



# THE BEE PROJECT®

*A Collaboration Sponsored by The Grant Wood Art Colony*

## *ABOUT THE PROJECT*

**AS A GRANT WOOD FELLOW** and Project Director, Elena Smyrniotis developed The Bee Project, under the auspices of The Grant Wood Art Colony in collaboration with the University of Iowa Office of Sustainability and the Environment, the UI Office of Community Engagement, Indian Creek Nature Center, and Czech Village/New Bohemian District in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. By involving a wide range of stakeholders, she artistically sought a.) to ensure a sustainable future for pollinators, b.) to encourage protection of fragile ecosystems, c.) to engage broad and diverse audiences, particularly children; and d.) to encourage mindfulness about recycling and creative expression. To extend the project beyond Iowa, organizers are pleased to announce that THE BEE PROJECT is now available nationwide.

THE BEE PROJECT is an outdoor, site-specific installation of modular structures resembling beehives populated by bees creatively and often lovingly made by participants from recycled materials, mostly plastics and metals. The project's beehive structures are fabricated from carbon steel mesh in the shape of hexagons and painted yellow to resemble a honeycomb. They vary in height from 3 to 6 feet; and can be placed in any number of configurations, taking into consideration the contour of the landscape, buildings, trees,

and paths of human traffic. The project also includes online video instructions which offer examples of how to build and install the bees.

THE BEE PROJECT affords children (as well as adults) the opportunity to learn how a bee's anatomy is constructed by using simple shapes and forms made from recycled materials to create bee sculptures, which may be attached to the honeycomb structures with zip ties. The project was conceived during the pandemic and as an outdoor activity, takes into consideration COVID safety. The result is a project that is creative, connected, educational, and safe.

A partner in the project of THE BEE PROJECT was University of Iowa Professor Emeritus Steve Hendrix, who earned his Ph.D. at the University of California – Berkley, and has since focused on plant-animal interactions, including reactions of plants to herbivores, and pollination ecology of prairie plants. His last 20 years have been dedicated to the community ecology and conservation of wild bees with an emphasis on bee diversity in different habitats, including produce farms and prairie fragments.

THE BEE PROJECT is sure to be a vibrant and meaningful element of any city park or cultural or scientific institution such as a nature or art center, a zoo, botanical garden or museum.



**ELENA SMYRNIOTIS** is an international multimedia artist residing in United States since 1998, with family in Russia and Ukraine. Currently, Elena is on a Fellowship at the University of Iowa. Her installations investigate relationships between architecture, space and abstracted topography to underscore environmental nexus in constructed landscape and in relationship to nature. Elena's most recent projects seek to address climatic impacts of melting ice caps and the progressive decimation and loss of bees and other pollinators. The artist earned her MFA in printmaking from the University of Notre Dame, her MA in printmaking and drawing from the University of Saint Francis also in Indiana, and her MA in Architecture and Engineering from the State Petroleum University in Ufa, Russia, the same city which gave the world, Rudolf Nureyev. Elena possesses global experience through a network of cultural institutions and achievement including a Fellowship at Rome Global Gateway in cooperation with Geographical Society of Italy; art instruction through workshops in Dubai, OAE; workshops at The Painting School of Montmiral, France; and the founding and directing of the Art and Architectural School for Children in Ufa, Russia. Her artwork has been featured in solo art and groups exhibitions in United States, Turkey and Spain.

**PARTICIPANTS CAN MAKE BEES** at home or in the classroom. In November 2021 a series of workshops for middle school students in Estherville, Iowa resulted in 150 bee sculptures made by 5th through 8th graders from recyclable materials which they themselves collected. The "Estherville bees" were subsequently scheduled for display downtown in Iowa City giving the students and their families a sense of pride and satisfaction.

Project instructions offer design suggestions, and suggest materials and tools that can be used to build the bees; while encouraging students to be creative and come up with their own ideas and designs.



PHOTO: 5-8 graders bee-making workshop in Estherville

*"Threats to both honeybees and wild bees are numerous. For honeybees, pests and pathogens such as mites and viruses, environmental stressors like pesticides or poor nutrition, and genetic limitations all contribute in varying degrees to what has been popularized as 'Colony Collapse Disorder.' For wild bees, threats come from loss of habitat, reduction of floral resources, loss of nesting sites, and the use of the chemicals in agricultural. . ."*

- Steve Hendrix, Ph.D.

*"We understand that this project alone will not save bees, however, it is a way of giving people, particularly young people, the empowerment, voice and inspiration to improve the environment and make the world a better place."*

- Elena Smyrniotis

## AVAILABILITY AND SPECIFICATIONS

**CONTENTS:** The Bee Project is intended as an outdoor installation comprised of modular hexagon structures that resemble honeycomb. These vary in height from 3 to 6 feet, and are constructed of durable carbon steel mesh, painted yellow. Included as part of the package are suggestions for educators to guide students through the process of creating and constructing bees from recycled materials to populate the installation.

**FEE:** Affordable, cost-effective fee for 2 or 3 months or longer plus shipping & insurance; with possible option to purchase

**DIGITAL SUPPORT DOCS:** Education, Press, and Registration

**INSTALLATION AND BEE CONSTRUCTION:** Supported by On-line Video Instructions including suggested designs, materials and tools

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING:** Lectures, Demonstrations & Workshops by the creator of the bee project available for a modest fee plus travel-related expenses

**AVAILABILITY:** March 2022 and thereafter

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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**MEMBER:** College Art Association

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Serving as Consulting Curator is the President of the traveling exhibition company, David J. Wagner, L.L.C.

For project updates, visit: [elenasmyrniotis.com/bee-project](http://elenasmyrniotis.com/bee-project)