Imagine a world without plastic... Artist Pascale Marthine Tayou uses plastic and recycled objects to draw our attention to the overuse and waste associated with consumerism.

Look inside to investigate the inspiration and meaning behind Tayou’s installation.

*Plastic bags 2001-2010* is a site specific work commissioned for ‘21st Century: Art in the First Decade’ at the Gallery of Modern Art. It is made up of hundreds of plastic bags which hang from the ceiling in a giant drop-like shape.
WHO?

Pascale Marthine Tayou was born in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in 1967. After periods spent in Stockholm and Paris, he now lives and works in Ghent, Belgium. Tayou belongs to group of African artists who redefine postcolonial culture and blend experiences of their birthplace with those of Europe.

*Tayou does not see himself as an African artist, but like that of his peers, his work is bound up with the cultures and communities of Africa and its identity within the rest of the world.*

Tayou's work examines the how far certain boundaries can be stretched and the impact of globalisation upon individuals and national identity through ideas of social exchange, economics and migration.

Tayou's work is extremely varied and consists of drawings, sculptures, installations, videos and performances, dealing with themes like the origin of his family and his nomadic existence, between his African roots and his life in Europe. It also raises questions on cultural and national identity, as well as on more existential issues such as AIDS or the complexity of urban life.

HOW?

Tayou prefers to work with materials that he comes across in his everyday life, and which take on new meanings in the context of his installations. He draws attention to such themes as nationalism, exile and the effects of intertwined global power structures, as well as exploring how people from different countries and continents perceive the world.

His work is directly influenced by the scenes he witnesses in the countries he visits. He collects ephemera from his journeys, including train and airline ticket stubs, restaurant and shop receipts and labels or wrappings for socks, razors, batteries and plastic bags. Tayou’s insistent reuse and recycling of these objects reminds us that contemporary life is inextricably linked with economics, migration and politics.
THE MODERN RECYCLER

The plastic bag is a characterising element of modern consumer society. On viewing Pascale’s installations, we are alerted to the excesses of contemporary living. Tayou compares plastic bags to humans, calling them both ‘useful and dangerous’.

The usefulness and necessity of consumer products also have adverse effects on the environment. Plastic bags and other plastic items are not biodegradable and, as a result, often end up in our oceans. In turn, a negative effect can be observed in the environment.

Although society consumes more than it needs, we are becoming more aware of environmental issues. This awareness is expressed globally through our concern over the depleted ozone layer, pollution and realisation of waste in society. Many artists recognise and try to express these ideas in their art works by recycling found or waste materials.

Artists recycling materials in their works include Simryn Gill, Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, Donna Marcus, Romuald Hazoumè, and Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy.
TRY THIS ACTIVITY!

Research artists who recycle waste materials to create their art works. List them in the table below, along with the materials they use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST NAME</th>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romuald Hazoumè</td>
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<td>Fiona Hall</td>
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<td>Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian</td>
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<td>Latifa Echakhch</td>
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<td>Sally Garrimarra</td>
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Start collecting items which could be described as rubbish. Try to collect all the same items (same type or colour) and incorporate these items into an art work of your own.

- Try to go without using plastic for a day. This includes bottles, containers, food packaging, beauty products, bank or go cards, and money other than coins.
- Is it possible?
- What aspect of this project did you find the hardest?
- Which items can’t you live without?

When you go shopping, try to find items that are not presented in plastic. What packaging alternatives to plastic are there?

- Search the internet and identify three new non-plastic packaging solutions or innovations.

WEB LINKS
http://www.pascalemarthinetayou.com/
http://www.e-flux.com/shows/view/4876
http://urbancrafts.wordpress.com/
http://inhabitat.com/art/
http://inhabitat.com/about/

YOUTUBE
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBmXMoI9Qus
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyWnv269WLY
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rbN5mXozn0

This educational resource was developed by Melina Mallos and Caitlin Pijpers (Access, Education and Regional Services, 2010)