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COWS - Clean Ocean Wave Sculpture

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COWS - Clean Ocean Wave Sculpture
One of my big projects as the artist in residence at UNE for the 2016 fall semester has been to create a clean ocean waves sculpture, otherwise known as COWS. The idea came about when I learned that September 17 was International Coastal Cleanup Day. Susan Farady's Marine Pollution class was scheduled to pick up ocean debris at local beaches. I caught them just in time and asked that instead of disposing of the trash properly, they give it to me for a sculptural installation.

My work-study students and I painted a COWS trash bin with a wave on it. We placed it on campus and encouraged other students, friends and strangers to pick up ocean debris and deposit the trash in the COWS bin.
Next the students diligently collected data on what we'd gathered. In total... 88 plastic bottles, 71 cans, 18 lobster trap pieces, 8 shoes, 7 glass bottles, 4 golf balls, 4 shotgun shells, 3 hats, 1 dog toy, 1 horseshoe, 1 plastic tarp, 1 pink kitty pool, 1 scarf, 1 CD case, 1 portable scale, 1 iron pipe, 1 gift card and lots of plastic bags, food wrappers, fish line and nets.

The next step was to color sort, clean and shred all of the material into weave-able strips.
We then hung a “loom” of stainless steel wire on the Marine Science Center lobby stair rails. For three days we engaged the UNE community in a big trash weaving effort: UNE students, staff, faculty and even some of my friends and family participated.

The goal of the project was to engage the UNE community in a hands-on creative project while raising awareness about the amount of ocean debris that washes up on our shores and how vitally important it is for us to keep our ocean clean.

The Clean Ocean Wave Sculpture is now on permanent display at the Arthur P. Girard Marine Science Center.