

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT for “THE PLASTICIST”

MATERIALS / SINGLE-USE PLASTICS SEEN IN THE FILM

“The Plasticist” is stuffed with plastic, much of it literally raining down upon our cast! ALL of the single-use plastics seen were donated by friends, neighbors, and the cast and crew, rescued from dumpsters, or collected from other film productions which were shot at our location during the previous month. It was the only way we could justify using so much single-use plastic for one short film.

We upcycled several large trash bags worth of plastic for this production. (We forgot to weigh the bags, but it was a lot!)

The Plastic Demon, Plazuzu, was designed and built by the film's producer/director. It was constructed from single-use plastic utensils, bottles, bottle caps, straws, food containers, shopping bags, dental flossers, bubble wrap and other plastics including red hazard tape for the hair, Easter eggs for the eyes, a pool noodle for the spine, and a plastic Halloween skull mask found discarded in the street (and which has now appeared in two films). It was all held together with cellophane tape.

The only items of plastic that were purchased for the film were the yellow contact lenses worn by the lead actress. They are reusable, and she intends to wear them again for several upcoming Halloween events. They were shipped in cardboard packaging with a plastic container for lens storage. <https://gothika.com/>

The priest shirts were purchased through Ivy Robes. They were shipped in paper envelopes, but packaged in individual LDP plastic bags. Alas, not zero-plastic like we hoped. <https://ivyrobes.com/>

The only single-use expendables used were a few pieces of gaffer's tape, some latex makeup applications, and makeup materials.

Camera, lighting, sound, and post-production equipment used in the film was already the property of the filmmakers, purchased from multiple vendors over many years, and previously used on several productions.

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC AVOIDANCE PRACTICES

Beyond the rescued/donated material that appears on screen, we made a concerted effort to avoid single-use plastic.

Filming was conducted in the writer/director's home, so when it came to food and drink, we used real ceramic plates, real glasses, real ceramic mugs, and real metal utensils.

Filtered water was provided in a Brita carafe, coffee was brewed on site with a traditional coffee maker and French press (no single-use pods). Individual cold beverages were either aluminum cans or glass bottles.

Our drink cooler was kept cold with repurposed plastic freezer packs that have been reused dozens of times over more than a decade and will continue to be used for the foreseeable future.

Many of the cast and crew brought their own water in reusable bottles.

ENERGY AND FUEL

Most pre-production was managed remotely. When the producer/director had to travel, he drove his 2007 Honda Civic Hybrid.

It was requested that cast and crew look for carpool or public transportation opportunities. Unfortunately, that proved mostly impractical; however, producer/actor Gregory Wright (a car-less Angeleno for many years) was able to take a public bus for part of his trip.

It should be noted that Gregory was chosen for his role in "The Plasticist" not just because he bears a slight resemblance to Max Von Sydow, but because he is a life-long eco-warrior, climate activist, and wide-ranging environmental policy wonk. He is currently pitching the idea of larger/easier-to-read recycling and non-recycling symbols on plastics, and clearer instructions on recycle bins to any who will listen, including a representative of Waste Management. www.wm.com/us/en/recycle-right/recycling-101

All batteries used on set were the rechargeable variety.

Use of electricity is of course inevitable when it comes to filmmaking, however, our production company, Asterion Arts, is dedicated to energy efficiency and the reduction of our carbon footprint. To that end, we do not use A.I. at any stage of production, from the writing to the final edit to marketing materials.

All current forms of A.I. have been documented as using unsustainable amounts of electricity and fresh water to perform even the simplest tasks, and we simply refuse to use it. (Something that's getting harder to do!)

Our films do incorporate some non-A.I.-generated VFX, but we prefer to create practical effects whenever feasible. They usually require less energy to generate, and also just look way cooler!

