

LIFE TREE

Vancouver

6:10 1000

What was the “inspiration” for the design of this effigy?

Our inspiration is the majestic temperate rainforest around Vancouver. Our numerous parks are home to towering trees that provide shelter and shade with stoic grace making a walk through these areas a peaceful retreat. Trees are a symbol of life, quietly cleaning our air and supporting our ecosystem; they connects us like the DNA we all share. The Life Tree is a amalgamation of these two symbols, with the branches circling upwards in a helix around the unifying core of the trunk. Each branch ends in a leaf, twinned with the leaf on the opposite side of the truck but with each set painted in a range of colors. These aspects respectively reflect the duality inherent in reproduction and the diversity which is necessary for genetic strength.

What impact does the effigy have on the local community?

The project was the catalyst for bringing several new burners into the community and creating new connections between existing burners, many of whom live in the same neighborhood. During the construction process, we were able to gain and share knowledge about design, construction, art and conducting a safe and effective burn. Through our outreach such as participation in our local MakerFaire, we educated a great number of people about Burning Man and about the Mountain Pine Beetle affecting our forests.

What interesting story happened during the design and execution of this project?

The design of the Tree has been extremely organic as problems were solved and new ideas were incorporated. The diversity of creative input was of great benefit to the project, as people took the ‘seed’ of our Design Lead David’s vision and added their own ideas.

The dynamic surrounding the pine beetle-affected wood has also been very interesting, with the lumber industry repeatedly referring to it disparagingly. Despite this, much of this wood is placed it into the lumber supply, often after having undergone intensive chemical treatments to remove the blue stain that is a byproduct of the beetle infestation. We used the lumber in its natural state and have educated the public to remove misconceptions about its use.

What does the effigy hope to convey to the greater community?

Through our effigy we would like to convey a strong sense of the diversity found in both the city of Vancouver and the coastal ecosystem that surrounds it. We have four leaf designs, each with a unique shape and color to convey the pluralism that we embrace as Vancouverites. We would also like to bring awareness to the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic which is ravaging the forests of British Columbia. We have done this by constructing the tree’s truck of beetle-affected lumber and dedicating a leaf design to the issue. The Mountain Pine Beetle is an example of fertility run amok, as warmer temperatures caused by climate change although their population to flourish, causing carbon dioxide to be released from the trees and creating a vicious cycle.

What materials were used in the construction of this effigy?

To bring attention to a serious issue affecting the forests of western North America, we used pine lumber which has been reclaimed following Mountain Pine Beetle infestation. We have also used non-toxic stains and lights donated by the community!

CORE Art Walk Activities

Join the Life Tree crew to learn about the Mountain Pine Beetle and bring your leather goods/clothes to get them branded with a pine beetle! There will also be some surprises in store so be sure to stop on by!

This was the first Burning Man art piece for the initial group starting the project, so it was a great learning experience. The help and participation of the community has been outstanding and inspirational. Thanks everyone!

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