

Reader's idea for an eco bag: a Weekend tote

Recycling has been a hot topic in this publication in recent months.

And now one of our regular readers has sent us an innovative idea – turning these very pages into a makeshift bag, using just some sticky tape, to carry home-grown vegetables.

Deborah Chamberlain, who lives in Ruislip, Middlesex, told Weekend: 'After a very enjoyable morning harvesting at our allotment, I put aside some vegetables to take to our daughter, but then found I didn't have a bag.

'So I folded my weekly Waitrose paper into a single-use paper bag – after I'd cut out the recipes I wanted, of course.

'Much better than a plastic bag, and great fun to make.'

Lucy Allen



LIMITED EDITION Deborah's bag made from a copy of Weekend

Cider on offer in apple amnesty

People are being invited to swap apples for cider in a fruit amnesty.

A token worth a pound will be given in exchange for every pound in weight of apples taken to The Cider House at London's Borough Market until Saturday 26 October.

They can be used to buy cider once the batch has been made available in April next year. Any profits will be donated to community projects.



LOG ON

Take in the splendid autumn colours at one of the UK's arboretums, p36



Illustration: Dale Edwin Murray

MY WEEK

Alvin Hall



Recognition of art was a moment of a lifetime

Some weeks I feel truly lucky and also thankful. How rare it is to experience, first hand, a moment of cultural change in one's lifetime, but also to see how that change alters the historical story of culture.

I went to several wondrous, pre-opening parties at the redesigned and expanded Museum Of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York this week. I got to the museum early each time so that I would be able to commune with some old 'friends' – works of art I have repeatedly visited over the years – and to see how the overall installation has changed.

I walked into a gallery looking for Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)*, a painting from 1907 that I love, and one I knew the museum will always show. Hanging on the adjacent wall, I saw Faith Ringgold's *American People Series #20: Die*, a powerful picture of a race riot made in 1967, but acquired by MoMA in 2016. The shock and the wonderment were immediate and simultaneous. I could not fully believe what I was seeing and I could not stop myself from tearing up.

I had interviewed 89-year-old Ringgold onstage at an event in Sugar Hill in Harlem a few weeks before. We had talked about this painting and what it meant for her to know not only that MoMA had bought it, but to see it hanging on a wall in the lobby of the museum. Now it was hanging on a wall next to a Picasso. I don't know anyone who could have imagined this remarkable, moving and quite thought-provoking juxtaposition.

Later that evening at the museum, I ran into another artist, 93-year-old Betye Saar, whose exhibition of her early prints, paintings and assemblages is part of MoMA's museum reopening. She and Ringgold, both African Americans, recall the days when inclusion in such an institution was not merely highly unlikely, it was simply not possible. Nonetheless they were both committed to their artist practices – Ringgold in New York and Saar in LA. In their work they exposed, confronted, and testified to many of the repressive attitudes and bigoted practices that were pervasive in the US in the daily lives of African Americans and in arts institutions. They worked consistently, diligently, pushing their own creative instincts when there was little support, particularly from museums, foundations and galleries. They persevered.

As I said goodbye to Saar, I grasped her hand and said: 'Isn't it a blessing and a joy to have lived long enough to be here, at this moment.' With a smile and sparkling eyes, she said simply: 'You know it.'

A LISTENING EAR

At least three mornings a week, my landline rings at 8am. If I don't answer it, my mobile rings. If I don't answer that, my landline starts again. When I do answer, the person at the other end, a neighbour, launches into a conversation about what's on her mind that day, which segues into what she has been doing since the last call. I don't have to respond and her talking barrels on, like a locomotive. Thankfully she eventually needs to take a breath. Then, if I'm lucky, I put the brakes on the monologue. I try not to be rude, but at some point I have to cut her off, gently. What she really wants is for me to listen. And on days when I really don't have anything pressing to do, I give her some time until she has said all she needs to. On those days, her call ends with a pause, followed by a softly spoken: 'Thank you'.