

BARBARA HASHIMOTO

Artist-in-Residence at the Chicago-based architecture firm Bauer Latoza Studio, asked the sixteen staff members to set aside junk mail they received at the office address. For an entire year Hashimoto incorporated the daily hand-shredding of this unsolicited material into her studio practice. At the end of twelve months she had amassed more than 3,000 cubic feet of shredded material, constituting the amount of junk mail delivered by the U.S. Postal Service to this one small business.

The genesis of this project was inspired by a number of startling statistics: 100 million trees are cut down to produce junk mail annually. The majority of junk mail is produced from natural forests. In 2006, Americans received 77 billion pieces of junk mail. In 2006, more than 15 million trees were cut down to produce the 1.8 billion pounds of undeliverable junk mail and The average American will spend eight months of his or her life handling junk mail.

Hashimoto's labor-intensive yet intimate process has inspired a series of sculptures, installations, performances, and collaborations presented in Los Angeles and Chicago, including these abstractions composed of woven strips of shredded junk mail.



Barbara Hashimoto

Left: Junk Mail Project, Shredded junk mail, Chicago Arts District

Below: “BARBARA HASHIMOTO GETS ALL TRASHY”

Hashimoto gracefully scoops up mounds of multicolored shredded junk mail while musician Edward Torrez vigorously plays lingering piano riffs. Hashimoto transforms Torrez into the unsuspecting dupe, who plays all tuxedo clad, a sort of domestic elegance, while the stream of junk mail envelops him completely. The harder he plays, the further he is swallowed by the superfluous pieces of paper.

