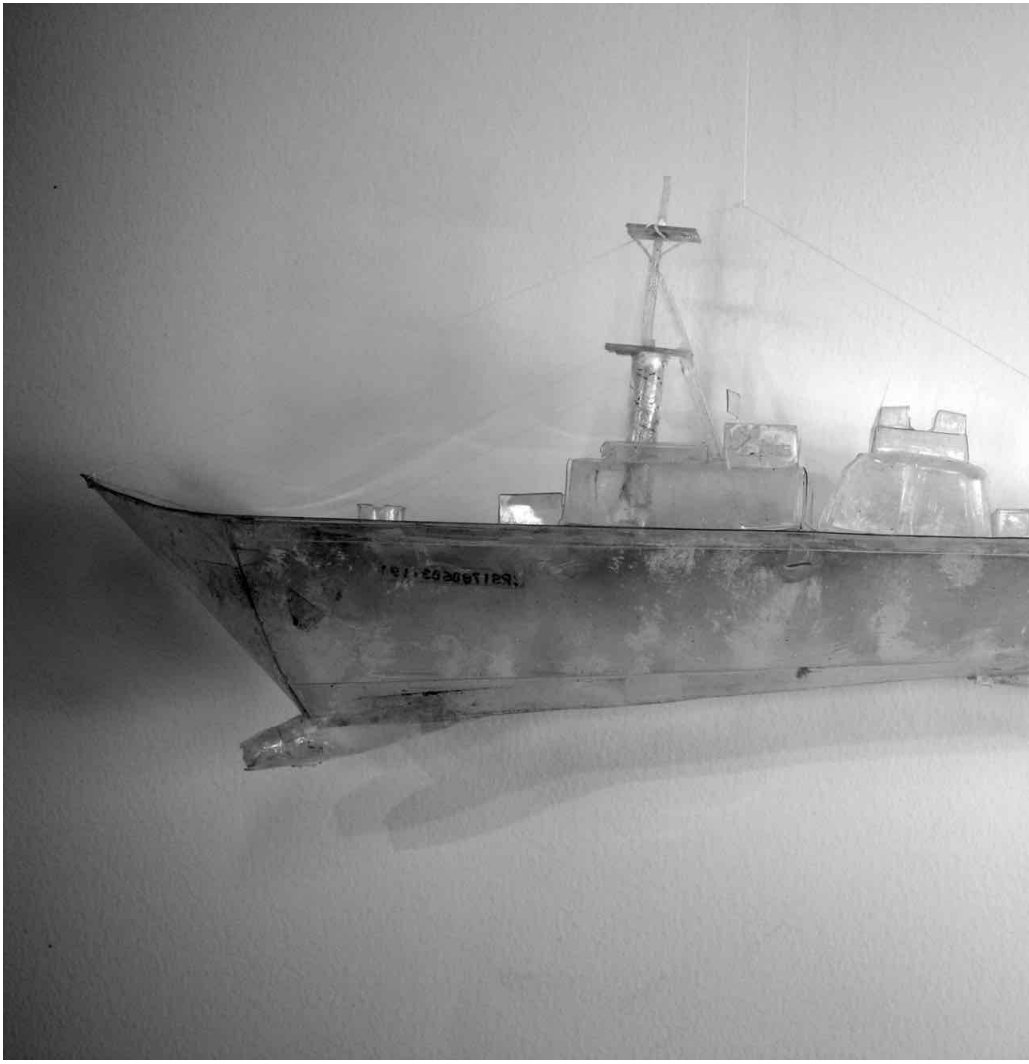
Troy David Oullette's "Detrituscope" is based on research into the 1989 Basil Convention to regulate the transboundary movements of waste from developed to developing countries, with poetic silences to capture innumerable treaty lapses. "Dronecopter" and "Destroyer/Creator," exist as two hypothetical models made from recycled PET bottles, of remote controlled machines for future use to measure ice, and to clear plastic from the Pacific gyre. Deb Todd Wheeler's "from the Biosphere (anonymous)" takes the same overload of daily plastic detritus, and cheerfully creates a botanist's taxonomy of flowers created by volunteers, and one giant floral mandala, a detail from "The Launch" as acts of recuperation and repair. Marguerite Kahrl uses hemp, a plant with a politicized past in the United States,

but cultivated and woven by her neighbors in Italy, to sew busts based on Goya's series of witnesses to war entitled Los Caprichos. Vivan Sundaram's video, "The Brief Ascension of Maryam Hussain" lyrically imagines the ascension of a lowly garbage worker from the streets of Delhi, out of his life as a garbage harvester and sorter, into an untroubled sky "above it all." Ellen Driscoll's dystopic landscapes, made from harvested plastic water bottles, imagine a future world of flood and drought, in which power structures are inverted, and the McMansion development plot is given over to spontaneous communities of slums.

