

FINAL REPORT

BEE CENTRAL- A COMMUNITY PUBLIC ART EVENT

June 2015- September 2015



"The Big Bee" created by Jenifer LaFrance and Rhonda Neufeld

**Funded by The City of Kelowna and
The Eco Art Incubator at The University of British Columbia**

Report Submitted November 2015
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INTRODUCTION

Bee Central was a series of four community art events that took place on at the Brent's Grist Mill Heritage Park. The art events were all participatory community art projects meant to engage the public in understanding the plight of pollinators and to introduce the Kelowna community to an underused park in the City.

From June through September 2015, **Bee Central** hosted four bee-centered art events. Each was held at the Brent's Grist Mill Heritage site at the bottom of Dilworth Mountain along Mill Creek Linear Park in Kelowna, BC. They were free of charge, family-friendly, and open to the public. Each of these family-focused art events, hosted by individual artists, was meant to engage the public in community discussions regarding pollination and the plight of bees. Rhonda Neufeld created a swarm of mechanically activated collaged and decorated paper bees, UBC Okanagan professor Samuel Roy-Bois built a community sculpture, UBC Okanagan student S. Megan Hunter presented a performance, *Murmurations*, and local eco artist Lori Mairs led community mason bee home and insect hotel building.

In our Community Public Art Grant, we had committed to three events but ended up putting on four as one of the students working on the Bee Central project received a Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies Undergraduate Research Award. S. Megan Hunter decided she would create a performance for Bee Central. Although no City funds were used specifically for this event, the performance added a rich and nuanced piece to the entire season of works and we were delighted to have this extra bonus.

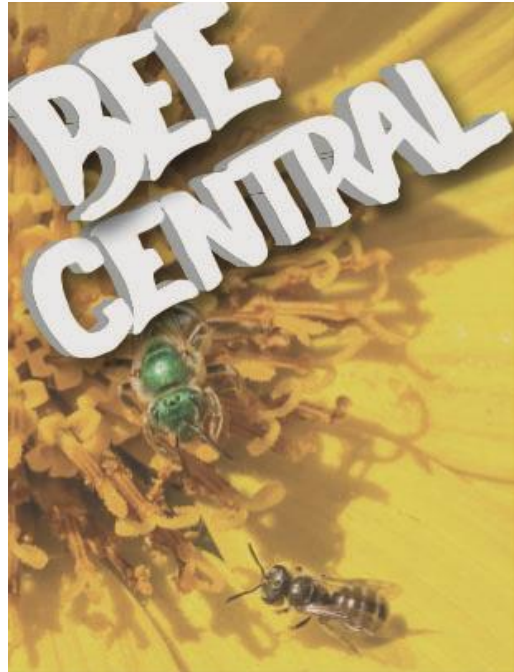
Process:

Once we received word we were successful with the grant application, we began meeting with the artists. We held two meetings with all three artists and Nancy met with each individually as they developed proposals and ideas for their participatory event. We had a contract with each artist and ensured it was clear that we would ask for feedback from them and that we would provide support as much as possible.

We also set up a public meeting to educate ourselves about bees. At the Kelowna branch of the Okanagan Regional Library, we hosted a bee meeting on Wednesday, March 25 2015. We had UBC entomologist Dr. Robert Lalonde, pollinator expert Dr. Elizabeth Elle from Simon Fraser and master beekeeper John Gates from Armstrong give us an evening introduction to the world of bees. This was attended by our hired students, most of our artists and over 30 members of the public, many supporters of the Public Art Pollinator Pastures project.

Nancy also hired two students, Sarah Megan Hunter and Victoria Moore, plus hired MFA graduate student Jenifer LaFrance to create a bee sculpture that we would use to "mark" the site when the events happened. See "The Big Bee" that came with us to each event on the cover of this report.

The students created a “look” for all our advertising based on a wonderful photograph given to us to use by Dr. Lalonde:



The above image was used on handbills and posters for each event- the City logo was of course included in all our promotional materials. The students also created some fun images that we had printed on buttons that we gave out to children who attended our events. All 100 of these buttons were scooped up and we are out of them!



Lastly, Nancy Holmes submitted a research ethics application in order to survey the public and our artists through the Research Ethics board at UBC. This was approved under the two approval certificates: H15-01359 and H15-01375.

