

Rasitha Sanjeeewa, *Fish Skeleton*, 2013

Inspiration Artist: Rasitha Sanjeeewa

Age Range: Secondary to Teen

Subject Areas: Science (Environmental science)

POLLUTION TO SOLUTION



**NATIONAL
GALLERY**

**CAYMAN
ISLANDS**

In This Packet

In this lesson, students will learn what pollution is and how they can turn common pollutants like plastic into art that comments on our environment.



What Is Pollution?

Pollution happens when harmful or poisonous materials or toxins enter the environment.

Pollutants can be very dangerous to living creatures including humans, animals and plants.

Forms of pollution include land, air and water pollution, as well as light and noise pollution.

What Are Some Things That Cause Pollution?

Pollution can happen when natural resources are used at a rate higher than nature's ability to restore itself. Manmade waste entering the environment as trash or toxic waste also affect Earth's ability to regenerate.

Common pollutants include single-use plastics like shopping bags, water bottles or toothpaste tubes, factory-generated smoke and chemical-based cleaning products.

Solutions for Pollution

One way to lower pollution is to **recycle**. This means finding new ways to use things that you would normally throw away.

Benefits of Recycling

- Reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators.
- Conserves natural resources such as timber, water and minerals.
- Increases economic security through use of local materials.
- Prevents pollution by reducing the need to collect new raw materials.
- Saves energy
- Helps create jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries.
- Reduces emissions of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and chlorofluorocarbons, that contribute to global climate change.

Ways to Recycle

Always make an effort not to use harmful pollutants, but if you have to:

Organise your garbage up into groups based on their material: plastic, glass, paper or aluminium.

Take them to Government recycling bins located at your local supermarket.

Some items like small bottle caps, food-soiled cardboard, plastic sandwich bags and other thin plastics cannot be recycled by taking them to a Government recycling bin.

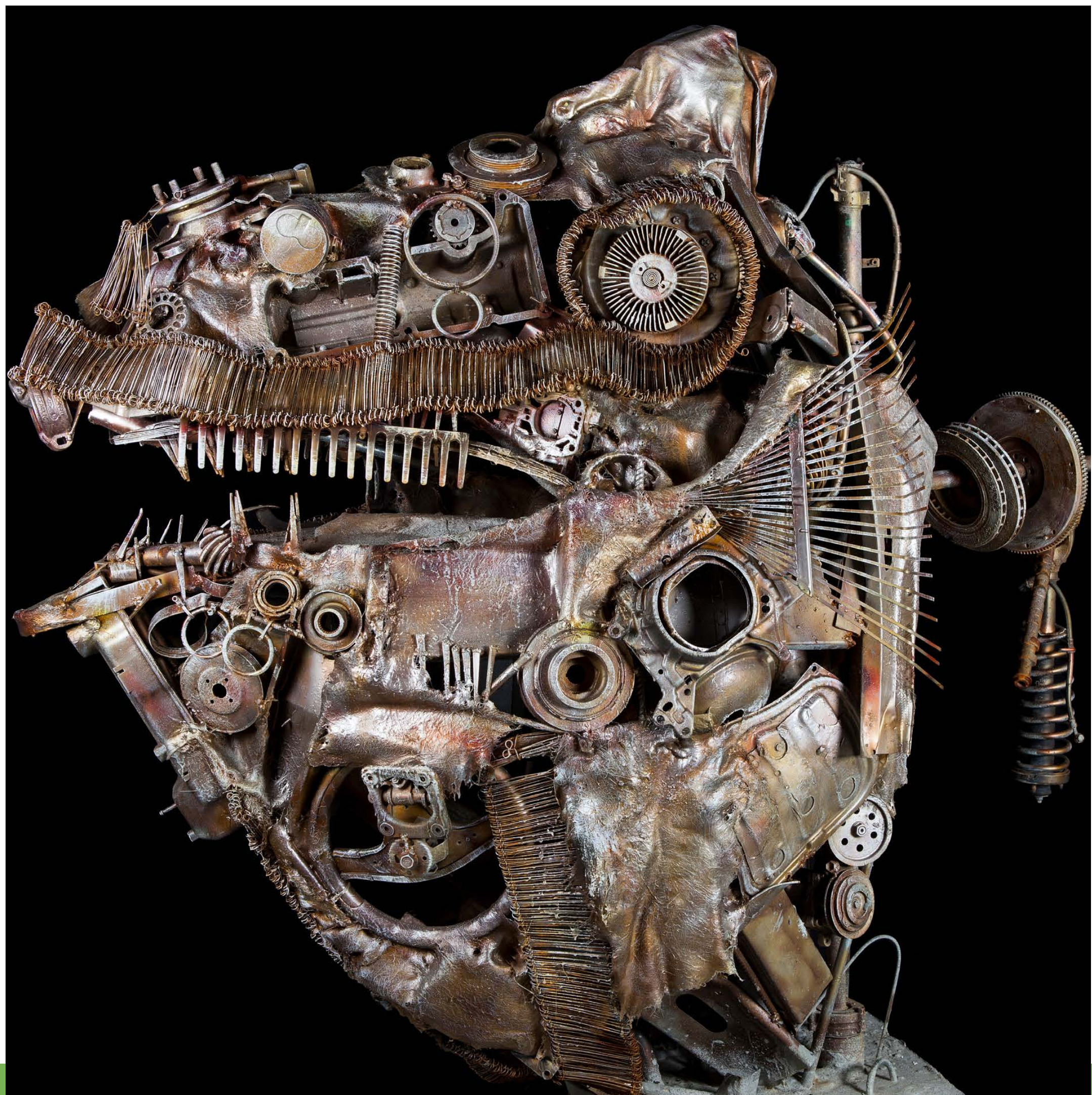
You can make these non-recyclable items into works of art instead.

