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A Seattle Dump Just Got Some Clever Public Art

Recycled rebar will make the Seattle North Transfer Station more beautiful



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Sculptor [Jean Shin](#) relies on other people's castaways to create art. So it made sense that she was hired to create public art for the renovation of a long-time Seattle dump site—and even more sense that she used trash from the renovation itself to create the art. [As ArtNet](#) reports, Shin used 10,000 linear feet of rebar to create something new (and unexpectedly beautiful) at Seattle's North Transfer Station.

Reclaimed maps the topography of Seattle's [North Transfer Station](#) before it was installed in 1966, [the artist writes](#) on her Facebook page. It's part of a large-scale renovation of the dump site, which needed improvements due to odor, noise and safety concerns. When the site was built in the 1960s, [the city writes](#), Seattle simply dumped all of its garbage into landfills. But since then, things have evolved—and so, reasoned

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stakeholders, should the dump.

That's where Shin came in. Shin is known for turning throwaway objects into large-scale sculpture—an artistic obsession that, [she told Smithsonian.com](#) in 2009, often leaves her in need of large amounts of raw materials. For the North Transfer Station, though, Shin was in luck: The site itself was a dump, and the renovation generated a large amount of rebar. She decided to coat it in colored epoxy and use it to call to mind the landscape that was on the site before it was turned into a waste facility. But Shin's move was more than a thrifty one: In [her artist's statement for the piece](#), the artist writes that her vision was to “highlight the potential of waste material to be reimaged into an elegant second life within the community.”

Reclaimed is just one of the many improvements that just may turn the North Transfer Station into the nation's most cheerful, community-friendly trash heap. The new site, which is still undergoing renovation, [will feature everything](#) from a fitness station to volleyball courts, play areas and gardens.

And it turns out that Seattle isn't the only city who lets artists play with its castaways. [One San Francisco dump](#) has hosted over 100 artists in residence since 1990—it gives scavenging privileges to artists and even has its own sculpture garden. Maybe trash really is artistic treasure.