

# Jar in Action

## What does sustainability mean to you?



# 2025-26

**Jar in Action** is an ongoing project undertaking research into perceptions around sustainability, produced by **Fusion art sci**. With engagement at its core the project asks artists, scientists and communities to create artworks, encapsulated within a jar, in response to the question: **What does sustainability mean to you?**

The project has been supported by libraries, schools and arts organisations to reach out to communities and provide new creative opportunities.

Here Jar in Action presents the most recent artworks submitted since September 2025 and invites audiences to meditate on the question and the unique creative responses exhibited.

### **Source of artwork**

Open Call for jars

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- Our Changing World community at The University of Edinburgh
- Biomedical and Medical Sciences third year cohort community workshops at The University of Edinburgh
- INCR/SIDB/EMS group workshops at The University of Edinburgh
- Others

The work is listed in the catalogue the order it was submitted using the text and images provided by the artists.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed, and welcome new work to join the growing collection, thank you!

## Description

**001** - Tom Pratt - Consider the trees

*Leaf, araldite.*

*Ginkgo biloba*, a living fossil, has been around a long time, so, imagine their surprise sustaining the Hiroshima atom bomb attack, still they sprouted and their descendants now spread symbolising peace - maybe this is one of those. The jar was dropped and glued back together again. No more Hiroshimas please - Shalom.



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**002** - Remo Pedreschi - Future opportunity

*Aluminium shavings*

This jar was not intended as an artwork, but has been in my workshop for about two years. It contains shavings from a project to up-cycle aluminium extrusions from an earlier research project into a range of workshop doors. I could not throw them away and they will be melted and cast into suitable objects at a later date. The original extrusions were rectangular box sections and used with minimal adaptation

The jar represents down cycling to material after up-cycling components. Re-use to re-cycle.



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**003** – Oliwia – Environment

*Leaves, rocks, dirt, cork, rusty nail*

Represents how we can merge the built environment with the natural world. The materials chosen (rock, cork, nail) can all be used in construction.



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**004** – Alasdair Kearton - The considerably depressing state of things

*Leaves, gravel, shards of glass, chocolate wrapper*

To me, sustainability involves cutting down on waste and supporting CO2 absorbing plants within nature. This jar reflects the current state of the environment, with the shredded and dead leaves at the bottom, being crushed by a weight of rocks - representing the strain humanity is placing on the natural world, and shards of glass - which represent the harm caused to nature by humans, and the chocolate wrapper on top which reflects society's carelessness and the (in my opinion - ill placed) importance we place on consumerist pleasure.



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**005** - Gintare Bagacionkaite - Sparking inspiration

*Glitter*

A small jar with big ideas. Sparks. To spark a conversation. To spark a discussion. To spark CHANGE.



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**006** - David Price - Its got you

*Biro ink, water*

Showing oil and water don't mix



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**007 – Anon – Untitled**

*Waste material*



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**008 – Calvin Chan - Fallen tree from storm**

*A fallen tree from Storm Amy*

A tree fell by Storm Amy recycled



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**009 – CA – Like trees**

*Paper, leaves, tree seeds, and plastic decorations*

The materials used are reminiscent of a forest. This work aims to convey that by reusing and recycling waste, we can help save our natural forests.



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**010 – Chun – Garden in my jar**

*Sawdust, leaves, wood*

My jar includes things one would see in a garden and I hope we can altogether take care of nature so that we can continue to enjoy the beauty of it.



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**011 - Kerstin Hasenpusch-Theil - Reduction of Plastic in Research**

*Plates, tips, slides*

Although research is necessary to understand diseases and try to cure it, the plastic usage is high. It would be great to be able to recycle some of the used material and to minimise the plastic usage in general.



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**012** - sam heczko - Light emitting diode

*saw dust, halogen lamps, leaves, wireless network chip*

We tend to be pessimistic about ability of technology to enhance sustainability. To power the ongoing AI revolution we deprive communities of drinkable water and open coal mines. However, the humble LED light is example of the opposite - cheap to produce, long lasting and energy efficient - it provides a way of producing light in a way that surpasses the old technologies in every way.



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**013**– Yuchen – Fish in the Box

*Plastic, coarse fabric, aluminum foil*

Fish in the box but wrapped by the fabrics and plastic which is common in our lives but difficult to be degraded in nature, urging the need for developing technologies for better degradation or recycling litters.



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**014** – AR – The ocean

*Plastic bag, plastic straw, leaf*

The jar holds one straw and one plastic sheet. These are small reminders of a much larger problem: our oceans burdened with countless pieces of plastic. Yet, the jar is not full. Like the vast ocean, there is still room for change, and for responsibility. This jar symbolises warning and hope: while the damage is real, it is not beyond repair.



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**015** - Niki and Klersa - In the Night Garden

*Leaves, bracelet, teabag, tea wrapper, feather, string, cork, microchip.*



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**016**— Ruby - Watch out! The fish can gigabyte!

*plastic bag and old parts of a computer board*

My jar represents the ongoing issue of e-waste, comprising a surprising amount of plastic in our oceans. The use of an old computer card to make the body of the fish also connotes the issues of underwater data farms that release toxic compounds, heavy metal components and chemical emissions in our seas. It shows an on-the-nose idea of how fish will evolve to handle these harsh conditions.



