

CONNECTICUT RESOURCES RECOVERY AUTHORITY

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New Mural at CRRA Trash Museum Traces Garbage History Higganum Artist Illustrates the Progression of Waste Disposal

HARTFORD, Conn. — A new mural exhibit at the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority Trash Museum depicts the history of garbage from pre-historic times to the present day.

Higganum artist Ted Esselstyn created a visual narrative of how trash management has evolved over time. The mural, 12 feet tall by 36 feet wide, is framed by two trees and challenges viewers to see what he called “the enormity of the subject matter.” Esselstyn used images of architectural and landscape changes to illustrate human’s changing methods of waste disposal. Images of pigs, vultures and even mastodons picking through garbage combine with facts and cultural anecdotes help the viewer make sense of all this history.

The painting’s depictions of trash management include

- throwing garbage into the street during ancient times;
- heaving items out windows during pre-colonial times;
- piling garbage in heaps during colonial times;
- letting pigs loose to eat the garbage during the pre-industrial era;
- incinerating garbage during the Industrial Revolution; and
- today’s methods of burning it to generate electricity or burying it in landfills.

“There is a richness in the history of garbage. It is something we all contribute to and can not ignore,” Esselstyn said of his reasons for painting the mural. “It was a physically challenging project given both the size of the subject matter and the mural itself. It was difficult putting it all into perspective in one visual image.”

“As the timeline of the mural progresses, the volume of trash was made evident through the crowding and leaning of the taller buildings during the industrial age. This leads into the age of consumerism. There are kids in the forefront multitasking; eating fast food, listening to music, and walking a dog. This is what most kids and adults can visually relate to.”

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Esselstyn designed the mural based on research he completed and input from the CRRA educational staff. He drew the pictures on wood panels in his studio using charcoal, which preserved the spontaneity of the overall illustration. He then painted over the charcoal using grittier and earthier paint colors and sandy texture to reflect the gritty nature of garbage.

Once the panels were painted, he installed them at the museum, cut out the tree shapes that bookend the mural and added benches sculpted in the shape of pigs, combining two and three-dimensional art. Under the mural are text facts superimposed on a muted newspaper background that assist in the navigation of the history of the mural. This section is globally shaped, mimicking a paper filled landfill.

The exhibit will be incorporated into the educational programs offered at the Trash Museum. Educators Regina Alfieri, Kirsten Martin and Pamela Garry will show visitors to the Museum the beauty of the mural. “The mural really catches your eye,” said Alfieri.

