

SCRAP

DISCUSSION GUIDE



OFFICIAL SELECTION
hotdocs
2022 OUTSPOKEN. OUTSTANDING.

[**DOCLANDS**]
OFFICIAL SELECTION
2022

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I am fascinated by things that are old and carry their history and am nostalgic for a time when life was slower, and things were made by hand and built to last. It was this nostalgia that I wanted to capture in Scrap. I made the film to show the strange beauty of objects that have reached their 'end of life' and to get people thinking about what happens to things like planes, ships, and phonebooths when they have outlived their use. While we are now conscious of the need to recycle things in our homes, few people think about what happens to larger items we use in our daily lives. Governments and corporations must dispose of tons and tons of materials each year - a recycling and/or disposal challenge which can have global implications. The two main drivers of our waste problem are overconsumption and disposable culture. Things are made cheaply to be used and thrown away.

Obsolescence is built into products and consumers are encouraged to upgrade rather than fix. The move away from mechanical objects to increasingly computerized items, makes repair and recycling more difficult - and more toxic. To compound the problem, we are losing the instinct and the ability to repair. These skills have been lost often within as little as one generation. And those who can still repair are being stymied by large corporations that are making it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to repair everything from cell phones to washing machines to farm equipment. People are aware of the need to recycle, but recycling is a band-aid solution which does nothing to address the root causes of this problem. By showing the fate of objects in the film I hope to open a discussion about how we can change our production and consumption habits to extend the lifecycle of the things we use.

Stacey Tenenbaum



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How To Use This Guide

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you use the documentary *SCRAP* to educate, engage, and activate people in the community after they have seen the award-winning film.





Engagement Ideas

Host a **community screening** event in-person or virtually

Include a panel with local experts for post-screening **Q&A**

Follow *SCRAP* on social media for updates and information

Connect with local groups working on reuse & repair, upcycling, and circular economy initiatives such as **our impact partners**

Hosting an Event

Visit our website, **scrapdoc.ca**, for information on how to host a screening of the film

Film running time: **78 minutes**

Languages: **English, French** (subtitled version available)

#ScrapDoc

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film synopsis

SCRAP is a love letter to the things we use in our daily lives. This cinematic documentary tells the stories of people who each have a connection to objects that have reached their 'end of life'. Together their stories convey a deeper environmental and human message about our relationship to things, the sadness we feel at their eventual loss, and the joy of we can find in giving them a new purpose.

Things, like people, show a certain beauty in their old age. Like us, they carry the weight of their history and the markings and scars accumulated through their lifespan. With the loss of these objects, we are also losing parts of our history and the cultural memory which they embody. The film raises awareness about the fate of the things we use and explores how artists and other creative thinkers can be part of giving new life to the things we discard.

characters



Dean Lewis

Dean Lewis is the owner and creative mastermind behind Old Car City in White, Georgia. Dean grew up in a junkyard which was started by his parents in the 1930s to sell used cars and parts. He decided to turn the car scrap business into a car museum and living art piece, where people can experience nature and photograph the old cars. Dean's collection includes over 4400 historic cars spread out over 35 acres of land.



Tchely Hyung-Chul Shin

Tchely Hyung-Chul Shin is a professor at the Grenoble School of Architecture (ENSAG) and he runs Shinslab Architecture with his wife and fellow architect Claire Shin. The company, established in 2007, designs audacious architectural projects in France and Korea. Among their achievements is "Light of Life Church", whose circular worship hall is covered by a wood and metal dome made from ancient cedar trees. In 2016 they designed Temp'L, an art installation created from a discarded ocean liner.



John Lopez

Sculptor John Lopez was born and raised on a ranch in Western South Dakota. He studied sculpture at Northern State University and had a successful career in bronze casting before he started working with scrap metal. John is known for his life-size hybrid metal sculptures made from discarded farm equipment and bronze castings. His sculptures can be found in private collections and public venues across the USA and in France, Monaco, and Qatar. You can also see his work at the Kokomo Inn, a gallery and sculpture park created by John in his hometown of Lemmon, South Dakota.



Saumya Khandelwal

Saumya Khandelwal is an independent photographer based in New Delhi. She has contributed photos to publications such as Time Magazine, National Geographic, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Guardian, Bloomberg Businessweek, and Vanity Fair. Saumya has built a diverse body of work spanning photojournalistic and documentary genres of photography. Saumya's personal photography work focuses on gender and environmental issues.



Tony Inglis

Tony Inglis works with his wife and brother-in-law at Unicorn Restorations where they lovingly restore old British phone boxes. This family business started up accidentally when British Telecom hired their transportation company to remove the boxes from the streets. After bringing them to auction, Tony's family decided to buy up the remaining boxes to restore. They have since brought back over 2000 phone booths which have been used back on the street, in films, as garden sculptures, office spaces, cafes, libraries, and more.



Ed Metka

Ed Metka is a lifetime streetcar enthusiast. When he retired from his job with the Army Corps of Engineers in 1989, Ed created the Vintage Electric Streetcar Co to fulfill his dream of bringing old streetcars back to life. Ed was an environmentalist before his time. As cities were turning to gas vehicles, he knew that electric streetcars are key to tackling urban problems like congestion and air pollution. Now that cities have finally caught up to Ed's vision of environmentally friendly urban planning around streetcar lines, he hopes he can sell the rest of his cars before it's too late.