As an ensemble of works, "Near Everywhere" encourages us to awaken to the daily details around us that remind us that "everything we need is already here."

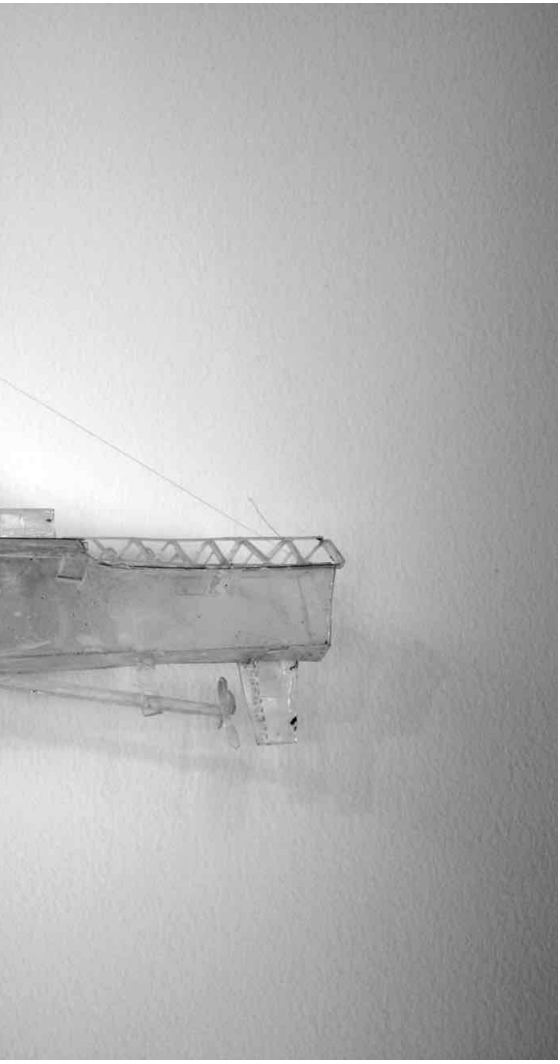
-Ellen Driscoll

Troy David Ouellette, Canada



This page: Destroyer / Creator, 2008
P.E.T plastic, thread, military glue
8"x 12"x 5"

previous Page: view from the street of
Near Everywhere ar GASP.

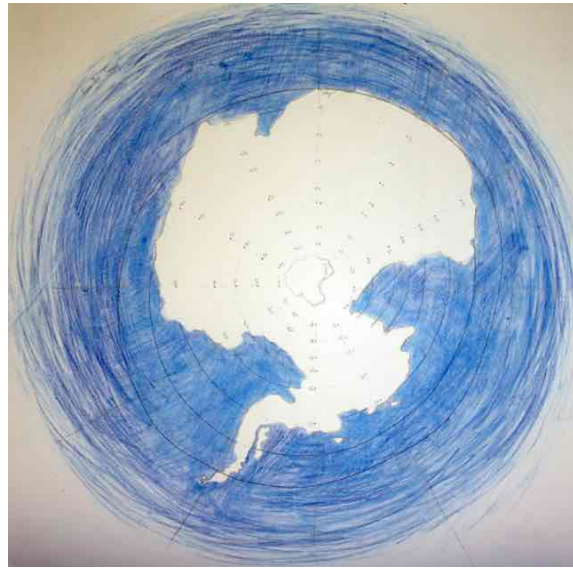


Similar to the recasting of spitfires as crop dusters or military ships as floating hospitals and rescue vessels, this work proposes a stripped-down version of a military destroyer. In this imagined scenario the destroyer is repurposed to clear rubbish from the currents that deposit vast masses of plastic in the North Pacific Gyre.

