



## Film Overview **Microplastic Madness** - Run time: 76 minutes

Microplastic Madness is an optimistic take on the local and global plastic pollution crisis as told through a refreshing urban youth point of view with an inspiring take action message.

Fifth graders from PS 15 in Red Hook, Brooklyn - a community on the frontline of Climate Change - spent 2 years investigating plastic pollution. Taking on the roles of citizen scientists, community leaders, and advocates, these 10-11 year olds collect local data, lead community outreach, and use their impressive data to inform policy, testifying and rallying at City Hall. They take the deep dive into the root causes of plastic pollution, bridging the connection between plastic, climate change, and environmental justice before turning their focus back to school. There they take action to rid their cafeteria of all single-use plastic, driving forward city-wide action and a scalable, youth-led plastic-free movement.

With stop-motion animation, heartfelt kid commentary, and interviews of experts and renowned scientists who are engaged in the most cutting edge research on the harmful effects of microplastics, this alarming, yet charming narrative, conveys an urgent message in user-friendly terms with a take action message to spark youth-led plastic free action in schools everywhere. The film has been accepted to 13 film festivals and received an award.

**Link to Trailer** 16:9 aspect ratio 70 seconds <https://vimeo.com/361115158>

## Director's Biography

### **Atsuko Quirk - *Producer/Director, D.P. and Editor of Microplastic Madness***



Atsuko is a documentary filmmaker, environmental advocate, and a 21st generation Samurai family member from northern Japan, living in New York City. She directed and produced "It's Everybody's Ocean," a film about marine debris that won the best documentary short at NYC International Film Festival in 2014, two awards at other festivals, and has been shown in ten cities all over the world. "School Lunch in Japan - It's not just about eating" (2010), her short documentary, has over 26 million views on YouTube! The movie conveys the importance of quality school mealtime and has inspired international audiences of students, educators, and school food leaders, as well as CafCu's own zero waste cafeteria programs.

### **Debby Lee Cohen - *Producer/Director of Microplastic Madness***



Debby Lee is a multi-disciplinary artist, zero waste activist/educator, and Founding Director of CafeteriaCulture.org. She worked as an art director, segment producer and consultant at HBO Family for over 25 years on many award winning shows, including SAVING MY TOMORROW and CLASSICAL BABY. She has designed scenery, giant puppets, and animation for theater, parades, film and television. In partnership with parents and students, she led the Styrofoam Out of Schools campaign that resulted in the elimination of a half billion plastic styrofoam trays per year from landfills, incinerators and students meals in NYC and nine other cities. For her zero waste efforts, she received a Proclamation from Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer (2018), She is a member of Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board and Plastic Free Waters Partnership NY/NJ Steering Committee. She presented at the United Nations in 2016 on urban youth action on plastic marine pollution.



**Microplastic Madness** is more than a movie. It's a springboard for youth action!

## About Cafeteria Culture

**Microplastic Madness - the movie and impact campaign** - is produced by **Cafeteria Culture** (founded in 2009 as Styrofoam Out of Schools), a non-profit environmental education organization that catalyzed the complete elimination of polystyrene (or, plastic styrofoam) trays from all New York City (NYC) public schools and nine other cities. This victory has resulted in the elimination of a half billion polystyrene trays per year from landfills, incinerators and student meals across the U.S.!

**With students as key partners and schools as hubs for action, Cafeteria Culture is ready to win the next plastic-free victory with a campaign to eliminate *all* single-use plastic packaging from school cafeterias across the U.S.**

The Cafeteria Culture team pilots innovative classroom and cafeteria education in NYC schools. By merging citizen science, civics, media production and the arts, our programs engage student as the designers of solutions to to reduce single-use plastic and to achieve zero waste, climate smart school communities.

“ Microplastic Madness is a **MUST SEE** documentary that includes rigorous science and math, covering the gamut of Climate Crisis issues. It will beyond convince anyone to stop/reduce using plastics. It dramatically shows NYC teachers teaching and leading students to be activists and citizen scientists in a positive loving way.

- Adam Zaid, NYC high school math teacher at Queens School of Inquiry and Math for America Master Teacher



## Quotes and Bios from Experts from the Movie

### [Judith Enck](#) - Former EPA Regional Administrator and founder of BEYOND PLASTICS



*“Microplastic Madness is the most informative, entertaining and hopeful film I have ever seen on the significant problem of plastic pollution. I highly recommend that students and non students alike watch it. And if you work in the environmental protection field, I predict you will want to watch it more than once. Microplastic Madness is an instant inspiration!” —Judith Enck*

Judith Enck is the former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 2 Administrator under President Obama and current Senior Fellow and Visiting Faculty member at Bennington College, where she teaches classes on plastic pollution. She is the founder of Beyond Plastics, an initiative that works with community leaders and trains college students to engage on plastic pollution issues through diverse avenues ranging from advocacy and legislative work to research and public engagement.



Images courtesy of Lisa Erdle, Rochman Lab

## [Chelsea M. Rochman](#) - University of Toronto Assistant Professor

### From the movie:



*"I thought a lot about how I could be most impactful, what I could do in my life, where I could make a difference. I strongly believe that science, data, and information evidence, should inform policy. So I became a scientist so that I could produce the information that is necessary for policy makers or decision makers to decide how they were going to do something good about it."* —Chelsea M. Rochman,

Dr. Chelsea Rochman is an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. She has her PhD in ecology with emphases on marine ecology, environmental chemistry and ecotoxicology. Her expertise is the sources, sinks and ecological implications of plastics and their associated cocktail of chemical contaminants in marine and freshwater habitats. Her research sites stretch from the world's remote ocean "garbage patches" to wastewater treatment plants and landfills around the world. Chelsea served as an expert witness on microplastics during the California hearings on a bill to ban plastic microbeads. This bill passed with bipartisan support and inspired similar bills in the U.S. Congress and abroad.

**[Marcus Eriksen](#) - 5 Gyres Institute Co-Founder, Research Director and Board Member**



Dr. Marcus Eriksen has led expeditions around the world to research plastic marine pollution. He and Anna Cummins began 5 Gyres with an 88-day journey from California to Hawaii on the Junk Raft, built from 15,000 plastic bottles. He received his Ph.D from USC. Currently in development of the Leap Lab Institute.

**[Eric Angel Ramos](#) - The Graduate Center, City University of New York Ph.D. Candidate in Animal Behavior & Comparative Psychology**



Eric Angel Ramos is a PhD Candidate in Animal Behavior and Comparative Psychology at The Graduate Center, City University of New York. His research concerns the behavioral ecology and conservation of marine mammals primarily in Belize and Mexico. Eric conducts research on a variety of marine mammals, including bottlenose dolphins and Antillean manatees throughout coastal and offshore habitats using passive acoustic monitoring and small drones.

**[Rachael Z. Miller](#) - Chief Ocean Lover and Founder of Rozalia Project for a Clean Ocean**



Rachael Z. Miller was the first Executive Director of Rozalia Project. She is now Founder/CEO of the Cora Ball, a consumer-based solution to microfiber pollution. Her academic background is in marine studies and underwater archaeology, which she studied at Brown University. She lives in Vermont and loves both to ski and to sail.



## PRESS CONTACTS

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## MOVIE WEBSITE & TRAILER

[www.microplasticmadness.org](http://www.microplasticmadness.org)

## ORGANIZATION WEBSITE

[www.cafeteriaculture.org](http://www.cafeteriaculture.org)