THE PROJECTS



A SWARM IN JUNE, RHONDA NEUFELD

June 14th –11am-3pm



This was an exciting afternoon of hands-on creating, featuring an observation hive of real live honeybees on site that was brought by master beekeeper John Gates. Armstrong artist, Rhonda Neufeld's creative passion for bee swarming was shared as people built a take-home bee out of recycle-able materials: paper, sticks and a straw. The bee was created so that its wings moved. The collage process and decorations were truly engaging. Rhonda brought a large number of magazines for cutting out images and drawing and painting materials. She also created large posters and images to help people understand pollination and bees. She created stamps of various types of pollen cells that people could stamp on paper or their bees. The designs and colours people created were dazzling. UBC performance professor Denise Kenney plotted out a series of bee dances for children and families. People could take their bee home with them for their home or they could add the bee to a chicken wire "Swarm." Most people did both- posed their bee for a photography on the swarm and then took the charming objects home with them.

We had a variety of community groups on site with us: Science Opportunities for Kids, the Master Gardeners of the Central Okanagan, and Meadowvista Farms. We also had a food truck (Craisan Foods) that drew people onto the underused site.

There were 49 people who attended the event. We learned several things from this event that we applied to future events: Beware of wind for our tents; bring stones for anchoring; we needed only one portable toilet, not two; having a few tables around the food truck would be good; we needed a garbage container; we needed to continue to work on promotion.

Artist Bio: **Rhonda Neufeld**



Rhonda Neufeld is a print media artist whose primary investigations are in intaglio, although she also works in drawing and installation. She brings a sensitive approach to her prints and installations, which disclose a deep commitment to and love of the land. Her unpretentious and natural approach to making art is rooted in the land of her home near Armstrong, BC, and her considerable experience as an apiarist. She received her BFA from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design (now Emily Carr University of Art and Design) and her MFA from the University of Regina. Rhonda has taught at a several universities and art schools in western Canada.

Her recent work, with collaborator Rodney Konopaki, has been shown throughout western Canada and Ontario in the travelling exhibition, “Chance Operations²”, which toured to nine cities, including Penticton. “Drawn Passages”, mainly work from a residency in Newfoundland, was shown at the Vernon Public Art Gallery and at The Gallery at Art Placement, Saskatoon, SK. “Walking Lines/Saskatchewan” was an exhibition of drawings and woodblock prints from a residency in Regina and shown at the Art Gallery of Regina last year. She was also part of a small art collective, Crossings Collective, that have made a number of discreet art interventions in the landscape of the Okanagan Valley.

Photos from “A Swarm in June



Bees hanging on “Swarm”



Bee Dance being filmed



Decorating bees



The Decorating Tent

SMALL WORLD, SAMUEL ROY-BOIS

July 4th – 11am-3pm



“Small World” was a community art event created by Samuel Roy-Bois, sculpture professor at UBC Okanagan. This public art project’s name refers to Stanley Milgram’s experiment demonstrating the six degrees of separation between people. The project was an invitation to create a large three-dimensional representation of human and nature interconnections. Throughout the day the public was invited to do some light carpentry, adding segments to the colourful wooden structure and witnessing the growth and development of this beautiful collective sculptural work. This intricate sculptural web of sticks and nodes was a symbolic representation of the fragile ecosystem shared by both humans and pollinators and of our deep inter-dependence. “Small World” was also a celebration of the collective effort, and the pleasure of fabricating. All materials, components and tools were provided on site. This afternoon was about building a family-friendly community sculpture. The metaphor was also inspired by the beauty and complexity of the beehive.

Samuel guided participants building a beautiful 3- dimensional structure. People could drop in at any time during the event. Everyone enjoyed using the hand-powered tools to create the points on the dowels and they enjoyed putting their coloured box and their dowel onto the sculpture which slowly grew into a beautiful and complex structure, light, airy, strangely enticing. We had two fantastic volunteers who helped Samuel all day with the building and tool management and one volunteer who helped with set up and take down.

There were 56 people who attended this event plus the three volunteers. Again, we had a couple of great food trucks- The Rolling Stove and a snowcone truck. These were much appreciated as the day grew hotter.