Not only will your work of art make garbage into something beautiful, it will also say a lot about why recycling is important for our environment.

Local Recycled Art

Rasitha Sanjeewa was born in Sri Lanka in 1972. After moving to the Cayman Islands following 2004's Hurricane Ivan, Sanjeewa began transforming wreckage into works of recycled art.

Fish Skeleton, featured in the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands' 2013 exhibition *Art of Assemblage*, is a sculpture made from recycled domestic materials and car parts. Throughout the twentieth century, artists employed trash materials as part of the modernist revolt against the use of traditional materials in fine art. Here, Sanjeewa draws attention to the islands' longstanding reliance on the ocean for sustenance and the increasing environmental pressures that threaten this relationship.



Art Activity: Plastic Cap Wind Chime

Materials:

- Yarn or string
- Scissors
- Stick or liquid glue (or clear tape if glue is not available)
- Scissors
- Colourful bottle caps, Milk jug caps, or plastic buttons
- Sturdy branch or stick (approx. 8-12inches)

Wash all bottle caps and lids thoroughly and set aside to dry.

Once dry, arrange the caps in the order you'd like to string them. You can choose to arrange them by colour, or stagger colours for an ombre or multi-coloured look.

Once you are happy with your arrangement, turn the first cap over and glue one end of the string to the inside. Be sure to let the glue dry fully. Repeat this process up the string, leaving about three inches of string at the top.

Create multiple strings of caps in this way, then use the excess string at the top to tie them onto a branch or painted stick. Make sure they are evenly spaced!

With a new piece of string, tie each end to the stick securely so that you can hang your chime.

The end result should be a colourful and dynamic piece of art made from objects that are too small to be recycled!



Image source: <https://blijmetkleur.wordpress.com/2012/06/30/doppengordijn/>

Follow-up Questions

- How do you think students your age can help to reduce pollution?
- Look around your home. What are a few objects you think could be re-used rather than thrown away? How would you re-use or recycle them?
- What waste do you produce on a daily basis? How do you think you could reduce this?
- What can recycled artwork teach us about the environment?
- Think about the different types of pollution: land, water, air, light and noise. Can you think of examples of each of these?