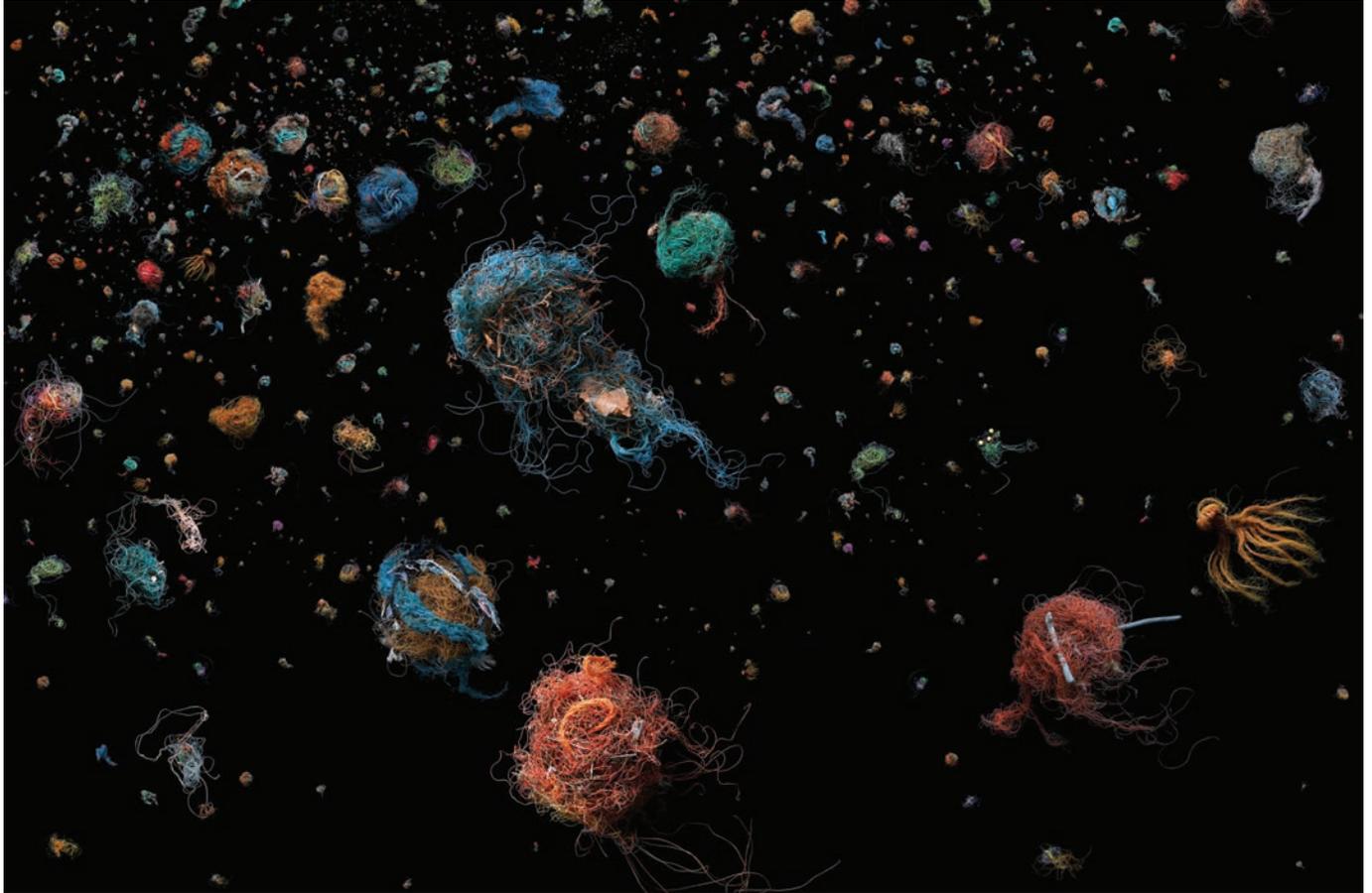


Press Release



Bird's Nest, from the series *Soup*
© Mandy Barker

Our Plastic Ocean Mandy Barker

28 June to 21 September 2019

Our Plastic Ocean, by international award-winning photographer Mandy Barker, addresses the current global crisis of marine plastic pollution. Barker collects debris from shorelines across the world and transforms them into powerful and captivating images. The exhibition, which premieres at Impressions Gallery, is the first major touring retrospective of her work.

At first glance, Barker's images are reminiscent of sea creatures and corals suspended in a dark void beneath the sea, but closer inspection reveals a more disturbing reality. From footballs to fishing nets, cotton-buds to coffee-cup lids, Barker highlights the incongruous plastic items now ubiquitous in our seas. Currently, 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the world's oceans every year and if these trends continue, our oceans could contain more plastic than fish by 2050.

