

'I just can't throw anything away': Madelon Vriesendorp on turning plastic junk into art

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SUMMARY

A profile marking Vriesendorp's exhibition *Cosmic Housework*, in which she transforms discarded plastic packaging — milk bottles, deodorant balls, cleaning-product bottles — into surreal sculptural characters. The piece frames the show as a return to the home of the late theorist Charles Jencks, tracing their decades-long friendship and collaboration, and Vriesendorp's role modelling his cosmic landscape designs. It also foregrounds the exhibition's theme of overlooked domestic and women's work.

| On the show's title: *housework is "the work we do so that we can do our proper work."*

EXHIBITION REFERENCED

Cosmic Housework — The Cosmic House, Holland Park, London; ran until 21 May 2024

WORKS & PIECES MENTIONED

Plastic Surgery — sculptural figures cut from plastic milk bottles

Swan Lake — milk-bottle swans installed in Jencks's whirlpool bath

Mind Game series — incl. *Body Pillows*, *Clock and Dice* — a table game / tableau reading

Enlightened Gamers

"Handelier", cardboard foot, limb cushions — pun-based domestic interventions through the house

PEOPLE

Charles Jencks — architectural theorist; former resident, collaborator

Rem Koolhaas — former husband; co-founder with MV of OMA

Maggie Keswick Jencks — co-designer, *Garden of Cosmic Speculation*

Eszter Steierhoffer — director, Jencks Foundation

Marysia Lewandowska — first artist in residence, *The Cosmic House*

RELATED REFERENCES

OMA — Office for Metropolitan Architecture

Landscape projects — *Garden of Cosmic Speculation* (Portrack); *Northumberlandia*; *Parco Portello*, Milan

The Story of Post-Modernism — Jencks, 2011 — MV cover painting & cartoon drawings