

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: FRIDAY 30 JULY 2010

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Recycling as an art form

The Cradle Coast campus of UTAS is marking the successful voyage of the plastic bottle boat Plastiki this week, by launching its own exhibition of recycled and re-created milk containers.

The exhibition, 'Puso' is the work of Tasmanian artist Ritchie Ares Doña and Ulverstone High School students who spent more than a hundred hours collecting, washing, peeling and reconstructing hundreds of plastic milk containers.

“This exhibition is strongly influenced by my childhood in the Philippines where my back yard was a rubbish dump and where the culture of recycling rubbish has existed for generations,” Mr Doña said.

“Plus it’s always good to be able to work in materials that don’t cost you anything because you’re more likely to take risks and experiment. This worked especially well with students.”

Puso is a technique used in the Philippines to weave cooking vessels, usually from coconut leaves or bamboo. Doña worked with 80 students to create the exhibition as part of an artist in residence program, managed by arts@work in partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts.

Campus community engagement officer, Nicki Fletcher said while Plastiki and Puso demonstrated different uses for recycled plastic, the message was the same.

“Plastiki has demonstrated the value of recycling as a resource whereas Ritchie and his students have floated the idea of recycling as an art form,” she said.

Puso consists of hundreds of individual parts of milk containers cut up, reformed and strung into three-dimensional art works. Only the lids were not used.

Puso will hang in the Foyer Gallery at the campus during National Science Week (14-22 August) and UTAS Open Day (22 August), until September 1. Mr Doña will discuss the making of the exhibition in the gallery next Wednesday 4 August at 11 am.

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