

FLOW by Katharine Harvey

I have always been captivated by the reflectiveness and translucency of water - how it is both inviting and unknowable. Light has a similar kind of mystery to it, being both invisible and visible. There is magic in these natural elements, where one senses the universe in an associative rather than a literal way.

The same duality appears in over 20 installations I have made since 2001, giant wall curtains and chandeliers made of discarded plastic containers, which I have collected and reused over the years. Corporate clients like Brookfield Properties and Cadillac Fairview have commissioned me to create these large-scale works for their building lobbies. The installations offer a way to educate tenants about recycling. Similarly, the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California installed my permanent piece to show visitors how plastic pollution destroys marine life.

My assemblages are alluring from a distance, designed to simulate the pulsating energy of falling water or the luminous qualities of crystal. At the same time, the transparent detritus reads close-up as an environmental message on consumer excess. It is a strange disconnect, to be enticed by a beautiful object only to acknowledge it is environmentally harmful. This series speaks to the growing awareness about climate change. However, it also offers insight into the human psyche and our complicated relationship with the natural world.

“FLOW”, 2020, recycled plastic objects, Plexiglas, mirror, 17 x 17 x 11 inches.

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