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**017** – COB - Silent waste: the cost of everyday carelessness

*Receipts, tissues, string, a lost cable, teabag wrapper, foam flower, tin foil cake wrapper, treat wrapper, panty liner, pen lid, clipping of participant form*



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At the bottom of her bag lies a story of everyday waste; crumpled receipts, a single-use sanitary products, a forgotten wrappers, a tangled wire. These aren't just rubbish; they're echoes of careless consumption, quick fixes, and forgotten consequences. Sustainability isn't just about big changes—it's about the small moments we ignore. It's about taking responsibility for every choice, every throwaway. Because these scraps add up. They are polluting our earth and damaging our future. To me, sustainability means honoring the weight of these everyday



decisions and choosing to protect what truly matters; our planet, our home, her future.

**018 - Madeleine McAllister - Contained nature**

*Net material, rope, leaves, piece of wood*

To me, sustainability means respecting the freedom of nature and every living thing within it. The jar represents how humans often confine and control the natural world, just as animals become trapped and entangled in ropes and nets. It reminds me that true sustainability is about releasing those restraints protecting rather than possessing, restoring rather than restricting. Sustainability means creating a world where nature can exist on its own terms, free to grow, breathe, and thrive without human interference.



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**019 – Kadeena – student**

*Expired pills*

Expired pills represent the inequity distribution of resources and waste, causing environmental pollution, and remind us of the importance of sustainable development.



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**020 - Anna Anderson & Maya Stables - Compressed coffee**

*Recyclable coffee cup, stirrer and milk bottle top*

Our work demonstrates that the possibility of sustainability in the modern world is suffocated by the extreme trends of student coffee consumptions



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**021 - AG and ED – Tree jar**

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*Leaves, pepiets ,j two jars , battaries .*

This jar represents evolution of energy production. From trees getting burned for energy to battaries. The jar makes the viewer think of new ways for reusable energy.



**022 - Saskia Allan, Hannah Martin, Carlina Walderdorff - Health x sustainability**

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*Paper, bandage, tampon applicator, swab, pipette tip, stickers, labels, tiptree jar*

Reflection of wastage produced by health services

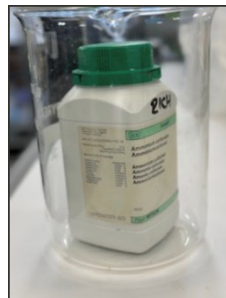


**023 - Dr Richard Abell, Julia MacLeod - Sustainability is Sustaining the Population**

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*Synthetic Nitrogen chemical of ammonia, container/label. (yet to be acquired)*

Discovered in 1918, the synthetic nitrogen chemical of ammonia is used as a proxy for world synthetic nitrogen fertiliser production. Globally nitrogen fertilisers production is responsible for ~1.5% of global CO2 emissions. In our current agricultural system ~ 3 billion on Earth rely on the increased food production possible using synthetic fertilisers.



**024 – Emma - Small tips, big impact**

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*Pipette tips*

Represents the many disposable plastics used in research as small contributions that build up to a large part of the problem of effective sustainability



**025 - A.C. – Profit**

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*Tree bark, dust-board, twine, leaf*

Business profit of our strive to be sustainable. People in hope to make a good impact on the world make conscious choices that value the reduce-reuse-recycle statement. Businesses see this as an avenue to charge the public more for consumer products, as sustainability plays on our heartstrings. The businesses use plastic products and trick us into believing we are doing good when in the end its was harmful for the planet to produce that product they sold and charged extra for. A term called greenwashing.



**026 – Gwen Gump – Run Forest Run**

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*Lighters & wood*

Arthur's Seat. Californian coastlines. New Zealand's forests. Wild fires are engulfing our planet. The carelessness of lighter disposal worldwide is a major contributor to these uncontrollable fires. There needs to be more awareness into the impact of unsustainable lighter disposable, and this jar is just the ignition point.



**027 – Rosie Cromwell – waste materials**

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*paper bag, plastic sleeve, metal canister*

When we think about plastic waste in medical waste we often think about sterile packaging that cannot easily be made recyclable. This is a different example - nestled among the paper and cardboard is a plastic sleeve. While this is useful, we don't need another sleeve for every prescription! Think about how easily that builds up, and where else cases like this might appear.



**028 – Ruth Pollit - Single Use only**

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*plastic, metal, textile*

We all benefit from modern hospital care and treatment during our lifetime. In Autumn 2025 my partner spent nine weeks in hospital for his initial surgery and then a further six weeks trying to shake off an infection. The experience revealed the enormous amount of one-use equipment used for his treatment and care. This isn't a new revelation! We all saw this during the Covid-19 pandemic. The items in the jar are just a few examples - yes even the metal scissors! How do we maintain high levels of healthcare and yet reduce, re-use and recycle?



**029 – Ruth Pollit - Patient's medication bag**

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*Plastic*

We all benefit from modern hospital care and treatment during our lifetime. Recent personal experience of my partner being in hospital for nine weeks meant he returned home with the ubiquitous patient's green bag full of new medication. Most of us probably throw these bags away once we return home but they are a super re-use item as they are really sturdy and they have a zip lock closure. But did you know that they are recyclable too?



**030 – Thomas Theil – To a sustainable use of jars**

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*Fresh orange juice, fresh ginger, lemon juice, sugar, cloves, cinnamon, star anis, citric acid, pectin*

Self explanatory



