

The Birth of a New 'State'

Mila Tenaglia (September 11, 2014)



Artist Maria Cristina Finucci's innovative and provocative project is set to launch at the UN. Supported by Missione Italiana and Ambassador Cardi, the event will open the semester of the Italian Presidency of the European Council. Sponsored by ENI.

A couple years ago, I read about the [Garbage Patch](#) [2]. It made a big impression on me, and since then I have examined the environmental disaster more closely. I had to do something." So [Maria Cristina Finucci](#) [3]—a brilliant Tuscan artist, architect and designer who has lived and worked in New York, Paris, Brussels, Moscow, Madrid and Rome—decided to spotlight a specific environmental issue involving the disposal of waste in our oceans.

First, explains Maria Cristina, she symbolically founded the 'Plastic State' with a major installation on April 11, 2013 at [UNESCO](#) [4] headquarters in Paris. "We needed a synthetic and



symbolic representation to capture this image, which I created using a transmedia technique, i.e., releasing various bits of 'evidence' of a different nature. I placed large transparent plastic bags filled with bottle caps to symbolize the island and created postcards" ('Greetings From the Garbage Patch State').

Then, a few months later she went to Venice and opened her pavilion at [Ca' Foscari University](#) [5]. She got students involved and created the "founding myth" of the new state. "I got them to tell me stories, and we talked about religion, geography, ethnic groups." The State continued to travel. It went to an international art festival in Madrid, where Maria Cristina put up a major installation. A year later she celebrated the Garbage State's first National Festival by placing a large wave of plastic in the piazza of the [MAXXI Museum](#) [6] of Rome.

And then they couldn't resist opening its first Embassy! "I made a civil registry. I registered thousands of objects—possible inhabitants of the Garbage Patch State. Sandals, glasses, plastic forks, detergents. I made birth certificates for anyone who wanted to become a citizen and adopt an object. Ever since then, media around the world has been talking about these installations."

Of course there was no way she was going to skip New York. "For me it's an honor to be present at the United Nations with my installation on September 29. [Ambassador Cardi](#) [7] was enthusiastic about the idea and he is a very pleasant person to work with."

ENI, Italy's major oil company and a true "Corporate Ambassador" of Italy around the world, last year picked up this project as the official sponsor. "It's an intelligent project which immediately got our support not only because of its ethical message but because of its innovative way of depicting it," explained [Stefano Lucchini](#) [8], then Director of International Relations and Communication at [ENI](#) [9].

Here's a little taste of the installation: a large serpent made with 132,500 caps will be displayed in the inside lobby during the [UN](#) [10]'s general assembly. But don't worry. If you can't make it to the UN, a documentary on the Garbage Patch State by director Miguel Angel Tobia will soon be released.

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Links

[1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/cartolinathegarbagepatch1410457155.jpg>

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pacific_garbage_patch

[3] <http://www.mariacristinafinucci.com/>

[4] <https://en.unesco.org/>

[5] http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=10497

[6] <http://www.fondazionemaxxi.it/?lang=en>

[7] http://www.italyun.esteri.it/Rappresentanza_ONU/Menu/La_Rappresentanza/ambasciatore

[8] <http://www.stefanolucchini.it/>

[9] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eni>

[10] <http://visit.un.org/>