

## **Ciel Bergman: Sea of Clouds What Can I Do**

### **Collection CAE1208**

#### **Introduction / Abstract**

Ciel Bergman used waste plastic collected from the beach to create an installation exhibition titled "Sea of Clouds What Can I Do", at the Santa Barbara Contemporary Art Forum in 1987. Concerned about the tons of discarded plastic and its consequences on marine mammals, she conceived the idea for recycling (all grades of) waste plastic to create a sustainable road paving material. Gary Fishback, inventor and contractor and Ciel's partner; Hal Stelmar, civil engineer; and Dennis Egan, chemist, then applied for and received a patent for "Plasphalt", a combination of recycled, granulated plastic and asphalt which creates a stronger paving material.

Materials donated include exhibition records, slides and other photographic documentation, press materials, samples of Plasphalt and source plastics, patent paperwork, field testing kit, correspondence, and grant applications.

#### **Ciel Bergman**

Ciel Bergman, formerly Cheryl Bowers, trained as a psychiatric nurse in the late 1950's, and then lived in Europe before returning to California to complete her MFA at the San Francisco Art Institute in 1973. She now lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she continues to paint, having resigned her tenure as a full professor of art at UCSB Santa Barbara in 1994. Her work is included in the collections of the National Gallery, Washington, D.C.; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Oakland Museum; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Orange County Museum of Art; the San Diego Museum of Fine Art; and the New Mexico Museum of Fine Art.

#### **Scope and Content**

While teaching art at the University of California, Santa Barbara during the 1980s, artist Ciel Bergman discovered increasing amounts of plastic trash washing up on the local beaches. She began to pick up the detritus with her friend Nancy Merrill. Together they created an installation titled *Sea of Clouds What Can I Do* that was exhibited in 1987 at the Santa Barbara Contemporary Art Forum.

During the artmaking process, and prompted by "witnessing the suffering of many beached, garroted and dying sea mammals, strangling in plastic" Bergman conceived the idea for recycling waste plastic to create a sustainable road paving material to reduce our dependence on oil. As a result, she helped launch the product known as Plasphalt™, which combines recycled plastic and asphalt. Plasphalt™ provides superior performance and reduced costs compared to traditional asphalt paving, but to date has yet to be adopted widely by roadbuilders.

Materials donated include notes, journals, exhibition records, slides and other photographic documentation, press materials, samples of Plasphalt and source plastics, Plasphalt patent paperwork, field testing kit, correspondence, and grant applications.

#### **Dates**

1986 - 2012

**Quantity / Extent**

1.5 cubic feet

**Language**

English

**Arrangement**

This archive is arranged into two series:

Series 1: Sea of Clouds Exhibition

Series 2: Plaspalt

**Related Publications**

Suzi Gablik, *The Re-Enchantment of Art* (New York, N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1991).

Dr. Peter Selz, *Art of Engagement: Visual Politics in California and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press; San Jose: San Jose Museum of Art, 2005).

**Container Listing by Series:****CAE1208/1 Series I: Sea of Clouds Exhibition, 1959 - 2012**

Series 1, which contains folders 1-9, contains items related to the exhibition titled *Sea of Clouds What Can I Do*, an installation by Cheryl Bowers (currently Ciel Bergman) in collaboration with Nancy Merrill in 1987. Materials include research, grant applications, installation images, and press materials.

**Box 12**

- 1-1 Artist Information, 1980 - 2012
- 1-2 Exhibition Research, 1959 - 1987
- 1-3 Exhibition Concept Development & Planning, 1986 - 1987
- 1-4 Exhibition Grants, 1987
- 1-5 Installation Images, 1987
- 1-6 Exhibition Response, 1987 - 1988
- 1-7 Education and Outreach, 1986 - 1990
- 1-8 Press, 1987
- 1-9 SITE Spread Application, 2011

**Flatfile F4: Oversized Items**

- 1-5#1 Fish ensnared by garbage, not dated
- 1-5#2 California Sea Lion ensnared by garbage, not dated
- 1-5#3 California Sea Lion ensnared by garbage, not dated
- 1-5#4 Litter on the beach, not dated

**Box 25: Objects**

- 1-6#1 "Suggestions Please" Exhibition Comment Book, 1987

## CAE1208/2 Series 2: Plasphalt, 1993 - 2010

Series 2, which contains folders 1 through 23, contains items relating to the production of Plasphalt and the company TEWA Technology Corporation.

### Box 12

- 2-1 Plasphalt Technical Information, 1996 - 2003
- 2-2 Plasphalt Patent, 1997 - 2002
- 2-3 Tower Road/Navarro Ridge Road Test Strips, 1996 - 2001
- 2-4 The Plasphalt Project Ltd., Co., and TEWA Technology Corporation, 1999 - 2009
- 2-5 Advocacy, 1995 - 2009
- 2-6 Press, 1993 - 2004
- 2-7 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), ABS (Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene), 1995
- 2-8 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), Acetal, 1995
- 2-9 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), Acrylic, 1995
- 2-10 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), EVA (Ethylene Vinyl Acetate), 1995
- 2-11 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), HDPE & LPDE (High Density and Low Density Polyethylene), 1995
- 2-12 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), Nylon, 1995
- 2-13 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), PB (Polybutylene), 1995
- 2-14 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), PBT (Polybutylene Terephthalate), 1995
- 2-15 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate), 1995
- 2-16 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), Plasphalt, 1996
- 2-17 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), Polycarbonate, 1995
- 2-18 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), Polyester or Liquid Crystal Polymer, 1995
- 2-19 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), Polypropylene, 1995
- 2-20 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), Polystyrene, 1995
- 2-21 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride), 1995
- 2-22 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), San Resin (Styrene Acrylonitrile), 1995
- 2-23 P.I. (Plasphalt International), 2010

### Box 26: Objects

- 2-1#1 Plasphalt Test Biscuit

### Box 25: Objects

- 2-1#2 (TRPA) Treated Recycled Plastic Aggregate (Sample), May 24, 2001
- 2-1#3 (TRPA) Treated Recycled Plastic Aggregate (Sample), May 24, 2001
- 2-1#4 Plexiglas Shavings
- 2-1#5 Plastic Aggregate (Black)
- 2-1#6 Plastic Aggregate (Appliance)
- 2-1#7 Plastic Aggregate (Appliance fine stream)
- 2-1#8 Plastic Aggregate (Computer)
- 2-1#9 Plastic Aggregate (Multicolored, small bits in sealed package)
- 2-1#10 Plastic Aggregate (Extremely fine white dust #1446)
- 2-1#11 Plastic Aggregate (Fine white dust with larger particles)
- 2-1#12 Plastic Aggregate (Fine gray dust with larger particles)
- 2-1#13 Plastic Aggregate (Brightly colored particles)
- 2-1#14 Plastic Aggregate (Clumps)
- 2-1#15 Plastic Aggregate, Allied Color Industries Incorporated, Virgin 11015, 00020502, A32324 PC, Beige #56
- 2-4#1 Power Supply

**Box 14: Small Objects**

2-4#2 Building Keys

**Box 21: Objects**

2-1#16 Deionized Water Container

**Standalone Object**

2-1#17 Reagents Asphalt Testing Kit