



Vik Muniz, *Day Dreamer*, 2010

## **International symposium**

**Waste Sciences, Knowledges and Practices  
European, North and Latin American perspectives**

**November 23 & 24, 2017**

**Institut des Amériques, Paris (France)**

## **Rationale**

Waste has emerged as a main environmental, economic and social issue in the last fifty years. The convergence of interests from various fields of reflection and action suggests a potential and fruitful “epistemological turn”. Yet this process is still on the verge of formalization. Research and decision on waste organizational and representational systems remain either fragmented or dependent on local context though some waste management recommendations arise from worries on the global consequences of discard. Hence this international symposium aims at opening transatlantic conversations between academic, technical and artistic areas in order to clarify how waste challenges our everyday sciences, knowledges and practices.

Waste has long been restricted to the areas of civil engineering and medicine since its invention as a category of public management at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century (Barles, 2002). It is not a topic of interest for social science until the 1970s when debates on sustainable development open with demographic and urban growth, environmental degradation and climate change issues. Among the countless existing perspectives, garbology (Rathje, 1984), rudology (Gouhier, 1988) have targeted waste as a constructive tool to portrait social consumption patterns. Those approaches are now used in global waste production prospective analysis (Chalmin, Gaillochet, 2009) and waste management recommendations.

With the social sciences “cultural turn” in the 1980s (Claval, 1988) new ways of thinking about waste appeared, first in the anglosphere and then in the francosphere. Socio-economic and environmental issues triggered interdisciplinary debates on products life cycle. Engineering sciences participated in the reflection on waste final destination, recycling and infrastructure as well as on circular economy. Geographers, sociologists and anthropologists also underlined the importance of local knowledge and know-how, emotional and corporal approaches (Douglas, 1966; Vergara, 2014).

Waste representations, normative, cultural and social issues (Hawkins, 2008) have proven helpful in understanding places and flows. Environmental justice, postcolonial

studies and political ecology (Bennett, 2010) pointed out interest discrepancies, power issues and conflicts as underlying and decisive issues for management.

In North America, “discard studies” (Lepawsky, Liboiron, 2015) have gone a step forward in gathering researchers beyond disciplinary affiliation. In France and in many other Latin American academic culture, waste management serves as a meeting point for research but each approach remains specific. Thus it is difficult to situate waste from an epistemological point of view. Practical problems always question the share of responsibilities among epistemic communities towards defining and identifying waste issues.

Both biochemistry and social sciences can contribute to know better and point out the effects of some waste products concentration in landfills (e.g. nanoparticles from technological devices). Those challenges have a concrete impact on waste management organization and day to day territorial waste management. Environmental uncertainty, social acceptability are main issues in a post factual world where sustainable practices engage political know-how and practical ethics – local governments, NGOs, private sector, citizens, etc.

This symposium will try to apprehend the methodological, empirical and theoretical issues that subtend production and organization of waste sciences, knowledges and practices. We will share experiences between Europe, North and Latin America and gather researchers, artists, practitioners.

Discussion will include without restricting to:

- **Sciences and waste**
- **Dialogues between epistemic communities**
- **Circulations between academics and practitioners**
- **Relation to local knowledge**
- **Waste territorial planning: global, historical and practical implications**

- **Waste as a cultural object**

### **Practical information**

Please send your abstract (title, abstract of 500 words max. and five key-words) before June 15, 2017 to the following e-mail:

[colloquedechets2017@gmail.com](mailto:colloquedechets2017@gmail.com)

The authors of abstracts selected for the conference will be notified at the end of July 2017 and must then submit their finished papers, 40 000 signs in length, before October 1, 2017.

Abstracts can be sent in French, Spanish, Portuguese and English.

The symposium will be held in the four languages. No oral translation will be provided but personal accommodation (abstracts in other languages, volunteer-assistance for questions and answers).

Many thanks in advance for your interest and for spreading this call

### **Place**

Institut des Amériques (IdA)

60, boulevard du Lycée – 8<sup>e</sup> étage 92170 Vanves

### **Agenda**

June 15, 2017: deadline for abstract submission (500 words – 5 keywords)

End of July 2017: Notification to the authors about their abstracts

October 1, 2017: deadline for paper submission (40 000 signs/20 pages)

November 23 & 24, 2017: symposium “Waste Sciences, Knowledges and Practices”

### **Organising Committee**

**Marcelo Pires Negrao**, PhD student in geography, Institut des Hautes Etudes d’Amérique latine, associate researcher at the Centre de Recherche et de Documentation des Amériques, area « Wide-open spaces » (IHEAL-CREDA).

**Marie-Noëlle Carré**, PhD in geography, lecturer at Université de Montréal (Quebec, Canada), associate researcher at the Centre de Recherche et de Documentation des Amériques, area « Cities and metropolitan areas ».

### **Scientific committee**

Sabine BARLES, Professor, Urbanism, Université Paris 1 - Panthéon Sorbonne

Claudia CIRELLI, associated researcher, Anthropology & Geography, Université de Tours

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## References

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Claval Paul, « La géographie culturelle dans les pays anglophones », *Annales de géographie*, n° 660-661, 2008, p. 8-26.

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