



Twitter ball

# Sarah Turner by Rachael Chambers

There's no mistaking which studio space belongs to Sarah Turner, an eco lighting designer from Nottingham. There are boxes of plastic bottles everywhere and hanging from the ceiling of the old building that Sarah occupies with other creatives are the most stunning lights and chandeliers. It's almost incomprehensible that such beauty came from the boxes of rubbish strewn around the studio. But rubbish it most certainly is not in the eyes of Sarah, for these bottles are her source material, as she explains:

"I absolutely thrive on the challenge of turning rubbish into something beautiful. I get a great deal of satisfaction in knowing that I have made something gorgeous and useful from things that otherwise would have probably ended up in a landfill site somewhere."

"I also think that making something from waste materials is actually harder than designing something from new materials. Often in design you would choose a material which would suit the design best, but with eco art you are stuck with the material! You have to work around its limitations and learn how to take advantage of its properties."

"I think the biggest restraint is that the material was designed to do something else and sometimes the material doesn't do what you want it to!" she continues. "You have to analyse the properties of the materials and then learn to take advantage of them, or at least work around what the material has to offer."

But Sarah has had plenty of practice turning waste materials into wondrous creations, as she was an avid childhood junk modelling enthusiast.

"Since I can remember I have always been making things from waste materials," she recalls. "Even as a child, many things were not thrown away in my house and were saved and stored in the garage for me to make something from them. So it is just a natural thing for me to make things from waste materials. I can see their value as raw materials and can't bring myself to throw something away that could be useful!"

Indeed this continued when Sarah worked part-time at a coffee shop whilst studying Furniture and Product Design at Nottingham Trent University.

"We threw so many plastic bottles away at the coffee shop," she says. "I decided I would collect them and see what I could make from them, I would normally go home with a bin bag full or two each day! I created several plastic bottle lights and featured them in my degree show. I got such good feedback about them that I decided to start a business selling them. That was about five years ago and I am so glad I made that decision!"

When Sarah started her business the same coffee shop kept collecting bottles for her, now she has lots more people collecting them for her as well.

"I call them my Bottle Army!" says Sarah. "They are simply friends, friends of friends and sometimes random strangers who want to contribute and help me recycle. I have on occasions come to my studio in the morning and there's been a bin bag full of bottles waiting for me by the door! I couldn't run my business without my fantastic Bottle Army!"

Early in 2012 the need for her 'Bottle Army' to collect specific Coca Cola bottles became paramount. One of Sarah's first designs was for her Cola 30 light which was hand sculpted from thirty plastic Coca Cola bottles. Ever since then Sarah had hoped it might be noticed by Coca Cola, but when they did eventually get in touch, the magnitude of the email she received didn't quite sink in at first.

**A journey from childhood junk modelling to working with Coca Cola at the London 2012 Olympics.**



Cola 10 ceiling light



Daisy 12 Green

"When I first started making lights from waste plastic bottles I always hoped that Coca Cola would notice me and my work and get in touch. But when they sent me an email with 'Coca Cola' in the subject title I didn't think much of it, as I get emails like that quite a lot as some of my lights are made from the bottles. So I was in complete shock when I opened the email and realised it was actually from Coca Cola - they had seen my work and wanted to work with me! Coca Cola asked me to design and make the lights and a sculpture for their hospitality centre at the Olympic Park. It was such a fantastic project and a great honour to be working with Coca Cola for such a once-in-a-lifetime event."

Sarah went on to make five two metre wide lights for the hospitality centre.

"I wanted the lights to have an Olympic look to them, which is why I chose to make them as circular disks with rings of the plastic bottles, reminiscent of the Olympic rings. I also liked the idea of having the classic looking light bulbs visible; it reminded me of the infamous Coca Cola Christmas truck. In the centre of each light was a globe which was my original Coca 30 design"

Sarah was also asked to create a nine metre high sculpture for the hospitality centre based on an athlete.

"The sculpture was made from thousands of

hand cut pieces of waste bottles and cans," explains Sarah. "The pieces are individually tied onto invisible wires in the form of a diver in three different stages of a high dive. When the breeze catches the wires the pieces spin and move, adding life and energy to the sculpture. The idea worked very well in the space. The diver dramatically jumps off the high board on the first floor, turns into a pike through the stairwell, then the final stage is the diver entering the water."

"This is a personal favourite of mine, just the legs are shown entering the water and a big splash is created. I think this adds a little humour to the piece as well as intrigue to the guests as they first entered the centre."

The Coca Cola installation and lights are just part of Sarah's rise to eco fame, for in the past five years her work has been featured in numerous magazines and books, at London Fashion week and as one of Kevin McCloud's 'Green Heroes' for Grand Designs Live. Sarah has had a gigantic 'family' of lights at Nottingham's 'Light Night' and exhibited at the Ideal Home Show and Tent London. She even created an eight foot high Christmas Tree for Falkirk Community Trust in Scotland.

The most thought provoking and relevant piece however has to be the 'Twitter Ball' that Sarah made for a charity, raising awareness of the amount of plastic polluting our seas. Over 500 used plastic bottles went into making a huge sphere resembling a Christmas bauble. Each bottle had a colour changing LED inside which was connected to Twitter. Every time someone tweeted a phrase about the charity, the Twitter Ball flashed different colours. What a sight and what a powerful message.

So every time you hold a plastic bottle in your hand, ready to bin it, think how in the right hands - those belonging to Sarah Turner - it could be transformed to light up your life.

M: 07817 852637  
E: info@sarahturner.co.uk  
W: www.sarahturner.co.uk



The big splash



Coca Cola table decoration for the Langham Hotel



Coca Cola chandelier

EUROPE'S LARGEST & MOST PRESTIGIOUS CRAFT EVENT

# Living Crafts

Art, Design & Innovation

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May

## HATFIELD HOUSE

HERTS

CELEBRATING BRITAIN'S FINEST ARTISTS & DESIGNER-MAKERS

Join hundreds of designer-makers at this annual extravaganza promoting the very best of British art & craft. With workshops, demonstrations, lectures and food & drink, Living Crafts is an experience not to be missed.

admin@livingcrafts.co.uk ☎ 02392 863 871

www.livingcrafts.co.uk

## craftCARNIVAL

# 2013

Organising the finest craft events in Wessex for 25 years. Contact us for a free illustrated guide to these unique shows.

<b>Somerley</b> 30 March-1 April	Craft Carnival
<b>Sherborne Castle</b> 4-6 May	Hill Butts House
<b>Kingston Lacy</b> 25-27 May	Kingston Lacy
<b>Chettle</b> 13-14 July	Wimborne, Dorset
<b>Kingston Lacy</b> 24-26 August	BH21 4DS
<b>Compton Acres</b> 16-17 November	(01202) 842407
	info@craftcarnival.co.uk
	www.craftcarnival.co.uk

# Craft Shows

2013

**Hyde End Easter Craft Show**  
29th 30th 31st March, 1st April

**Calke Abbey Craft Show\***  
4th 5th 6th May

**Blickling Craft Show\*** Bank Holiday  
25th 26th 27th May

**Hyde End Autumn Craft Show**  
4th 5th 6th October

**Crafts and Gifts for Christmas at Blickling Hall\***  
30th November, 1st December and 7th 8th December

**Christmas Crafts at Calke Abbey\***  
7th 8th December

**Food and Drink Blickling Hall\***  
14th 15th December

\* National Trust venues



EasternEvents

For more details visit our website  
[www.easternevents.com](http://www.easternevents.com)

tel: 01263 734711

e-mail: info@easternevents.com