From accompanying scientists on an expedition from Hawaii to Japan, tracing the debris of the 2011 Tsunami, to a voyage on board Greenpeace's Beluga II to the Inner Hebrides, Mandy Barker has followed a trail of plastic pollution across the globe. The images resulting from these expeditions have become some of the most recognisable visual commentary on marine plastic pollution.

Our Plastic Ocean spans a decade of Barker's work including the series **Soup**, meticulously detailed composite images of discarded plastic objects; **Albatross** revealing 276 pieces of plastic found inside the stomach of a 90 day old albatross chick; and **Beyond Drifting**, which sees Barker trace the footsteps of nineteenth century botanist John Vaughan Thompson who collected plankton specimens, the ocean's most basic life-form.

The exhibition also features notebooks and journals documenting Barker's voyages and research; a case of sand permeated with

microplastics recovered from a Hawaiian beach; and an installation of suspended footballs, crowdsourced from around the world for her 2014 World Cup project **Penalty**.

Barker says, "For the past decade, I have researched and documented the impact of oceanic waste, combining art and science to raise awareness. I hope to inspire positive action in tackling this increasing environmental challenge which is of global concern."

Curator Angela Sheard says, "We are proud to launch the first major UK touring retrospective of Mandy Barker's work at Impressions Gallery. Barker's images are both rich in detail and hard-hitting in subject. As a charity that helps people understand the world through photography, it's important for us to share this compelling work which explores an urgent and timely issue."

An Impressions Gallery touring exhibition curated by Angela Sheard.



Above: *Transform*, from the series *Hong Kong Soup: 1826; Plividas chloticus*, (Barbie doll arm) from the series *Beyond Drifting*.

Opposite, top left: *Clothing & Material*, from the series *Indefinite*

Opposite, top right: *Soup: 500+*

Opposite, below: 276 pieces found in the stomach of a single 90 day old albatross chick, from *Albatross*



Notes to Editors

For further information, images, or to arrange an interview with Mandy Barker, contact Angela Sheard, Associate Curator at angelasheard@impressions-gallery.com or phone 01274 737843.

Credits *Our Plastic Ocean* is an Impressions Gallery touring exhibition curated by Angela Sheard. The printing and mounting sponsor for *Our Plastic Ocean* is Spectrum Photographic, Brighton.

Events Artist Talk and Summer Party, Saturday 13 July 2019, 2.00pm to 4.00pm

Book New hardback publication *Altered Ocean* is published by Overlapse and will be available from May 2019. The book features an overview of Barker's work and an introduction by internationally renowned marine scientist Professor Richard Thompson OBE, director of the Marine Institute in Plymouth.

Exhibition venue and opening hours:

Impressions Gallery, Centenary Square, Bradford, BD1 1SD

Tuesday to Thursday 10am to 6pm

Friday and Saturday 10am to 5pm

Closed Sundays and Mondays

Admission Free

Tel. 01274 737843

Email enquiries@impressions-gallery.com

Social Media

Twitter: @ImpGalleryPhoto

Facebook: Impressions Gallery

Instagram: @ImpGalleryPhoto

#OurPlasticOcean

Mandy Barker (Hull, UK, 1964) is an international award-winning photographer whose work involving marine plastic debris has received global recognition. Barker's work has been published in over 40 countries including; *National Geographic*, *TIME Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times*, *Smithsonian*, *The New Scientist*, *The Explorer's Journal*, *UNESCO*, *The British Journal of Photography*, *FOAM Magazine*, *GUP*, and *The RPS Journal*. She has exhibited internationally from Inner Mongolia, China, to the United Nations Headquarters, including the Aperture Foundation in New York, the Victoria & Albert Museum and Photographers' Gallery in London, and the Science & Technology Park in Hong Kong.

Barker was shortlisted for the Prix Pictet Award SPACE 2017, the world's leading photography award for sustainability and is a recipient of the 2018 National Geographic Society Grant for Research and Exploration. She has spoken internationally about her work at Stanford University, California; the Science and Technology Park in Hong Kong; and was the opening keynote speaker for the EuroConference GlobalCapital Sustainable & Responsible Capital Markets Forum in Amsterdam in 2018. In May 2019 she will travel with a team of scientists to Henderson Island, a remote, uninhabited Pacific island which has the highest density of plastic waste anywhere in the world.

Impressions Gallery is a charity that helps people understand the world through photography. The Gallery collaborates with photographers and organisations nationally and internationally to commission, exhibit and publish photography. Our work with new emerging photographers and often-overlooked artists cements and builds their careers. Established in 1972 as one of the first specialist photographic galleries in Europe, Impressions has grown to become one of the UK's leading independent venues for contemporary photography. We are located in the heart of Bradford, UNESCO City of Film. We work with local communities and young people to make photography accessible to all through our formal and informal education. Impressions is funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation and supported by Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

www.impressions-gallery.com

Arts Council England believes that great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. They support activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Between 2018 and 2022, they will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

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