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 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.

**Plastiglomerate Stone:** 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.

**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.

**Plastics Sample:** 2013. 46" x 11", Salvaged adhesive sign vinyl, salvaged wallpaper, thread, Velcro.

**Ginger Crunch:** 2010. 38" x 12" x 5", Salvaged adhesive vinyl, metal.
Kelly Jazvac - Sharp and Numb
Text by Alison Cooley

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 Pizzly, dwell upon something, 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 highlighting the uncertainties of anchoring ourselves to an irrevocable changes to the planet’s basic fabric.

The environmental crisis that Jazvac’s work alludes to is not 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 recognize 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.

[1] I am not the first to suggest the vibrancy of inanimate things. This thinking has many lines, including scholarly movements like object-oriented ontology (Levi Bryant, Graham Harman, Ian Bogost, and many others), and feminist histories of science (Kari Barad, Janet Metz, 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.

978-3-929706-19-4

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

LIST OF WORKS
Pizzly, 2011, 48 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
HMMXMMXMM, 2013, 46” x 11”, salvaged adhesive vinyl, salvaged wallpaper, thread, Velcro
Fungible, 2012, salvaged adhesive vinyl, aluminium, 25 cm x 46 cm x 0.4 cm. Photo credit: Dave Kemp
Purse, 2017, salvaged banner, salvaged adhesive vinyl, thread, adhesive, 45” x 16” x 34”
Get Ready For Love, 2008, 7’ x 14” x 2”, salvaged adhesive vinyl
Sell, 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
Vugly, 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.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

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

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

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

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.

Found Object (HOME), 2013, 35” x 14.5” salvaged adhesive vinyl, frame.