



Purse, 2017. 45" x 16" x 3/4", Salvaged banner, salvaged adhesive vinyl, thread, adhesive.



Vuggy, 2016. Approx. 20" x 36", Salvaged vinyl, plastic, thread, thumbtacks, 2016.



Ginger Crunch, 2010. 38" x 12" x 5", Salvaged adhesive vinyl, metal.



Plastiglomerate Sample. 2013. Displayed by Jazvac as found object sculptures, plastiglomerate is a new stone type by a collaborative research team including Jazvac, geologist Patricia Corcoran and oceanographer Charles Moore. The stone is made by the fusion of molten plastic with beach sediment, such as sand, wood, coral and rock. Photo credit: Jeff Elstone.



Fungible, 2012, salvaged adhesive vinyl, adhesive, aluminum, 25 cm x 46 cm x 46 cm, Photo credit: Dave Kemp



Salps, 2012. 42" x 28" x 1", Salvaged adhesive vinyl, metal, chip clips.



Pizzly, 2011. 4 m x 1.65 m x 25 cm, Salvaged adhesive vinyl, banner, adhesive, metal.



ATMTMTMTM, 2013. 46" X 11", Salvaged adhesive sign vinyl, salvaged wallpaper, thread, Velcro.

**KELLY JAZVAC**

Kelly Jazvac works in collage, installation and sculpture. Simultaneously, she engages in interdisciplinary research with a team of scientists, writers and activists concerned with plastic pollution. Jazvac's recent exhibitions include A Stratigraphic Fiction at The Berman Museum, Philadelphia; Organic Situation at Koenig and Clinton, New York; and Site Words, Spoilers and Shoplifters at Diaz Contemporary, Toronto. Her work has been written about in e-flux Journal, Hyperallergic, The Huffington Post, and Magenta.

**ALISON COOLEY**

Alison Cooley is a critic, curator, and educator based in Toronto. Her research explores the intersections of natural history, visual culture, and socially engaged artistic practice, and addresses experiential and interpretative dimensions of art criticism. She is currently the Blackwood Gallery's Curatorial Assistant and Collections Archivist.

**SHARP AND NUMB  
KELLY JAZVAC**

MAY 25 - JUNE 30 2017  
Artist-led tour May 26, 12:00PM

**ART GALLERY OF SOUTHWESTERN MANITOBA  
710 ROSSER AVENUE, UNIT 2  
BRANDON, MANITOBA. R7A 0K9**



Found Object (GUEST), 2017, 9.5" x 21", salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Kelly Jazvac - Sharp and Numb  
Text by Alison Cooley

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Kelly Jazvac works in plastic. Gathering large quantities of discarded adhesive vinyl, she cuts, recombines, and collages—or else she tucks and reshapes, drapes, and folds. Sitting often somewhere between wall-hangings and sculptures, Jazvac’s works use commercial materials; materials that are inextricable from the capitalist system that produced them, and unavoidably bound up in environmental degradation. Her practice is marked by incredible tensions and contradictions—between cherished material and trash, evidence and illusion, environmental wonder and despair, familiar and alien—all poetic paradoxes that animate the exhibition *Sharp and Numb*.

It is partly by accident that I begin to think of Kelly Jazvac’s work as fungal. Two accidents: first, I misread the title of fungible, a large, slouching, brown vinyl diamond work. Though derived from the Latin *fungibilis/fungi*, “fungible” shares no literal association with the Greek *sphongos*, or its Latin offspring, *fungus*. The second coincidence: in an email to me, Jazvac quotes a 2005 book by anthropologist and feminist science scholar Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, whose more recent book uses fungi to explore nature-culture entanglements and the environmental ridges of capitalism. Although an accidental framework, fungus is the ideal metaphor for Jazvac’s work—its capacity to navigate through the fissures and tensions of environmental messes; its tendency to patch together disparate ecosystems; its perfect transitory weave through water-forest-kitchen-industry-street; its holding together of life and death, animacy and inanimacy; its penchant for duality—stitching through the contrariness at the heart of *Sharp and Numb*.

Jazvac’s artistic practice generally revolves around the concept of salvaging. Collecting found materials from the street, amassing donations from friends and colleagues, gathering discarded plastics from salvage companies, Jazvac works like a fungal decomposer, pulling apart in order to combine and animate her materials anew. The resulting sculptures and wall-works repurpose images printed on vinyl to create uncanny collages that thwart the material’s original intentions. Her recombinations bloom, alive in the tensions that plastic embodies. While *Salps*, for example, nests together lush, eager, shimmering greens and blues suggestive of tropical waters, other works, like *Pizzly*, dwell in the trashiness and decrepitude of discarded plastic. In

each work, many dualities—the living and the dead, the reaching and the flaccid, the bodily and the soulless, the creeping and the stagnant—testify to plastic’s presence and its remarkable instability. Though plastic is a thoroughly artificial compound that we would not understand as living in the traditional sense, it clearly has a kind of life cycle, a vibrancy that comes from always being in relation with human and nonhuman worlds [1]. In a circuit that begins with production and culminates in disposal, breakdown, and eventual return (in one form or another), plastic always acts alongside and within ecologies.

