

## un\*sus\*tain\*a\*ble

(Water or Plastic--Portraits of Beauty and Destruction)

In conjunction with The Smithsonian's Waterways Exhibit on view at the Dorchester Arts Center this fall, Main Street Gallery's upcoming November/December show features found object artist, Karen O'Dowd, whose exhibit, entitled **un\*sus\*tain\*a\*ble**, is a visual portrayal of our un-remitting use of plastic and its impact on our oceans and waterways. The exhibit will open on Friday, November 1 and run through Sunday, January 5.

Passionate about recycling and upcycling, Karen's work took a curve after she read that **by the year 2050, plastic will outweigh marine life in our oceans**. Always interested in making art out of found objects that others toss away, Karen has found plastic waste to be a compelling material for her latest works.

"Every speck of plastic we use will last 500-1,000 years", the artist states. "And an enormous amount of it is ending up in our oceans, creating a swath of toxic, marine life-killing habitat." In her unique way, the artist, who lives and maintains her studio in Royal Oak, is making a bold artistic statement about this troubling state-of-affairs by using plastics to create sculptures, jewelry and wall hangings, and by incorporating plastics into her paintings. Although her works are largely made from recycled plastics, "Recycling is not an answer (for our planet), at least not yet" says the artist. "It is too costly and the market for recyclable plastic cannot begin to keep up with our consumption." "Plus," she adds, "the vast majority of plastic produced is not recyclable."

By making striking artworks out of plastic, Karen is underscoring and highlighting in a creative way, her belief that "we need to act, personally and on regional and global levels, to address this world-wide problem." Everyone needs to use less and while alternatives to plastic are only just beginning to become readily available, we all can do better, use less and buy smarter. We can make our voices heard and demand reductions in single-use plastic.

There will be two "meet the artist" receptions for **un\*sus\*tain\*a\*ble** on Second Saturdays, November 9 and December 14 from 5-8 pm at the gallery at 518 Poplar St., in Cambridge, across from Jimmie and Sooks restaurant. Karen will speak about her artistic methods and her vision at the November 9 reception and a celebration with champagne and chocolates will take place at the December 14 holiday reception. Both receptions are free and open to the public. The twelve members of Main Street Gallery will also be showing works that relate to the Waterways theme as well as small works for holiday giving. For more information, please call the gallery at: 410-330-4659 or visit the website: [www.mainstgALLERY.org](http://www.mainstgALLERY.org).

Main Street Gallery is Cambridge's only artist-owned and run cooperative and is currently reviewing work from prospective members. Please contact the Gallery if you are interested in being a part of this vibrant artist community.