

## UK plastic London arts project

In summer 2008, artists Merrie and Edwina Ashton go to Hanover Primary School in Islington armed with containers of different types of plastic waste including bottle tops, ring-binders, bubble wrap and benecol tubs. They slap some wet, dead fish on a table surrounded by about 30 eight year old children.

The children are told that plastic is harmful and often ends in the sea, causing the death of as many as 100,000 marine mammals each year.

Edwina performs a demo on a fish's swim bladder and the children, split into 2 groups, peer studiously at the fish on the table, and begin to draw them.

Then the class is divided into smaller groups to study coloured photocopies of marine species – a whale, a jellyfish, a shrimp, which they learn to draw using pencil and crayons.

The children have to learn how to translate the 2-dimensional images they have created to 3-dimensional objects using the difficult types of plastic. They wrestle to convert this tough, hydro-carbon into an array of marine species – their powers of observation heightened by the drawing process beforehand. Sellotape proves essential in the transformation process and about a dozen models of marine life, from a whale to a jellyfish, are born.