

## WORLD

# 13 Artists Who Turned Ocean Trash Into Amazing Art

Marisa Gertz | June 8, 2016

## In recognition of World Oceans Day

Today is World Oceans Day, “a global day of ocean celebration and collaboration for a better future.” This year’s focus is the prevention of plastic ocean pollution and events are taking place worldwide in order to learn about the challenges facing our oceans, clean up local beaches, and get involved in marine conservation efforts.

Studies on the issue of marine debris have reached some dire conclusions. Last year, the journal *Science* reported 8 million metric tons of plastic end up in oceans each year, while *PNAS* found that 90% of seabirds have ingested the substance. In January, the World Economic Forum predicted that the world’s oceans will be filled with more plastic mass than fish mass by 2050.

Marine plastic is a special threat because it does not fully degrade, instead breaking down into smaller and smaller pieces called microplastics. Ocean dwellers, such as sea turtles and fish, can mistake the debris for food, leading to digestive issues and starvation.

Artists and activists have taken notice, using marine plastic as a medium, like paint or clay, to create artwork. Although often aesthetically beautiful, the works point to the concerning profusion of these plastics in our environment.



Alejandro Durán—Brotos (Shoots), 2014

In recognition of World Oceans Day, we present 13 artists, from sculptors to photographers, to filmmakers, who use marine plastic in their work.

### Alejandro Durán: Washed Up

Alejandro Durán is a multimedia artist from Mexico City, now based in Brooklyn. The meticulously arranged photographs in his *Washed Up* series aim to “reveal the pervasive impact of consumer culture on the natural world” and “the fraught intersections of man and nature.” On [his website](#), he encourages fans of his work to keep informed on the issue of plastic pollution and to make changes in their lives to reduce their impact on the environment.



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