

A Second Chance by Yesenia Veamatahau

Nestled among the architectural and dendritic beauty of Santa Clara University's campus, the de Saisset Museum offers itself as a haven for unconventional forms of art. *Reduce, Reuse, Re-Imagine* is currently on display as a testament to the worth of overlooked, even disparaged objects. The exhibit will run from through February 2nd and features the work of professional artists as well as Santa Clara students. A grant from SCU's Sustainable Resource Initiative breathed life into this project. Accordingly, the contributors have implemented a Zero Waste policy in their creations, such that the materials in their pieces were gathered from sources typically considered "garbage." Surprisingly, the end result is not only aesthetically pleasing but inherently thought-provoking. A new lens is placed on the audience's eyes, allowing them to see refuse in an appealing light. Thus, a ripple effect occurs, bringing sustainability, waste, and finite resources from the back of people's minds to the forefront. *Reduce, Reuse, Re-Imagine* entices viewers to alter the way in which they perceive their surroundings and value the inanimate objects in their periphery.

One of the most eye-catching pieces is placed at the entrance to the exhibit. Contrasted against a purely white wall, "Green Apples" by Sudhu Tewari looks as though it found its way out of a science-fiction film from another decade. An overturned colander, with springs of varying hues and sizes poking out of its holes, rests atop a small, brown table. This component is attached to an outdated Apple computer monitor. An inscription on the upturned bottom of the colander, apparently written in black marker, reads "pluck me with fingers not sticks." Nervously at first, and then with delight, one plucks away at the curly coils protruding from the kitchen gadget. Each strum is met with a satisfying "sproing" and corresponds with the appearance of a small green light on the television screen. This light brings to mind the image of Gatsby, staring rapturously at a very similar illumination emanating from Daisy's dock across the water. In addition, dependent upon the pluck of the springs, a half-white, half-orange circle of small LED lights on the colander flashes blue in various patterns. The overall compilation exudes an indescribably nostalgic vibe, reminding one of stories read in the past or perhaps a time machine constructed during childhood days. Knowing that "Green Apples" was created in 2007, viewers realize Tewari could have used electronics more appropriate to the time; however, given the overarching theme of the exhibit, his use of technological dinosaurs adds a deeper significance that could not be achieved otherwise. The

outdated materials retain value despite their age; they are no longer branded obsolete but used to create a work of art.

Across the room from this interactive piece, an unorthodox American flag invites attention. Ryan Carrington's "Class Pride Pursuit" gives discarded clothes a renewed purpose in the composition of a national symbol. Scraps of designer suits and carpenter's pants, rarely found in such close proximity in day to day life, create the fabric for the flag's stripes. The brown and black pattern is a stark contrast to the usual red and white. As the viewer's eye is drawn across the flag, s/he notes another marked difference. In the upper left hand corner, blue collared shirts have been stitched together to create the backdrop for the stars. The stars themselves again deviate from the accepted coloration, since they are stitched together out of red neckties. The message Carrington is attempting to communicate through his piece becomes increasingly clear. Blue collar is indicative of a working class person, while someone who wears a necktie to work often enjoys a higher status in life. While some may argue that as a result of progressive reform America has become a society where equal opportunity abounds, the fact "Class Pride Pursuit" was created in 2013 acknowledges the continued presence of a social hierarchy. As his title aptly suggests, Carrington has created a visual representation of the struggle between the classes in America. The metaphor is given more power in light of its material: the literal garb of each dichotomized group.

Complementing the aforementioned pieces in both style and significance, many more works of art are showcased in *Reduce, Reuse, Re-Imagine*. For instance, Sara Ryan's "CD Fish" and Philip Martinelli's "Yorick's Skull and the Fall of Sparrow" are both excellent works created in just this past year. Each piece featured in the exhibit attests to the powerful beauty found in redemption. As one walks among the unconventional displays, the conviction that items written off as garbage can actually possess more value than anticipated is cemented. One needs only to recognize the innate worth in all objects, especially in relation to an environment of finite resources. Within the welcoming walls of the de Saisset Museum, trash receives another chance, a new purpose, and a restored meaning. *Reduce, Reuse, Re-Imagine* succeeds not only in providing an aesthetically pleasing experience, it instills a fervor for appreciation and sustainability outside the exhibit as well.