

Lori Goldberg Outs the Trash

A Vancouver artist tackles the human love affair with stuff – and the dirty secrets about the garbage it creates.

by Portia Priegert

October 8, 2018 8:00 PM

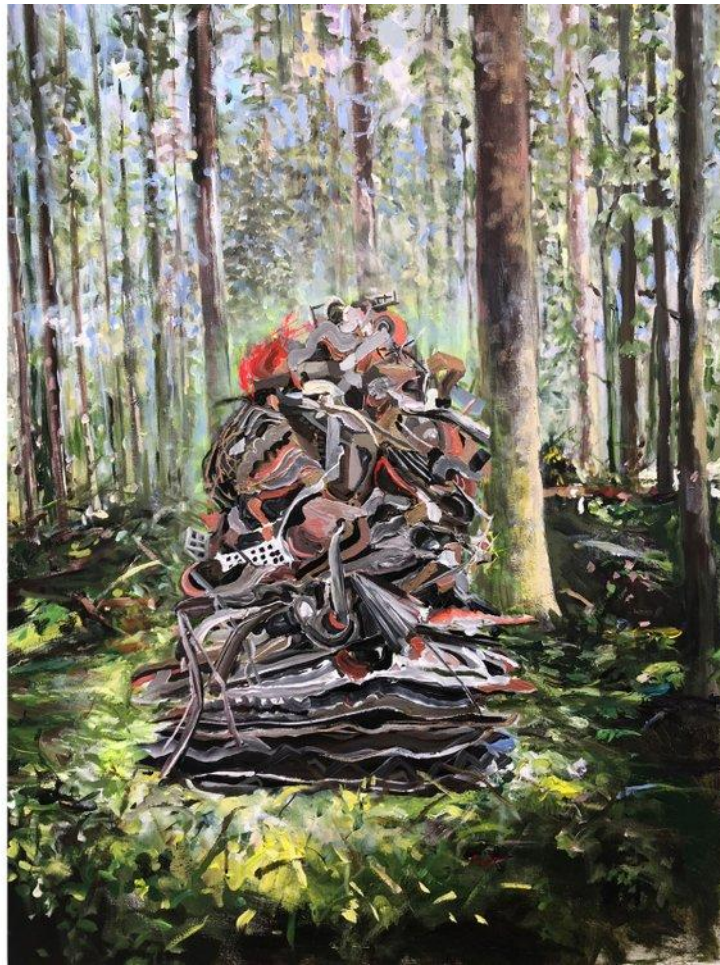


Lori Goldberg, "Cacophony of Our Debris," 2018, acrylic on canvas, 30" x 40"

It's easy to laugh at the plus-sized books about simplifying your life and getting rid of clutter, especially when they're stacked high in the aisle at a big box store. Our society, so absorbed in amassing consumer goods, apparently doesn't find irony in solutions that create more of what led to this impasse: We are swamped by our stuff.

Vancouver artist Lori Goldberg focuses on the problem in her upcoming show, *Poetics of the Discarded*, but her work is troubled by the same conundrum. How does one make art, particularly art about waste, without simply adding to the problem?

Goldberg's paintings, on view at Vancouver's South Main Gallery from Oct. 13 to Nov. 4, re-imagine garbage in all its rich material diversity. But there's no escaping that her work also falls into the "more stuff" category. Anyone who's ever had a studio can attest to the storage and disposal problems created by an art practice.



Lori Goldberg, "Visitation," 2018, acrylic on canvas, 40" x 30"

And it's not that Goldberg's paintings are trash. She has created an interesting series that is varied, creative and painterly. It's timely work and conceptually vital.

Visitation, for example, offers a huge honking pile of crushed metal stacked tidily in a light-dappled forest. *Cacophony of Our Debris* dances with a profusion of painterly marks that hint of pipes, bicycle wheels, broken chairs and who knows what else, mounded almost to the top of the canvas.

Spin Cycle, by contrast, zooms in closer. It's a moraine of paper, boards, fabric and clear plastic wrap as gossamer as a spider's web. Somehow, it evokes a mood of retro modernism.

Goldberg is certainly not the only artist to tackle the theme: [David Janzen](#) and [Kelly Jazvac](#) are two others who have shown recently in Western Canada. And, of course, there's a long tradition of artists collaging various forms of trash into their work. No less than Picasso used a wicker

basket, ceramic flowerpots and chunks of metal, all of it reportedly found in the fields near his studio, to make his 1950 bronze sculpture, *The She Goat*.

Goldberg readily acknowledges her complicity. She works with acrylic paint – a synthetic resin that will be around for a long time. Like most of us, she has more stuff than she needs, and a carbon footprint scuffed by international travel.



Lori Goldberg, "Spin Cycle," 2018, acrylic on canvas, 50" x 34"

But she has explored eco-friendly ephemeral projects, like collecting socks that have lost their partners. And she is working to establish a new artist-run organization that would see artists upcycle garbage during residencies.

Yet you can sense her frustration. She doesn't want to get depressed. Art – making objects – is what she is trained to do and what she has taught in continuing study courses at Emily Carr University. "I don't know the answer," she says. "And I don't feel like I can solve it. And I'm part of it."

She takes solace in three rules: "Trust where I'm going. Play. And get the work done." She calls them her mantra, something she returns to again and again. "When I'm stuck," she says, "I just remember to lighten up." ■

Poetics of the Discarded is on view at the South Main Gallery in Vancouver from Oct. 13 to Nov. 3, 2018.

South Main Gallery

279 East 6 Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia V5T 1J7 [View Map](#)

PHONE **604-565-5622**

[Visit Website](#)

HOURS Mon to Sat 10:30 am - 5:30 pm, Sun noon - 5 pm

SOUTH MAIN
@gallery

[SoMa Gallery](#)

[23 October 2018](#)

[Lori Goldberg](#)



Portia Priegert

Portia Priegert is the editor of Galleries West. A former news reporter at the Ottawa bureau of The Canadian Press, she has an MFA from UBC Okanagan and has taught at the University of Victoria.

October 3, 2018 10:55 AM

MAGAZINE NEWS FIND IT

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Writers](#)

[Advertise](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Submit Your Event](#)

Copyright © 1999 - 2018 T2 Media Inc. All rights reserved.

Built with Metro Publisher™