Discussion Questions

1. In *Scrap*, the characters take items that would otherwise be discarded and find another purpose for them. What makes these items 'treasures and not trash'?
2. The film visits a number of locations around the world, what do the characters share or have in common?
3. *Scrap* arrives at its environmental call to action in a more subtle, unconventional way than typical eco-documentaries. What makes this a film with environmental significance and how does its indirect approach affect the way its message is received?
4. Director Stacy Tenenbaum engages with artists like sculptor John Lopez and photojournalist Saumya Khandewal to illuminate their creative perspectives, which she notes are often left out of conversations around the issues plaguing our planet. What is unique about [these] artists' contributions to the global discussion about climate change?
5. Much of today's green technologies are new, cutting edge innovations. How does the film model ecologically-minded ways of life that are simultaneously 'anchored to the past' and oriented toward a greener future? How can we raise awareness about this more accessible approach to combating climate change?
6. Composer Ramachandra Borcar created the music for the film using metal, other stuff from the scrap yards and recorded soundwaves of electronics. How do you think those experimental instruments enhance the narrative and environmental message?

SCRAP's Environmental Themes

The Circular Economy

What is it?

In a circular economy, products are made to last longer, communities share resources, and materials can be easily repaired and reused. Circular products are manufactured to assure that all components can eventually be recycled and that those recycled parts can be used to create new products – reducing all waste and closing the circle at the object's end of life.

Why should you care?

The linear way that we currently do things isn't working. We're taking too much, wasting too much, and emitting too much. Right now, we're using 1.6 Earths every year, meaning 60% more resources than the planet can regenerate. And 91% of the materials we consume end up as waste in our global economy. This waste accounts for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions on the planet.

How can you get involved?

We can each do our part to design waste out of the system by repairing broken items instead of throwing them away, using sharing services like public tool libraries, getting creative to repurpose our old things, or purchasing from businesses that participate in the circular economy. These efforts can help pressure governments and corporations to build products made to last and use resources more sustainably. You can learn more about the circular economy and how to get involved through our partner organizations below.



Right to Repair

What is it?

The Right to Repair movement compels companies to make information, parts, and tools for repairing their products available to customers and repair shops so we can extend the lifespan of devices and save them from the scrap pile.

Why should you care?

There are now more cellphones on earth than people. Americans throw out 416,000 cell phones per day, and only 15 to 20 percent of electronic waste is recycled. Cell phones and other electronics often need to be repaired by the manufacturer or the warranty is considered void. If you do try to get your electronics repaired, the response is usually that it will be cheaper to just buy new. Built in obsolescence on things like phone charging cables, compounds the problem of e-waste. As companies release newer, better versions every few years, consumers are encouraged to discard their old technology at an increasingly rapid rate. Creating this constant stream of new technology takes energy and resources. The energy required to make and dispose of e-waste is enormous. If everyone in the U.S. extended the lifespan of their cellphones by one year, it would save as much energy as taking 636,000 cars off the road. And it's not just cell phones; many of the items we use, from washing machines to cars, have become increasingly computerized and difficult – if not impossible – to repair. Even if you have the knowledge to be able to repair such technology, companies are doing everything they can to keep you from fixing their products, and they are actively lobbying against legislation designed to give consumers the tools they need to fix the products they own.

How can you get involved?

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Upcycling

What is it?

Upcycling is about finding a new purpose for things that would otherwise be thrown-away. People who upcycle create useful things from discarded objects rather than buying something new. It's a creative process that protects your wallet and the planet.

Why should you care?

About 70% of metal is only used once before being discarded, which means that tons of metal waste ends up in landfills each year. Considering that metals like steel can take over 100 years to degrade, the amount of accumulation is staggering. Americans throw out enough metal cans to build a pipe from Los Angeles to New York everyday – that pipeline would easily stretch across the globe over 40 times in just one year. Our Earth hardly has room for all of us, let alone all this waste. Considering that steel retains its strength for years, it is the perfect material for upcycling. Buildings can be made from old ships, furniture out of cars parts, homes out of shipping containers, and even art out of old farm equipment. The only limit to how things can be upcycled is our own imagination.

How can you get involved?

Each of us can do our part with upcycling projects big and small. You don't even have to be crafty. Begin by using empty coffee tins as planters or punch holes in them to create pretty tea light holders or use them to organize nuts and bolts in your home workshop. You can also buy items made from upcycled materials from companies and craftspeople. Check out some of our partners for inspiration.



Urban Exploration

What is it?

Urban exploration is a different way of seeing and appreciating the world around us. Urban explorers take photographs of things that are abandoned and discarded. They show the beauty of things we throw away and preserve our history in their images.

Why should you care?

Urban exploration is a creative way to explore the world around you. It combines exercise, urban appreciation, historic research, and artistic expression. Urban exploration is also a way of documenting things before they disappear. A consequence of our disposable culture is that we are also losing parts of our history and cultural memory as things are being discarded rather than preserved. Things from the past that were built to last can still be found and interacted with so we can still appreciate their history and design. These things connect us to our past in a way that is important. Urban photography is a way to preserve our history so people can see how others lived and can also enjoy the evolution of design over time. Urban exploration taps into the feelings of nostalgia we have for things which are at their end of life, and it connects us to our past.

How can you get involved?

It's easy to become an urban explorer! All you need is a cell phone or camera and an ability to look for the beauty in things and places that might usually be overlooked. You can do research online about the history of places in your town to get ideas of where to explore. Check out our urban explorer community for some inspiration.