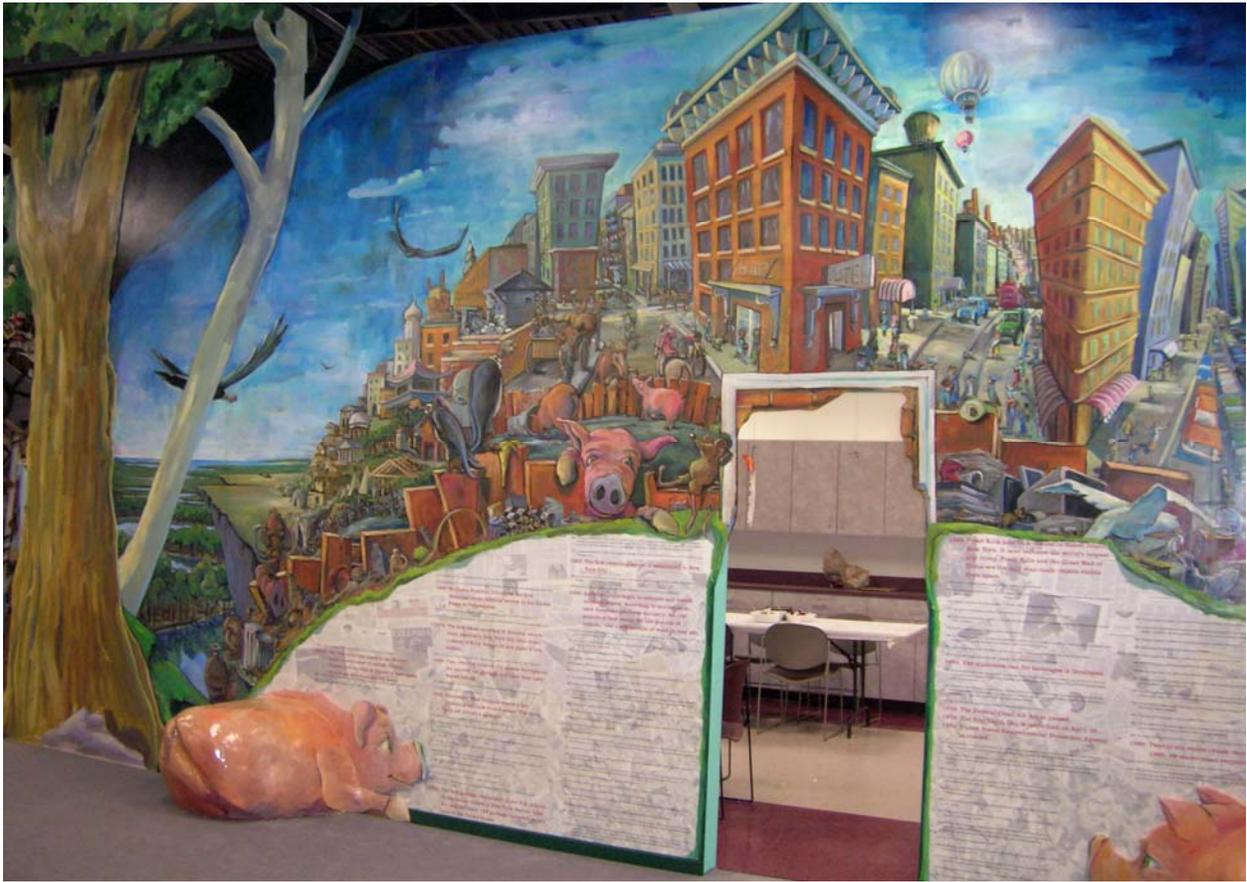
The educators plan to create activities that look back historically at trash management, how it has evolved, and will stimulate ideas on how it can be best managed in the future. “We are really looking forward to incorporating it into our tours and activities,” said Alfieri.

“This is a wonderful addition to our educational program,” said Sotoria Montanari, CRRA education supervisor. “Each year, we teach more than 40,000 visitors at the Trash Museum in Hartford and the Garbage Museum in Stratford about trash, its management and its impact in Connecticut and the world. This will broaden everyone’s perspective on how trash management has evolved over the years.”

The Trash Museum is located at 211 Murphy Road in Hartford. The museum is open to the public Wednesday to Friday from noon to 4 p.m. September through June with expanded public hours in July and August. For more information or directions, contact (860)757-7765 or go to <http://www.crra.org> and click on “Education Centers.”

The Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority is a quasi-public agency whose mission is to work for – and in – the best interests of the municipalities of the state of Connecticut. CRRA’s new board of directors and new management team develop and implement environmentally sound solutions and best practices for solid waste disposal and recycling management on behalf of municipalities. CRRA also runs environmental and recycling educational programs through its Trash Museum in Hartford and Garbage Museum in Stratford. For more information about CRRA and its activities, visit <http://www.crra.org>.

Editors: A photograph of the exhibit follows.



A 12-by-36-foot mural depicting the history of garbage has been installed at the CRRA Trash Museum in Hartford. Higganum artist Ted Esselstyn created the mural to include a doorway leading from an exhibit area to the museum's activity room.

Editors: For a 300-dpi .jpg version of this image, please contact Paul Nonnenmacher at (860) 757-7771 or pnonnenmacher@crra.org .