Jazvac’s work is evidence of ecological entanglement and environmental crisis, but her oeuvre is animated by the fluid movement between evidence and illusion—each work is simultaneously a witness to capitalism’s relentless, opportunistic progression, and a game enabled by its offcuts. Jazvac’s salvage methodology allows her to play productively with plastic’s circulation by mining the material’s existing histories. She describes her materials as coming to her already laden with “poetic resonances”—meanings baked into the objects from their former uses. For instance, *Hedgehog Bathtime* capitalizes on the high-resolution sponginess of flesh and stucco reproduced on vinyl, reassembling provocative bits of skin and plaster into something newly monstrous. However, as Jazvac explains, the work also gestures to the overwhelming whiteness of bodies in advertising, its conspicuous fleshiness revealing a grotesque inequity.

Nowhere is the tension between evidence and illusion more palpable than in one large ‘plastiglomerate’ ceremoniously set on a small shelf. A remarkable aesthetic object that oscillates between horrific and seductive, the plastiglomerate’s origins appear at first uncertain—stone or sculpture? In fact, the specimen represents a new classification of stone composed of fused plastic and volcanic rock, which was first classified by Jazvac alongside geologist Patricia Corcoran, and oceanographer Charles Moore in 2014. Straddling the space between art object and geological sample, the piece of plastiglomerate embodies the marvellous strangeness of the earth’s enfolding of waste into its natural processes, as well as the sheer terror of the resulting consequences: we have made irrevocable changes to the planet’s basic fabric.

The environmental crisis that Jazvac’s work alludes to is not separate from crises of capitalism and colonialism. Natural gas and crude oil form the basis for the production of plastic, and their extraction has long been a site of colonial greed and Indigenous resistance (see, for example, Indigenous-led movements against Line 3, the Dakota Access Pipeline, the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline, and the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline). But industrial colonialism is also deeply embedded in plastic’s overseas production, exposing factory workers to poisonous working conditions for the convenience and enjoyment of an abundance of plastic commodities. This all quickly becomes hard to measure and comprehend—plastic’s reach stretches; plastic overwhelms.

Linked by the drift of the dotted line through the gallery, two enigmatic signs, Home and Guest, pull together some of the unfathomability and alienness of everything Jazvac’s work performs. Both make reference to human presence, highlighting the uncertainties of anchoring ourselves to an

earth massively disturbed by the production of our comforts and routines. Plastic is, after all, a habitual force. Both signs also gesture to stewardship—to the care we take in the spaces where we reside, contrasted with the negligence often afforded to natural spaces we call “home” and claim ownership over. How might shifting our positions to that of “guest” change the dynamic? We might hope to rescue some respect for the ecologies we inhabit by thinking of ourselves (and humans more broadly) as gracious visitors.

Made absurd through their unusual presentation—like much of Jazvac’s work in *Sharp and Numb—Home* and *Guest* evoke something symbiotic, or perhaps parasitic. They straddle a seeming contradiction, touching possibilities for takeover, infiltration, generosity, partnership, absorption, and contamination. Literally upending the signs’ intended stadium presentations, Jazvac challenges the winner-take-all mentality that often characterizes both sports competitions and extraction economies. Instead, she insists we complicate our thinking, returning to forms of hospitality towards each other and our environments that realistically account for the impacts of human activity.

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[1] I am not the first to suggest the vibrancy of inanimate things. This thinking has many lineages, including scholarly movements like object-oriented ontology (Levi Bryant, Graham Harman, Ian Bogost, and many others), and feminist histories of science (Karen Barad, Jane Bennett, Donna Haraway, Anna L. Tsing, Mel Y. Chen, and many others). Indigenous thinkers and scholars (in the Canadian context, scholars including David Carneau and Kim Tallbear) have worked between scholarship and much-longer-established Indigenous ways of knowing to identify and argue for the liveliness of the non-living.

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Found Object (HOME), 2017, 35.5" x 14.5," salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

#### LIST OF WORKS

- Pizzly*, 2011, 4m x 1.65 m x 25 cm, salvaged adhesive vinyl, banner, adhesive, metal.
- Hedgehog Bathtime*, 2013, 28" x 21" x 3", salvaged adhesive vinyl, banner, thread adhesive, Velcro.
- ATMTMTMTM*, 2013, 46" x 11", salvaged adhesive vinyl, salvaged wallpaper, thread, Velcro.
- Fungible*, 2012, salvaged adhesive vinyl, adhesive, aluminum, 25 cm x 46 cm x 46 cm, Photo credit: Dave Kemp
- Purse*, 2017, salvaged banner, salvaged adhesive vinyl, thread, adhesive, 45" x 16" x 3/4".
- Shut Up Get Ready For Love*, 2008, 7" x 14" x 2", Salvaged adhesive vinyl.
- Salp*, 2012. 42" x 28" x 1", Salvaged adhesive vinyl, metal, chip clips.
- Ginger Crunch*, 2010, Salvaged adhesive vinyl, metal, 38" x 12" x 5".
- Plastiglomerate Sample*. 2013. Displayed by Jazvac as found object sculptures, plastiglomerate is a new stone type first described by a collaborative research team including Jazvac, geologist Patricia Corcoran and oceanographer Charles Moore. The stone is made by the fusion of molten plastic with beach sediment, such as sand, wood, coral and rock. Photo credit: Jeff Elstone.
- Vuggy*, 2016, salvaged vinyl, plastic, thread, thumbtacks, 2016. Approx. 20" x 36
- Found Object (HOME)*, 2017, 35.5" x 14.5," salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.
- Found Object (GUEST)*, 2017, 9.5" x 21", salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

