

Left Out: Who is disposable?

A bag of trash sits on the street. You do a double take as you realize that it actually does look like it is sitting. The shape of a person can be seen under the plastic. What do you do?

London artist Maxwell Rushton has created a sculpture called Left Out, a cast of a human figure wrapped in a trash bag, but the artwork is not so much the object but rather the reactions it evokes in passersby.

"The art does lie in the viewer and their reactions - or non-reactions," Rushton says. "Roughly 70 percent of people would notice it and then out of those, half reacted. That could be from looking over their shoulder to running over and trying to 'save' it, ripping the trash bag off. The other half would look at it and walk on."

Rushton spent a couple of years as a teenager in supported accommodation after problems at home. He got the idea for Left Out last year after he walked out of a shop, tripped over a bin bag and spun around to apologize to it, thinking it was a homeless person on the streets.

So far Rushton has taken Left Out onto the streets of London twice and recorded the reactions of the public. A video has gone viral around the world. The message of some people being viewed as disposable is tapping into a universal concern.

"It's not an individual, it doesn't have a face, it's not male or female, you can think of it as anyone displaced, needing help," Rushton explains. "It doesn't illustrate culture or creed. It's about humanity."

- By Steven MacKenzie

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