

Press Release

Plastic, The New Coal

Curated by **Monique Verdin and Patricia Watts**

On view:

March 15 - April 15, 2025

Thursday - Saturday, 12 - 4pm CST

Opening Reception:

Saturday, March 15, 2025, 1 - 4pm CST

Location:

The Descendants Project, Education and Cultural District

167 Alexis Court, Vacherie, Louisiana 70090

Located along the Mississippi River in St. John the Baptist Parish

Featuring work by:

Hannah Chalew, Shana M griffin, Heather Bird Harris, Pamela Longobardi, Juan Carlos Quintana, Renee Royale, Luba Zygarewicz, and outdoor labyrinth by The Descendants Project in partnership with Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies and Design Jones

Plastic, the New Coal confronts plastics global truths and local challenges along the final leg of the Mississippi River where petrochemical facilities line its banks. Known globally as Cancer Alley, residents of the lower Mississippi have called it home for several generations. The exhibition is sited at Descendants Project education and cultural district in the historic freetown of Wallace, Louisiana, located down river from Saint James Parish where the Taiwanese Formosa Plastics Corp currently wants to build one of the largest plastics complexes in the world; the Sunshine Plant, including facilities across 2,400 acres where they will produce resins and polymers used to manufacture products like single-use plastic bags and artificial turf.

Artists have been invited to share works that engage plastics as both subject and material, responding to the histories and current realities of how plastic production, a ubiquitous by-product of the fossil fuel industry, has severely impacted the region. The works span from collected soils at former plantation sites to a painting made with mineral pigments and plastic fragments representing plastic islands collecting in our oceans. Additional works include wall sculpture made with collected beach plastics, photography and video of landscapes documenting ecological and racialized violence, a large painting mapping chemical production along the Mississippi, and outdoor site installations made with natural and plastic materials.

Plastic, the New Coal was selected through apexart's Open Call. For more information and images visit <https://apexart.org/watts-verdin.php> or contact maryam.ghoreishi@apexart.org.

Monique Verdin is a citizen of the Houma Nation, an interdisciplinary artist and storyteller documenting relationships between environment, culture and change. She stewards the Land Memory Bank & Seed Exchange, and is the Women's Earth and Climate Action Network's Gulf South food and medicine sovereignty program manager.

Patricia Watts is curator and founder of ecoartspace, an online platform for artists addressing environmental issues. Since 2000, approximately 2,000 artists and scientists have participated from 29 countries. Watts has curated over 30 art and ecology exhibitions working with artists concerned about the health of our planet.

apexart's program supporters past and present include the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, the Kettering Family Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Buhl Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Spencer Brownstone, the Kenneth A. Cowin Foundation, Epstein Teicher Philanthropies, The Greenwich Collection Ltd., William Talbot Hillman Foundation/Affirmation Arts Fund, the Fifth Floor Foundation, The Puffin Foundation, the Trust for Mutual Understanding, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, public funds from Creative Engagement, supported by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and administered by LMCC, funds from NYSCA Electronic Media/Film in Partnership with Wave Farm: Media Arts Assistance Fund, with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, as well as the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the New York State Legislature.

#PlastictheNewCoal

apexart - vacherie, louisiana



Juan Carlos Quintana, *Tour #2 (Sacrifice Zone)*, 2022, 100 x 218 inches

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