Maite Zubiaurre, Professor of Spanish and German Letters at the University of California, Los Angeles, is the author of Cultures of the Erotic in Spain, 1898-1939, also published by Vanderbilt.

Talking Trash

Cultural Uses of Waste

Much has been written about landfills and the monumentality of rubbish, but little attention has been paid to ""litter,"" the small trash that soils the urban pavement, like the bits of chewing gum that some artists decorate. Talking Trash looks at refuse in its early stages, when it is still tiny and unassuming, still lives in the city, and has yet to grow, leave the metropolis, and accumulate in landfills. The chapters of Talking Trash reflect upon the anthropomorphic nature of urban refuse; upon the poetics and semantics of micro-litterscapes and the archives of all things discarded; upon ""Dumpsterology,"" or the history of the garbage container as a gendered artifact dense with cultural meaning; and upon ""dirty innocence,"" or the complex and contradictory link that ties childhood to muck. The author also focuses on one significant non-urban scene, the desert landscape and the clothing and other items that immigrants discard as they make a desperate trek across the border.

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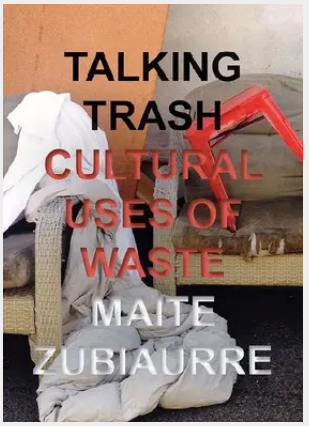

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