

# Recyclables

Alice Bradshaw



Alice Bradshaw - Recyclables

Artist in Residence, Brighthouse  
Household Waste Recycling Centre

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# THANKS

This publication is produced for Brighthouse Arts Festival 2018.

Thank you to Tom Ratcliffe, Arts for Brighthouse and Suez for arranging and supporting my residency at the Brighthouse HWRC.

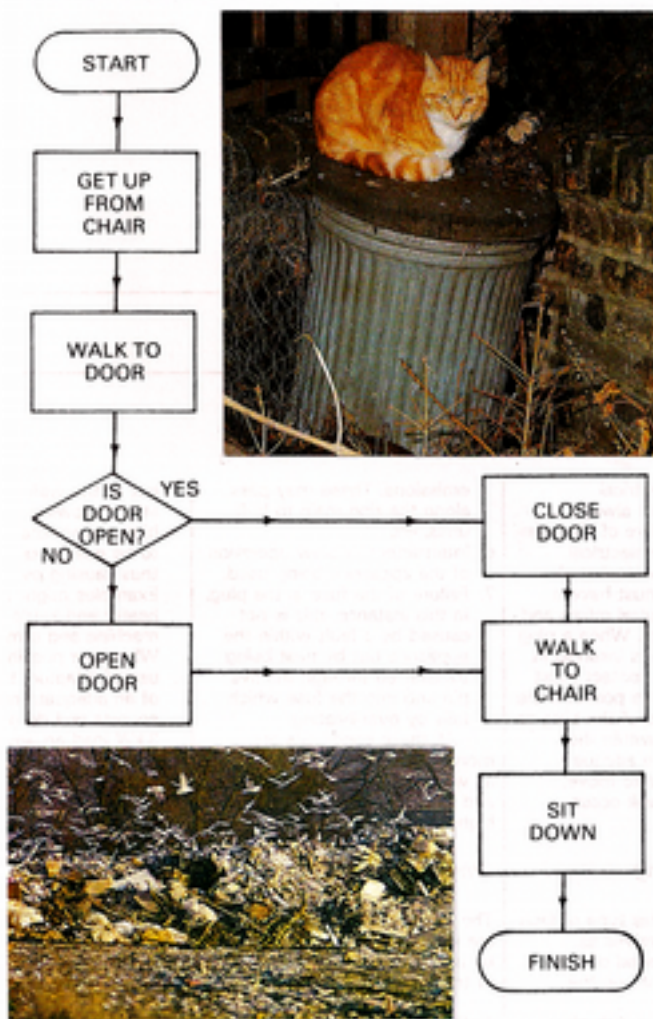
Thank you to the Suez team at Brighthouse HWRC for making me feel so welcome and entertaining my rubbish conversations for a month.

Thank you 509 Arts for supporting the production of this publication and exhibition at Brighthouse Library.

Thank you Calderdale Libraries for hosting the end of residency exhibition.

Thank you to everybody who stopped to talk to me about their rubbish.

# MANUAL



# INTRODUCTION

My interest in rubbish and its changeable value as both social object and art material is a long standing obsession. Rubbish is a temporary object-state before an item is reused, recycled or decomposed. The object history and the processes involved in deciding that something is rubbish and throwing it away are particularly of interest. The conversations we have about rubbish are something I place great value on.

I've been collecting, cataloguing and exhibiting rubbish for my Museum of Contemporary Rubbish since 2010 and 'Talking Rubbish' as research based practice since 2014 whilst I was undertaking my Masters by Research at the University of Huddersfield. My desire to undertake an artist residency in a recycling centre stems from wanting to see the everyday operations first hand and wanting to talk rubbish with the people discarding it and the people processing it.

# RECYCLING PROCESS



Rubbish items known as 'recyclables' are identified, categorised and sorted according to material composition. Some recyclables are sent to the on-site charity shop to be resold back into object circulation and others are sent to various processing centres to be recycled into reusable materials.

The process of identifying recyclables worthy of going to the charity shop is undertaken by staff who decide if they have potential resale value.



## RESIDENCY PROCESS

The residency process involved photographing recyclables and finding out about the objects' history; their provenance. These Rubbish Conversations were semi-structured interviews which involved asking where the objects were from, what they were used for and why they were no longer needed.

Recyclables were photographed at the skips and in the charity shop and I also researched the site. Some objects were taken back to my studio to work with. I talked rubbish extensively with the staff on site and asked about the recyclable anomalies that they found interesting or unusual.

This process, the recyclables and their stories have inspired a new series of works on paper, a series of prints, a film, a sculpture and a public performance on site.

# PHOTOGRAPHS

This is a 1978 aerial photograph of Brighouse which I was shown during my residency. The colour fading is from light exposure and the rip is from removing it from the frame where it had become water damaged.



Using photography to document my process digitally records and archives the recyclables and histories. I also used photography to create some self-portraits with recyclables.

