



*Trash from the Hooch #15*

Archival Pigment Print

Teal Gordon

A twice-daily 20-minute walk to the train station over the past year and a half opened my eyes to the vast amount of trash that litters our earth. During this period of time I had a class with Pam Longobardi, an avid environmental artist who was planning the *Plastic Gyre Symposium* to spread awareness on the effects of plastic on the planet. Seeing the effect of trash on nature first hand, I was driven to contribute to the conversation.

Many artists engage in the discussion that Pam Longobardi aroused. Work by artists such as Huang Xu, Vik Muniz, and Mandy Barker struck me in particular. Huang Xu photographs plastic bags to look like abstract forms that allude to organic matter in their easy flowing appearance. Vik Muniz creates large-scale portraits from the refuse of garbage dumps. Mandy Barker uses a knolling technique to create colorful explosions of trash. The fact that these three artists created something beautiful out of something disgusting was intriguing and inspired me to create the series *Trash from the Hooch*.

*Trash from the Hooch* consists of images of trash that I picked up from the Chattahoochee River at Riverside Park during a yearly cleanup event called Sweep the Hooch. I photographed the trash in a commercially lit studio style to emphasize –the link to consumerism and resulting waste. I am interested in the conflict between looking at something toxic, but in such a beautiful light.

I brought the trash into the shooting studio and photographed it with commercial lighting to emphasize the link between product consumerism and waste. I am interested in the conflict between looking at something toxic bathed in such beautiful light.