Artist Bio: Samuel Roy-Bois



Samuel Roy-Bois is an artist interested in ideas related to the built environment and architecture and explores these through immersive installations, fiction and sound. He acquired his Baccalaureate in Fine Arts (BFA) from Université Laval in Quebec (1996) and a Masters Degree in Studio Arts from Concordia University in Montréal (2001). He has previously taught at Concordia University and Emily Carr University of Art and Design. His installations have been shown across Canada and internationally; his solo exhibitions include *Parisian Laundry*, Montreal, 2013; *Artspeak*, Vancouver, 2012; *Rodman Hall*, St-Catharines, 2011; *Southern Alberta Art Gallery*, Lethbridge, 2009; *Contemporary Art Gallery*, Vancouver, 2008; *Point éphémère*, Paris, 2007; *Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal*, 2006; *Or Gallery*, Vancouver, 2003, *Articule*, Montreal, 2003, *L'oeil de poisson*, Quebec City, 1997 and 1999. Group shows include *Vancouver Art Gallery*, 2009; *Ottawa Art Gallery*, 2009; *Musée National des Beaux Arts du Québec*, 2008; *Musée d'art de Joliette*, 2008; *Oakville Galleries*, 2007; *Nuit Blanche*, Toronto, 2006. In 2012 he received the *Vancouver Mayor's Arts Award for Public Art* and the *Ontario Association of Art Galleries Exhibition Design and Installation Award*.

Photos from “SMALL WORLD”



Two photos of people using the popular handheld “pencil sharpener” tool!



The Coloured Boxes- painted the colours bees see



As the sculpture was built it got more amazing and beautiful!



MURMURATIONS, SARAH MEGAN HUNTER

August 23rd – 7:00 – 8:30 pm



On Sunday, August 23rd from 7:00 – 8:30 PM *Bee Central* presented *Murmurations* by Sarah Megan Hunter. *Murmurations* was a live performance art piece especially created by Creative Writing student Hunter with a grant from the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies Undergraduate Research award.

Hunter created a script and invited and worked with performers and vocalists or soundmakers in the community. The performers were current BFA and graduated BFA students in Interdisciplinary Performance, and Hunter combined these movement makers with the sound makers to create the overall experience. She created a text (“she” poems) and the choreographed web or network of movement and sound came out of her research into theories of movement, intercultural ritual, social drama, and *Psychomagic* (a term coined by Jodorovsky) that has its roots deeply embedded in Mexican healing folklore, as well as indigenous bees. The audience functioned as witnesses as well as participants. After a procession, the performance unfolded in the middle of a circle of audience members: the final movement of the piece involved the entire audience coming together humming, to touch a central, vibrating core of the ritual. It was a moving, sophisticated and thoughtful piece.

Murmurations was presented to a group of approximately 65 community participants. It was an ominous day as the skies had filled with smoke early that morning. We also had several volunteers and Incubator staff to document and help out in addition to the audience members. Cole Mash gave all the thank you's and 'house-keeping' details; Denise Kenney video documented the occasion; Victoria Moore photographed stills; Roland Simmons recorded the audio. Emily MacMillen is currently putting together the documentation video of the performance, funded by the Eco Art Incubator.

Performers:

Janelle Sheppard
Rhian Jack
Scott Mendonca
Bao Linh Le
Wendy Craven

Vocalists:

Kathleen Baker
Karen Angle
Lisa McIntosh
& her daughter Neko
Tara Day
& her daughter Catie

Artist Bio: Sarah Megan Hunter



Sarah Megan Hunter is a 4th Year BA student at UBC Okanagan, majoring in Creative Writing. Her intercultural interests stem largely from her Cherokee-European descent, and growing up in Western Mexico. Her current artistic work, *Murmurations*, involves exploring indigeneity, melittology, and intergenerational trauma through performance. She is an emerging playwright, and her play *27 Voices* is one of five finalists selected for *Advance Theatre: New Works by Women Series* and will be featured at the 2015 Granville Island Fringe Festival. Her collection *Daylighting* (2014), co-written with Jessica Bonney, explores cultural wounds via poetry.

Photos From Murmurations:



Opening Procession



Movement makers, or Performers



Audience encircling performers, poetic texts draped on ground.



Movement Makers

MASON BEE HOMES, LORI MAIRS

September 26th – 11am-3pm



Ecological artist Lori Mairs created a multi-dimensional, multi-stationed community art project around the fascinating life cycle of mason bees. She guided the community in building on-site mini-homes for native bees through using recycled materials and the community was invited to take these away for their own backyards. She researched the life cycle of mason bees and created a handout for everyone, as well as several large posters about the little super-pollinator. She also created an enchanting large scale model of a mason bee tube with the development of mason bees illustrated.

