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Environmental Art

The term environmental art can be used to refer to art describing the natural world or celebrating the natural world. It can also be used to describe art that directly addresses environmental issues. This style of environmental art can also be called ecological art or eco-art.

Environmental art can act as a powerful learning tool. Many artists have collaborated with organisations to create artworks that raise awareness and educate the public on an environmental issue. It is for this reason that MobileMuster worked with artist Chris Jordan to create a large-scale artwork out of old mobile phones waiting to be recycled. The artwork, built at Federation Square during the Sustainable Living Festival, was designed to bring attention to Australia's growing mobile phone e-waste problem. The public was invited to participate in the artwork by recycling their old mobile phones in the lead up to the festival and interact with the artwork at the festival. The artwork also featured the number 23 which refers to the 23 million old mobile phones that are currently unused and ready to be recycled. To view the artwork visit www.mobilemuster.com.au/schools

Artist Profile: Chris Jordan

Chris Jordan is one of the world's most important artists of social commentary. He is an acclaimed artist and environmental activist and an example of the important role art plays in bringing awareness to the issue of sustainability.

His artwork explores consumer behaviour and the impact of behaviour on the environment. He creates large scale artworks, sometimes using waste products such as plastic bags and aluminium cans to depict the detrimental impact of mass consumption. His artwork has been described as both aesthetically beautiful, engaging and thought-provoking, representing the beauty and horror of our consumer behaviour.

In his Running the Numbers project Chris Jordan uses powerful statistics to convey messages and educate the public. His artwork may make his audiences feel unsettled as it explores confronting issues on the negative impact of our behaviour on the environment. Ultimately it is hoped that audiences walk away inspired with the ability to effect change on an individual level to turn these statistics around.

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Visit [Chris Jordan's Official Web-Site](#), and view his work which can be grouped into the following series.

- *Intolerable Beauty: Portraits of American Mass Consumption* (2003–2006). A series of large format photographs 2005 depicting the magnitude of America's waste and consumption.
- *In Katrina's Wake: Portraits of Loss from an Unnatural Disaster* (2005). A series of photographs taken in 2005 depicting the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.
- *Running The Numbers I: An American Self Portrait* (2006–2009). A series of photographic mosaics depicting visualisations of statistics related to America's consumerism, social problems, and addictions.
- *Running the Numbers II: Portraits of global mass culture* (2009–2010). A series of photographic mosaics depicting visualisations of statistics showing the magnitude of global consumerism.
- *Midway: Message from the Gyre* (2009–ongoing) A series of photographs depicting the effect of plastic Midway Atoll and on the Laysan albatrosses who mistake the plastic it for food - [the Midway video blog](#).

Watch: [Chris Jordan: Turning Powerful Stats into Art](#) [video], (11 minutes)

In this talk Chris Jordan shows us an arresting view of what Western culture looks like. His supersized images picture some almost unimaginable statistics, like the astonishing number of paper cups or plastic bags that we consume each day. Chris Jordan creates his artwork from small objects arranged to create larger images, sometimes based on famous artwork. His artwork transforms statistics into artwork that can be both seen and felt.

This TED Talk reveals that Chris Jordan is a powerful speaker as well as a gifted artist. He uses his work to draw attention to behaviours we unconsciously engage in on a collective level in order to help us connect with the consequences and posing the question “how do we change?”

Further reading and related resources:

Jordan, C. (Director/Producer) (2012). *Midway: Stories from the gyre* [Video]. Trailer available from <http://www.midwayfilm.com/>

TEDxRainier (Producer), Jordan, C. (Presenter). (2012). *Chris Jordan: Midway journey* [Video]. Available from http://tedxrainier.com/12/speaker_jordan.asp