

# ISSUES

IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF  
SCIENCES, ENGINEERING,  
AND MEDICINE

ARIZONA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

35<sup>th</sup>  
*Anniversary  
Issue*

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# Archives



Susan Beiner, *NON-Biodegradable*, 2019, porcelain, acrylic, and wood, 36 x 84 x 65 inches

## NON-Biodegradable

Many of Susan Beiner's recent installations are a response to our increasingly manufactured world. She challenges us to reconsider our own perceptions of what is natural in our day-to-day surroundings. In some installations, she uses synthetic materials to make organic-looking objects such as flowers; in *NON-Biodegradable*, she makes objects that look like plastic trash out of porcelain. The installation addresses the growing threat that plastic pollution poses to the health of the planet and humanity. When examined up close, viewers can read the amount of time it will take for various objects to biodegrade, such as 450 years for a plastic bottle. She writes, "There is a new 'geological era' of plastic coating the earth.

Our natural environment is being polluted by non-biodegradable trash affecting it in ways yet unknown.... We are surrounded by a very real and growing threat, a threat of humanity's effect on our life-giving ecosystem."

In addition to her environmentally focused art, Beiner is currently creating a ceramic installation for the Arizona Cancer Evolution Center that visually interprets research about the growth cycles of various cancer cells. It will be completed in 2020 and permanently installed on Arizona State University's Tempe campus. Susan Beiner is the Joan R. Lincoln Endowed Professor of Ceramics at Arizona State University, where she has been teaching since 2006.