

## DETRITUS & ART / A personal point of view on Environment and Art by Rainer Stegmann

### The Garbage Story

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By chance, one of us noticed an overflowing bin in a street in Venice and was drawn to the aesthetic of its colorful contents. A photo was taken, and thoughts were turned into words.

What is the relevance of sharing this photo and the reflections it inspired? Is it just an overflowing waste bin, or is there more to discover? We see it as a way to ignite curiosity and interest in the discarded object, the beauty it can reveal, and the powerful message it sends. Waste can inspire our imagination and uncover many stories behind it. Waste can become a source of creativity.

Viewed from the perspective of waste management, a close look at the bin tells us that several items are recyclable, such as the two plastic bottles, the can, and perhaps the single-use paper-and-plastic cups. The remaining waste materials may be difficult to sort and should be disposed of; due to their high calorific value, they should be incinerated. Some items in the bin could have been avoided: the single-use cups could have been replaced with reusable cups, the drink in the can could have been served in a deposit-return bottle, and plastic bottles could have been replaced with refundable ones.

Another often overlooked aspect of Waste Management is organizing waste collection in public spaces. Therefore, there should be enough trash cans, emptied regularly, to prevent littering. Key questions include how many to install, their capacity, and how frequently they should be emptied to avoid overflows, which often happen during events. This is a significant challenge due to high costs. Trash cans should have lids to prevent litter from being blown away by the wind, to deter animals, and to protect against rain. Plastic cigarette butts should be collected in a designated compartment inside the trash can to prevent them from ending up in the oceans. Although the trash container in Venice inspired us for the Garbage Story, the City of Venice may reconsider the design of the trash containers presented here.



*"Every item in this garbage bin has a story to tell: plastic, paper and tin. The remains of a busy day in a city. Water bottles, a fizzy drink, an ice cream cup smudged in melted chocolate, an invitation to an evening of music and wine, a crumpled-up ticket. Was it for a museum? The trail of leisurely time spent strolling around in the warm sun. The air is vibrant with sound. The piazza is buzzing with many people, colourful and confused like the jumbled display in the bin. Happy memories will be taken but this will remain."*

*In the next volume of DETRITUS, I will present the artist Diedel Klöver, who lives in Varel, Germany. He creates wonderful sculptures from wasted metal items. In this example, these are screws and nuts.*

