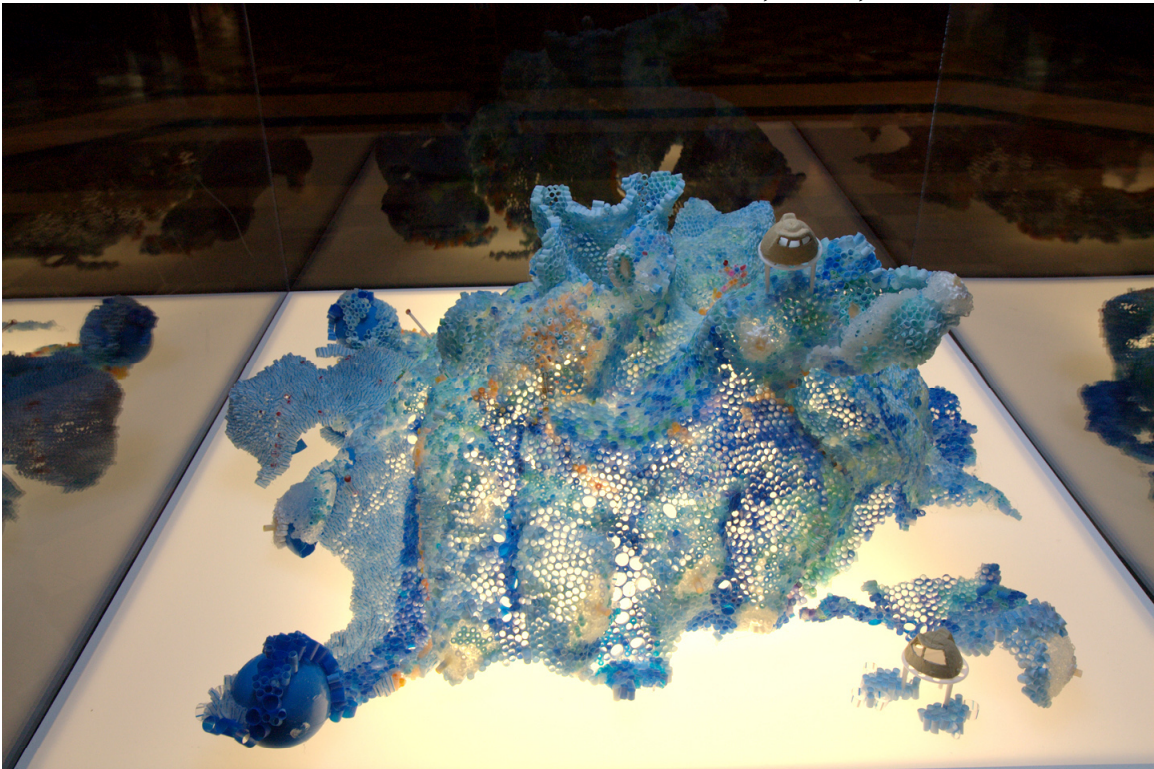


Nash — on Varnot
Gallery Ell Studio Visit
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On a recent visit to the studio of artist Annie Varnot, I had the opportunity to view the artist's biomorphic, landscape inspired sculptures, drawings, and photographs up close. I was instantly struck by the intensity of labor and craft that goes into her assemblages made from jewelry size pieces of cut drinking straws and the extremely detailed, lace cut-out drawings. The artist, who describes her goal as "creating an environment in which to be safe," is approaching her project on a very intimate scale.

"Swelling," 2009, appears like a beautiful display of glowing blue coral. Illuminate by its light box base, the piece is presented as an anthropologic curiosity. But viewed up close, reveals itself to have more in common with a clever plastic model for a Sci-Fi movie about a post human colony created entirely of garbage. Varnot is taking on the bleak subject of consumer culture and human destruction of the environment, while calling attention to the fact that our nature as humans is to create more, more, more.



"Swelling," drinking straws, thermometer, egg carton pieces, mixed media, 2009

Recently, the artist began a new project that involved salvaging the discarded, defective byproducts of egg farming- or the “unsellable” eggs. She was donated a large quantity of these eggs from a Canadian farmer, and then painstakingly blew out all the yokes so she could use the shell material in her work. Such a huge task has yet to see a clear result, but Varnot is once again attempting to turn destruction back into creation and is literally breathing new life into these discarded wombs. The cycle of creation and destruction are inseparable, and Varnot insists on perpetuating the cycle, by turning destruction back towards creation.

Kirsten Nash
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