## SELF-PORTRAITS



One of the first recyclables I discovered in the charity shop was this giant plastic yellow pepper which still had its original barcode on it (£16.99). I thought what a hideous and pointless object it was and why would anyone want it? I instinctively bought it – for a bargain 50p.

This series of self-portraits place the recyclables in centre focus and completely obscures my face. The recyclables I chose for these self-portraits have reflective surfaces and also interesting sound qualities.



# SORTING

Correctly sorting recyclables is the main function of the recycling centre. For some recyclables it is not obvious which skip or bin they belong, so the main question people ask is “where does this go?” Blue glass goes in the clear glass bin.



Sorting the information and images I've gleaned from my residency has been a complex process, with 'mixed composition' interrelated ideas and interests. The resulting exhibition, film and publication begin to unpick some of these ideas.

## ORO ANTICO



One recyclable I photographed was this tin of yellow ochre paint – similar to one of the oldest known pigments found in cave paintings. Oro Antico translates as ‘antique gold,’ which looks nothing like this colour.

The story I gleaned about this paint is it was a family member's who had recently split from their partner and was redecorating the house they used to share.



There are a lot of house clearances after a death or a relationship break down. People want to dispose of these unwanted items they've come into possession of through loss, downsizing or moving on with their lives - starting afresh without the object memories of a previous life.

Oro Antico paint became symbolic of broken relationships and broken objects, with its name referencing the passing fashions and trends of household styles. I dubbed it 'Split Paint'.



## EDGES & PERIPHERIES

I also kept seeing yellow everywhere on site: Road markings and 'no parking here' lines, signage and skips, edges and peripheries in high visibility yellow. Some paint was new and vibrant, some old and faded with sun bleaching.





## COLOUR MATCHING

I wanted to use some of this Oro Antico 'Split Paint' to highlight edges and tears on objects and collages. I visited Seagulls Paint in Leeds which sells recycled paint and they colour matched by eye one small pot of this colour.











## FAKE KINTSUGI

Kintsugi is a Japanese technique of 'golden repair': using gold enriched glue to mend important items and simultaenously drawing attention to the imperfections.

As my colour-matched yellow is a poor version 'fake' of a poor immitation 'antique gold', I was curious to see what it would look like on the breaks of objects inspired by Kintsugi technique.

On my second-to-last day as artist in residence at the Recycling Centre, I was given a small bone china plate of Bishop's Bonner Cottage by someone doing a relative's house clearance. The building is the oldest in Dereham, "vitually untouched by the 21st century," now a museum and apparently about 30 miles from where my late mother was born and grew up. We talked at length about Norfolk and our respective memories of visiting there.

The plate was broken and mended with a lot of transparent glue. I took it back to my studio and painted over the glue with my fake Oro Antico.



My residency concludes with this publication, a film, a performance on site, an exhibition at Brighthouse Library, plus ongoing Rubbish Conversations.

# RUBBISH CONVERSATIONS

I'm always keen to talk rubbish with willing participants! If you would like a rubbish conversation please do get in touch:

[contemporaryrubbish@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:contemporaryrubbish@yahoo.co.uk)

You can see more of my work and writing about rubbish here:

[www.alicebradshaw.co.uk](http://www.alicebradshaw.co.uk)

[museumofcontemporaryrubbish.blogspot.com](http://museumofcontemporaryrubbish.blogspot.com)

[contemporaryrubbish.wordpress.com](http://contemporaryrubbish.wordpress.com)

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[vimeo.com/user4403120](https://vimeo.com/user4403120)

[www.a-n.co.uk/blogs/rubbish-residency](http://www.a-n.co.uk/blogs/rubbish-residency)



# IMAGE LIST

- p.1 & 9      Self Portrait (Yellow Pepper) *photograph*
- p.4          MANUAL *collage of discarded images*
- p.6          SKIPS *photograph*
- p.8          Brighthouse Aerial View (1978) *found photograph, photographer unknown*
- p.10        Self Portrait (Bin Lid) *photograph*
- p.11        Blue Glass Bottle *photograph*
- p.12        Oro Antico Paint *photograph*
- p.13        Discarded Yellow Chair *photograph*
- p.14        Skip, curb, storage unit, WASTE, curb, no parking *photographs*
- p.15        Colour Matching at Seagulls Paint, Leeds *photograph*
- p.16        Chair *discarded image with fake Oro Antico paint*
- p.17        Bed *discarded image with fake Oro Antico paint*
- p.18        Cooker *discarded image with fake Oro Antico paint*
- p.19        Sofa *discarded image with fake Oro Antico paint*
- p.21        Household Waste *broken and repaired*  
Museum plate with fake Oro Antico

All images by Alice Bradshaw (2018) unless otherwise stated



[www.brighouseartsfestival.co.uk](http://www.brighouseartsfestival.co.uk)

