New York artists use waste to create new exhibit with Materials for the Arts

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"Re-Enliven" opens Thursday in Lower Manhattan.

Surely you've heard the adage, "One man's trash is another man's treasure." But in the case of a new art exhibit opening Thursday, one city's trash is the inspiration for four local artists.

Materials for the Arts’ “Re-Enliven” exhibit sheds light on New York City’s relationship with waste — and the 10,000 tons of it residents create on a daily basis. It features works of art created from food containers, bike tubes, fabric scraps and more, which have been culled from MFTA’s 35,000-square-foot facility.

The artists featured are Jean Shin, who created art with leather remnants; Bernard Klevickas, who used plastic orbs and food containers; Jean Foos,
who got creative with used paint cups; and Jairo Toro, who used bicycle inner tubes.

The opening for “Re-Enliven” will take place Thursday, Dec. 1, from 6-8 p.m., at Gibney Dance’s Agnes Varis Performing Arts Center at 280 Broadway. The entrance is at 53A Chambers St. The exhibit runs through Jan. 16. It was curated by Elena Light of Gibney Dance and John Cloud Kaiser and Lanelle Pintal of MFTA.

MFTA is a refuse facility that provides free art supplies to public schools and nonprofits that offer arts programming via surplus materials it gathers from city businesses and residents. Each year, the organization redirects more than 1 million pounds of material from the city’s waste stream.