NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana — One artist has turned trash into art to send a message. Huge sculptures of sea life are displayed around New Orleans' aquarium and zoo, all of them made from plastic trash that washed ashore. They include a great white shark made of bottle caps and beach toys and a jellyfish made mostly of cut-up water bottles.

The artwork, part of a project called Washed Ashore: Art to Save the Sea, is the creation of Angela Haseltine Pozzi, who started making the pieces after seeing plastic heaped by the waves onto Oregon's southern coast. Pozzi was in the town of Bandon, where her grandparents had lived, mourning her first husband's death.

"I'd known its beaches all my life," she said. "I went to the ocean to heal and found that the ocean needed healing."
She wants the size of her creations to make people realize just how much plastic gets into the ocean. She wants people to then act on that knowledge. Signs next to each piece suggest simple ways to reduce the problem, such as not using plastic straws, reusing water bottles, and picking up other people's litter.

"Every piece of trash picked up and properly disposed of is a piece that will not cause harm to local environments and animals," says the sign for "Greta the Great White Shark."

Pozzi said she wants to create art that is "beautiful, and a little horrifying."

**Sculptures Travel The Country**

An army of volunteers in Oregon — about 10,000 since Pozzi started in 2010 — help her collect, prepare and assemble the beach trash into art. One of their wash-basins for plastic is a bathtub that also was found on the beach.

She now has more than 70 pieces in three exhibitions currently traveling around the United States. Her artwork might also travel to other countries. The pieces have been displayed at zoos, aquariums and botanical gardens. Pozzi also has permanent exhibits at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and a gallery in Bandon, Oregon.

The Audubon Aquarium of the Americas in New Orleans is currently showing six sculptures, and a puffin sculpture is on display at the Audubon Zoo. More pieces will be added to both locations in October.

In addition to the shark and two jellyfish sculptures, there is a walk-through whale ribcage made with bucket lids, bottles, buoys and bait traps. There is a sculpture of a marlin that has a beak made of fishing rods, and "Musical Seaweed." That statue's long leaves include metal and plastic bottle caps strung on wires so they rattle when a leaf is hit lightly.

**When The Trash Is An In-Your-Face Message**

Robert and Lauryn Geosits of Mandeville, Louisiana, were visiting with their three children.

"This is such a great idea for people to visualize just how much trash is in the ocean," Lauryn Geosits said.

Her husband read from a sign while their baby slept in a stroller and Chelsea, 7, and Preston, 8, searched the shark for the items he named: "There's a toy car bumper, bottle caps, beach toys, a lighter ..."

Pozzi was asked about the strangest piece she has used. "When you've processed more than 21 tons of debris into more than 70 pieces of art you've seen pretty much everything.

"One of the most shocking are bleach bottles that have bite marks from fish," Pozzi said.
A fish made entirely of fish-bitten plastic is among the pieces to be added in October.

**Plastic Garbage Is In Every Waterway**

Most of the pieces coming to New Orleans this fall are on display at Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. These sculptures include a river otter, a seahorse, and a clownfish in an anemone.

"We are very sad to see them go, because they've been very successful," said Tynnetta Qaiym, vice president for planning and design at Shedd.

She said the response has been far beyond what she expected, both in the number of pictures patrons have posted on social media and in increased conservation awareness.

Qaiym had thought the exhibit might be more interesting to coastal residents, but said it also connects Midwesterners to the Great Lakes.

"People are talking about plastics and the Great Lakes and the waterways in a way that we were hoping for but not really sure it would happen," she said.

In New Orleans, the sculptures are in a variety of places and will stay up through April.

"Look! A jellyfish! A jellyfish!" little Elliot Harold of Chalmette shouted as he approached a stairway below one of Pozzi's creations.

"It's the only thing he's liked all day," said his grandmother, Gera Mendel.
Document Analysis Chart

"Plastic sea life comes ashore, sculpting an environmental lesson"

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