

## From the sublime to the sublime: Wanderings of a Rubbish Picker

*Wandering is to ramble with the resolve to discover something not (yet) known.* — Unknown

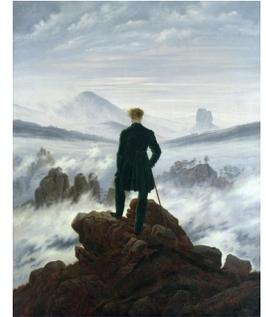
*It is not so much by the things each day that are manufactured, sold, bought that you can measure Leonia's opulence, but rather by the things each day that are thrown out to make room for the new.*

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 1972

The wanderings of the Rubbish Picker are meditations on the contemporary human relationship with waste – trash, litter, rubbish, garbage, debris, detritus, refuse – offering a perspective from which to consider the condition of things. The acts of maintenance highlight personal efforts to manage discarded objects found in private and public spaces, acts which include clearing away and sorting accumulated rubbish from roadsides and eddies where it collects and through encounters with the built-out-of-necessity landscapes of active, decommissioned and clandestine landfill sites.

This project drifts into the pragmatic aesthetic, forgotten spaces and visible but unseen actions through the Rubbish Picker. A contemporary of the Caspar David Friedrich figure in the 1818 painting *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, the characters are representative of individuals that form part of the collective, both conjuring the sublime through a paired sense of awe and of dread when faced with things and places they encounter.

The individual objects that collectively become garbage have intrinsic beauty, even in a discarded state: the design, material, colour, the manufacturing that brought it into being, the distribution and collection processes through which garbage flows. Waste is exclusive to humanity. It is representative of our cultures awe-inspiring wealth, resourcefulness and creativity.



*Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, 1818  
Caspar David Friedrich  
Detail, Public Domain

The value of waste is transformed when the quantities increase. Once there is enough trash to collect and sort into recycling, compost or garbage it becomes commodity, where value is determined by the market economy and through the social requirements and capacity for reusing or landfilling.

The value of waste changes again when it becomes litter, circulating freely, flowing into the commons along roadside, in bushes or trees, gathering in the eddies of back laneways or abandoned lots, building up as layers of detritus-based humus. Litter becomes part of the pragmatic aesthetic: the fundamental and evolving appearance of things, objects, places and structures found in our surroundings, appearances that are inherently dynamic due to use and the passage of time. Some of the litter is collected into containers that are seemingly magically emptied, but much is forgotten, overlooked and ignored gathering invisibly in plain sight.

The Rubbish Picker walks, sorts, collects and transports trash to sites filled with other refuse. He stands on the mounds providing human scale for the ubiquitous accumulation of waste.

Such acts can cause the Rubbish Picker to spin in circles and tumble to the ground, dizzy with confusion at the futility characteristic within the task of cleaning and the dread brought on by the conspicuousness of waste.

Occasionally the wanderings are marked by multiple hollow cast beeswax replicas of ubiquitous, commonly found discarded objects like plastic water bottles or disposable coffee cups, examples of the waste created by single use items. The original is transformed by the beeswax from a common discard to a rarefied and valued object, which requires attention and care to preserve it from its intrinsic vulnerability and fragility. For the Rubbish Picker, honeybees offer a metaphor for the sublime duality and purpose found in community, social structures, labour and the individual and collective interests associated with both public and private virtues.

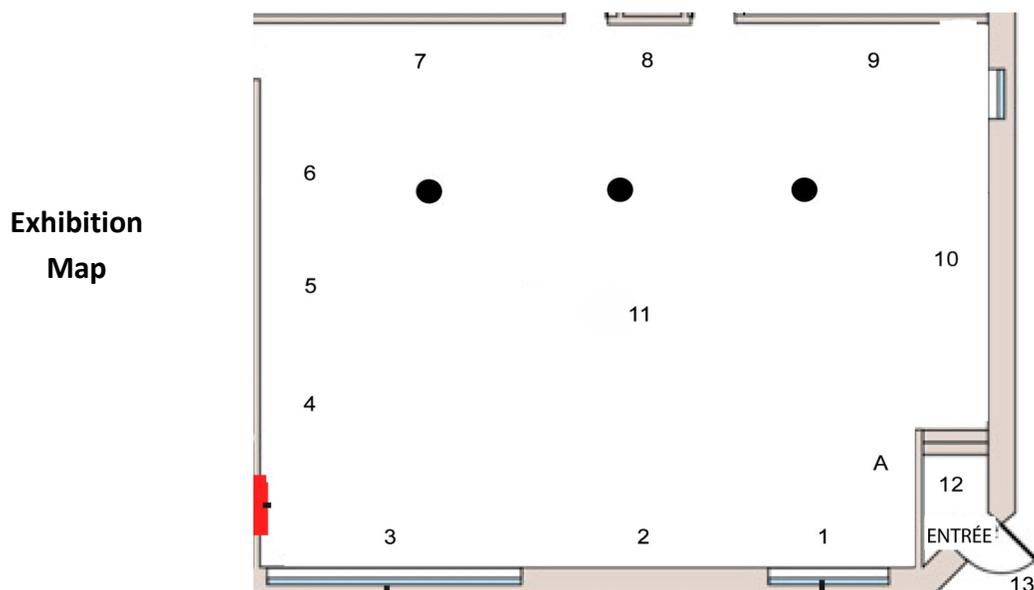
The Rubbish Picker leaves beeswax replicas as markers of actions preformed, provides them as offerings and points of entry for conversations about the relationship to waste and the affect levied on the community at large.

