

## Art made from recycled materials

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**BY JESSICA LYONS**

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The exhibition "Made in the MFTA," which is currently on display at the Henry De Ford III Gallery in the Citi building, highlights the work that can be done using recycled materials.

Located in Long Island City, Materials for the Arts (MFTA), which is a program of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and Departments of Sanitation and Education, provides recycled materials for arts programs throughout the five boroughs.



PHOTOS BY GERALD LAVAR PHOTOGRAPHY

When the Citi building was first built, a gallery was included in order to bring art to the community and staff. They had long held a desire to partner with the MFTA for an exhibit.

Curator Robert Bangiola said that the main requirement of the exhibit's pieces were that they had to be created using materials from MFTA. He said that he was thrilled with the final results.

"There are thousands of artists from organizations that use Materials for the Arts," Bangiola said. "The artists I chose for this show are some of the most exciting and resourceful in the international art scene."

Juan Carlos Alcaraz, the Director of Artists on Wheels, created "Time Machine" using scrap electric and hardware parts. A love for machines was his inspiration.

"It's important to show the people that the recycled parts, the scrap parts, can come alive again," he said.

Olek, an artist whose piece is called "Borborygami," said that she likes the idea of using recycled materials. She also said that such materials already have had another life and story behind them.

"I think that using recycled materials for art makes total sense," said Annie Reichert of the Flux Factory. "It's important for artists to have access to cheaper, free materials to do what they're doing."

Reichert assisted in facilitating the Flux Factory's participation in the exhibit. Ian Montgomery's piece "How to Fold a Giant Bear" is included in it.

Astoria resident Blanka Amezkua, who also teaches art to middle school students in three of the boroughs, used the project in the exhibit to unite her students. Each student put together pieces of fabric to represent the members of their households.

Amezka said that she hopes people who see the exhibition will learn "that anything you have can be turned into art."

Suzanne F. W. Lemakis, the Director of the Citi Department of Fine Arts, and Teri Lehner, who assists her, said that their goals for the exhibition are to "entertain" visitors as well as educate more people about artists reusing materials.

" 'Made in the MFTA' is a terrific art show, but it's also a terrific example of the importance of reuse. Every year Material for the Arts collects and redistributes millions of dollars worth of donations, helping reduce our waste stream while generating enormous creativity among New Yorkers of all ages," said Kate D. Levin, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. "This past year alone, our program made it possible for artists, students, and educators from across the five boroughs to turn 680 tons of material into artworks, props, stage sets, and classroom projects."

"Made in the MFTA" will be on display at the Henry De Ford III Gallery through March 5. The gallery is located in the Citi building at One Court Square in Long Island City. It is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, visit [www.mfta.org](http://www.mfta.org) or call 718-248-2953.

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