(<https://news.mit.edu/2025/explained-generative-ai-environmental-impact-0117>)

WASTE MANAGEMENT

After the film, most CRV plastics (such as the water bottles) were distributed to local residents who regularly take plastics to certified recycling centers for cash refunds. (calrecycle.ca.gov/BevContainer/)

Some plastics will be taken to Safe Place For Youth (www.safeplaceforyouth.org) where they'll be upcycled into craft projects.

Hard-to-recycle or hard-to-categorize plastics will be collected by Ridwell (www.ridwell.com), a company that takes many types of materials and sorts them for safe recycling.

Some non-recyclable plastics (such as black plastic food containers or low-density polyethylene bags) will be used by the producers for storage of small items such as office, art, and craft supplies. An assortment of plastics, such as the pill bottles, will be stored for props and set dressing for future films.

All food and beverages were consumed during the shoot or taken by cast and crew at the end of the day. None of it went to waste. Compostable packaging went into the large composting bin in the writer/director's back yard.

Plazuzu will never see a landfill or recycling center! She will remain at the writer/director's home, and will appear in more productions.

MORE PRODUCTION SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

Lunch was provided by the vegan restaurant, Julie Goes Green. They prioritize sustainability by using locally sourced, organic ingredients and eco-friendly practices. Almost all of their to-go packaging is compostable. (www.juliegoesgreen.com)

For craft service, we used Too Good To Go (www.toogoodtogo.com), an app that connects people with surplus restaurant food. It helps prevent food waste and gives customers a hefty discount.

Although not specific to this production, many pieces of furniture and home furnishings seen in the film were received from neighbors through the Facebook Buy Nothing group. Mattress, couch, coffee table, end tables, curtains, and lamps were all given a second (or third) life through the group. (www.facebook.com/groups/875054236381625)

RESEARCH FOR THE FILM

Much of the information mentioned in the film was gleaned from the following sources:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/microplastics-in-arteries-linked-to-heart-disease-risk>

<https://oncodaily.com/oncolibrary/does-plastic-cause-cancer>

<https://www.sciencealert.com/study-reveals-the-shocking-amount-of-plastic-we-breathe-in-every-day>

<https://www.sciencealert.com/atlantic-oceans-nanoplastic-problem-revealed-in-shocking-new-study>

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/are-the-microplastics-found-in-testicles-a-health-danger/>

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/healthyeats/news/throw-away-black-takeout-container-kitchen-utensils>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/aug/03/world-in-15th-plastics-crisis-hitting-health-from-infancy-to-old-age-report-warns>

<https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/39764/END%20PLASTIC%20POLLUTION%20-%20TOWARDS%20AN%20INTERNATIONAL%20LEGALLY%20BINDING%20INSTRUMENT%20-%20English.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<https://www.sustainableentertainmentalliance.org/>

<https://www.plasticsindustry.com/the-7-different-types-of-plastics/>

<https://microplasticfreefuture.com/blog/sustainable-alternatives-to-plastic-packaging/>

<https://planetpulse.blog/2025/06/11/plastic-alternatives-are-they-really-sustainable/>

BEHIND THE SCENES

You can find out more about the making of “The Plasticist” at our production company website: <https://www.asterion-arts.com/projects/short-films/making-of-the-plasticist>

CONCLUSION

In “The Plasticist” we tried to comment on the grim fact that, despite our good intentions, plastic is becoming impossible to avoid. Even if we never purchase a single item of plastic, it still saturates our environment, our food, and our bodies. The true horror is in its inescapable nature.

Our only hope is that through education, mindful shopping practices, political pressure, financial pressure on plastic manufacturers, and awareness-raising art (such as these films), we can reduce the current problem, and alleviate it for future generations.

Our thanks to the Plastic Pollution Coalition for providing us this opportunity to creatively face a monstrous threat to our health and the health of the biosphere. We all learned a lot while making the film. Some of it truly terrifying!

Together, let’s keep fighting the demon!

Nick Dragon

nickdragoneffect@gmail.com