Douglas Scholes, 2018

***Du sublime au sublime : Les errances d'un éboueur sauvage***

**From the sublime to the sublime: Wanderings of a Rubbish Picker**

**Douglas Scholes**



**A. Déclaration d'exposition / Exhibition Statement**

1. Une promenade dans le quartier des affaires – Montréal : Banque (2015) 60" x 40". Impression jet d'encre sur papier rétro-éclairé / *inkjet printing on backlit paper*. Photographe / *photographer*: Jacinthe Lessard.
2. Anthropique contrainte I (2018) Vidéo monocanal avec son / *single-channel video with sound*.
3. Palettes (2015) 53 ½" x 110". Impression jet d'encre sur papier rétro-éclairé / *inkjet printing on backlit paper*. Photographe / *photographer*: Adrian Clarke.
4. Anthropique contrainte II (2018) 40" x 60". Jet d'encre imprimé sur du papier d'archive / *inkjet printed on archive paper*. Photographe/*photographer*: Laurie Lamoureux Scholes.
5. Vestiges III – Site #1: Sorted (2013) 40" x 60". Jet d'encre imprimé sur du papier d'archive / *inkjet printed on archive paper*. Photographe/*photographer*: Douglas Scholes.
6. Mattresses (2014) 40" x 60. Jet d'encre imprimé sur du papier d'archive / *inkjet printed on archive paper*. Photographe/*photographer*: Sarah Fuller.
7. Compilation vidéo / *Video Compilation* (2018): a. Vestiges 1 (2013); b. Passages (2013).
8. Livres de projets / *Project Books*: a. The Condition of Things (Images and wax insert by Douglas scholes with text by Daniel Canty) (2012) ; b. Le flâneur flottant / sautant — Floating/Jumping Wanderer #49/50 (2018); c. Le flâneur tournant sur lui-même — Spinning Wanderer #49/50 (2018).
9. Spinning Video Compilation (2018): a. Cone Spin (2012); b. Rubbish Spin (2015); c. Peel Basis Spin (2017); d. Drone Spin (2017); e. Anthropique contrainte — spin (2018).
10. Terrible Beauties (2018) 45 images d'objets jetables jetés / *45 images of discarded disposable objects*. Impression jet d'encre sur papier photo Kodak. / *inkjet printing on Kodak photo paper*. Différentes tailles montées dans des cadres usées, peint blancs / *various sizes mounted in second-hand frames, painted white*.
11. Répliques ((2009-2018) Des répliques d'ordures faites avec de la cire d'abeilles / *rubbish replicas cast in beeswax*..
12. Acts of Maintenance (2009 ongoing). Trophée / *trophie*.
13. Installation des trophées (2018) Estrie Aide, 345, rue Wellington sud.

## Remerciements / Thank You!

Un grand merci à tous ceux qui ont soutenu la résidence et l'installation!

*Many thanks to everyone who supported the residency and installation!*

Équipe Sporobole Team:

Éric Desmarais, Érik Beck, Gaétan Desmarais, Tanya St-Pierre

Claude Belleau, Estrie Aide

Noémie Fortrin

Gentiane Bélanger

Myriam Yates

Patrick Lacasse

Frank Poule

festival du texte courte de Sherbrooke – Sophie Jeukens, Audrey Bacon

Laurie Lamoureux Scholes

### Crédits vidéo / Video Credits:

2. Anthropique contrainte I (2018) : Ingénierie du son / *sound engineering*: Atobop.

7. Compilation vidéo / *Video Compilation*:

a. Vestiges 1 (2013) : Caméra et le montage / *camera and editing*: Douglas Scholes; Musique / *music*: Christian Carrière.

b. Passages (2013) : caméra / *camera*: Jaden Scholes; montage - editing: Douglas Scholes; musique / *music*: Christian Carrière *no input mixer* et / *and* The Artsy Chicks *Soft Radio*.

8. Compilation vidéo: Spinning / *Video Compilation*: Spinning

a. Cone Spin (2012) : Caméra et le montage / *camera and editing* : Douglas Scholes.

b. Rubbish Spin (2015) : caméra / *camera*: Sarah Fuller; montage / *editing*: Douglas Scholes.

c. Peel Basis Spin (2017) : caméra / *camera*: Andres Castillo; montage / *editing*: Jaden Scholes.

d. Drone Spin (2017) : caméra / *camera* : Josh Usheroff; montage / *editing*: Douglas Scholes.

e. Landfill Spin (2018) : caméra / *camera* : Laurie Lamoureux Scholes; montage / *editing*: Douglas Scholes.

**SPOROBOLÉ**  
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