Detrituscope is a sound work based on statistics from the Basil Convention, which are audible in an inverted stethoscope. The Convention was initiated in 1989 and is principally devoted to the creation of a framework for controlling the transboundary movements of hazardous wastes, across international frontiers especially waste flowing from "developed" to "developing" countries. The silence in the audio piece mirrors the silence of the missing reports and gaps in the process of tracking movements, of what is deemed hazardous waste. Even with 170 signatories the convention is fraught with problems. These difficulties, in managing the movements of hazardous waste, range from: OECD reporting failures, jurisdictional disagreements at various governmental levels between countries and secretive dumping arrangements that circumvent the conventions ability to track hazardous waste. The definition of what constitutes hazardous waste also differs from state to state and established agreements, such as NAFTA, often trump the convention. The irony is that much of what is deemed to be hazardous is medical waste. In this case the irony is mirrored in the plastic, which once held such promise in the field of material production and chemistry during the mid twentieth century.

Detrituscope, 2007-2008
rivets, P.E.T. plastic, CD player, amplifier, speaker,
box tape
dimensions variable

Dronecopter, 2008
P.E.T. plastic, rivets, aluminum tripod, drywall plugs
8"x 12"x 12"
60" atop tripod mount



This view of Antarctica that accompanies the Dronecopter model, (opposite page), shows the landing sites for collecting ice core samples in a mock geological survey. Plotted using spiral and longitudinal coordinates, this speculative mission is tasked with collecting data regarding climactic conditions, in the hopes of determining a course of action. In contrast to the Northwest Passage, which is soon to be opened up in the Canadian north, Antarctica still holds both mystery and fascination as being remote and pristine.

Polar Survey Mission, 2008
graphite, pencil crayon on rag paper,
23"x 23"

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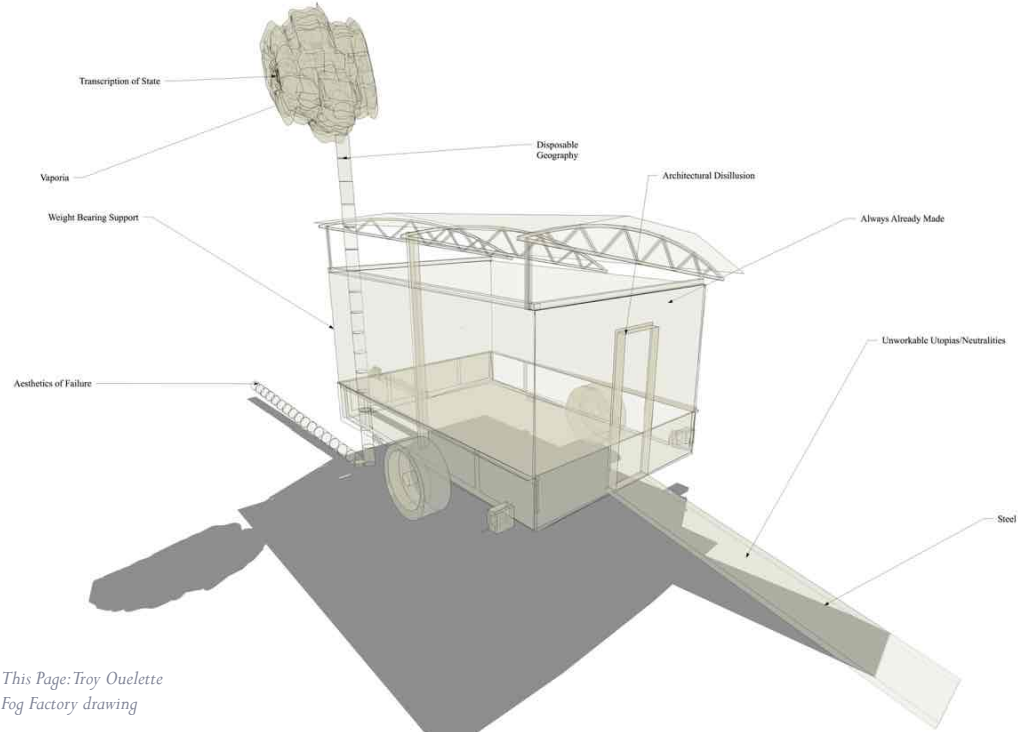

This Page: Troy Ouelette
Fog Factory drawing