Along with this rich project, she had hands-on project for young children—including making a bee finger puppet out thrift store gloves, pipe-cleaners, and maple keys. The community also participated in creating two pollinator hotels to be installed on the site of a pollinator pasture next spring. The event was presented alongside on-site talks with the Central Okanagan Heritage Society that linked pioneer culture and agriculture related to Brent's Grist Mill. We had a volunteer do face-painting for the kids.

Lastly this event was UBC's presence at Kelowna's national Culture Days celebrations. People were invited to drop in at any time.

There were 143 attendees at this event as well as five volunteers.

Artist Bio: **Lori Mairs**



Lori Mairs is an ecological artist-researcher who lives in a companion-species relationship with the 22 acres that is the Woodhaven Nature Conservancy. Mairs is a sculptor, writer, and photographer. She graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Okanagan University College in 2005 and with a Master of Fine Arts degree from UBC Okanagan in 2013. Mairs works with bones, shed antler, steel and beeswax. For Bee Central she re-discovered the pleasure of paper mache. Her most recent show *The Bones of Tobias* exhibit for the Lake Country Art Gallery. Lori is also a filmmaker and has collaborated with UBC Professor Nancy Holmes on the Woodhaven Eco Art Project as well as the film about the project.

Photos from Mason Bee Homes



The site of the projects with empty insect hotels ready to be filled.



Making the tubes to put in the Mason Bee Homes- made from milk cartons.



The fabulous paper mache mason bee from the tube, seen below:





A beautiful insect hotel at the day's end.

FOLLOW UP AND FURTHER HAPPENINGS

Surveys of Public

We had public surveys for people to fill in at two events, Samuel Roy-Bois's "Small World" and Lori Mairs' "Mason Bee Homes." Forty-five surveys were filled in (some surveys were filled in for more than one person). The surveys were filled in by 14 men and 31 women. The age breakdown was as follows:

- under 12: 3
- 13-17: 3
- 25-39: 8
- 40-59: 18
- 60-79: 12
- over 80: 2

Overall, the response was overwhelmingly positive. Two issues that came up as potential for improvement were complaints about parking (this is an issue about the site itself and there was little we could do about it though we ended up creating signage to help people) and a concern that advertising hadn't been wide enough. The latter was of concern after the relatively low numbers attending the first two events (around 50 people at each.) We geared up with more social media for the next two events and in the September event partnered with Culture Days. These two events had significantly more attendees.

One of our favorite questions on the survey was to ask people what words they would use to describe the events and here is a Word Cloud using "Wordle" software made up of all the words people used to describe the events:



A quick analysis shows that these events were “fun, engaging, informative, and connecting,” all words that indicate the artists created projects that fully fulfilled our mandate.

Surveys of Artists:

We also surveyed the three artists who were funded by the City and these are attached to this report in an appendix. We felt it important that the City be informed about how the artists experienced the project and how well they were supported by our team. The responses were positive, overall.

Other Concluding Events

At least three of the artists’ projects have gone or may go on to other venues. Lori Mairs’ “Mason Bee Homes” was re-mounted on a smaller scale at the Red Barn Artisan Fair in the Mission Hall in early November where we used up nearly all our Mason Bee Home material. The Public Art Pollinator Pasture in Richmond will be hosting Samuel Roy-Bois’s project, “Small World,” this upcoming May. Rhonda Neufeld’s project has also received attention.

Lastly, we ended Bee Central with a Volunteer Appreciation Reception on Tuesday, November 24 at the downtown Kelowna branch of the Okanagan Regional library where we gave artists cards created specially from a drawing of Lori Mairs that she created while planning her project. We gave the artists some gifts, volunteers got refreshments, cards and much thanks. We also created a photo montage of the events and showed the volunteers this filmic piece. We had 12 volunteers and staff attend this volunteer appreciation event.

We followed this reception with an event about the Public Art Pollinator Pasture in Kelowna in hopes that people will continue to want to make community-based public art with us.

We are grateful the City of Kelowna which supported this terrific project.

Photo Credits:

Nancy Holmes, Rhonda Neufeld, Victoria Moore, BaoLinh Le