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## Turning junk into art

**Huntington Beach Art Center to unveil 'Escape from the Landfill' show that deals with plastics, consumerism, energy consumption.**

July 11, 2012 | By Imran Vittachi



Olga Lah stands with her piece "Propagate." ... (SCOTT SMELTZER,...)

The artist traced her giant baby doll concept back to when she cleared out her 10-year-old son's room of toys he no longer touched.

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"I had just been stashing things in his room," Joyce Dallal said, describing the size of her now 13-year-old son's past playtime footprint on the environment. "I was just amazed at the amount of stuff I pulled out of his room. It filled several garbage bags."

Dallal soon discovered that it wasn't so easy to get rid of the boy's unwanted toys. She tried to give them away to neighbors and the local Goodwill, but they wouldn't take them.

The experience got her thinking.

Dallal, who's based in Culver City, eventually conceived the idea for "Receptacle." To make it, she erected a 10-foot tall sculpture of a baby — made of wire meshing used to make trash cans — then nourished it by "feeding" it discarded toys, objects constructed out of plastics and other not-so-environmentally-friendly materials.

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"Receptacle" will invade the Huntington Beach Art Center as part of a group exhibit opening Saturday night. Dubbed "Escape from the Landfill," the show, featuring sculptures and installations by Dallal and two other Southland artists — Cynthia Minet and Olga Lah — deals with the place of plastics, consumerism and energy consumption have in modern-day society, HBAC officials said.

Lah, who is based in Gardena, enlisted locals to help install her piece, which is made up of around 150,000 plastic container caps that decorate the HBAC gallery walls.

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Minet, who also works out of Culver City, has created life-sized sculptures of a camel and a pair of oxen, which she made out of repurposed and recycled materials.

According to her artist's statement, the oxen are plowing through a field of plastic bottles and they are lit from within by LED lights.

The creatures "glow with a life force that escapes our landfills," wrote Minet in her statement. "Underlying their playful construction, [these] sculptures question whether ultimately we will evolve to become the materials that we can't do without and point to humankind's dependence on electricity."

"Escape from the Landfill" will run through Sept. 1 and be accompanied by a series of nighttime panel discussions, dubbed "Late 8," about garbage, recycling and similar topics.

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