

Deforestation-Disruption Project Description – February, 2024

Broken Forests EcoArtists are making deliberate, direct and resonant artistic actions on the land in 2024. These new works will include installations, performances, video projections and sound art presentations. They will also include a public exhibition/gathering to expose/discuss current and future forestry plans for British Columbia. Our projects are emergent, and meant to engage discussion and to reach out to all sectors of the Canadian Public.

The BF EcoArtists group (including artists chosen from across Canada) will create, install and perform 12 art projects focusing on the stated themes in and around Greater Victoria and within the endangered forests near Port Renfrew, B.C. For this **Deforestation/Disruption Project** artists will be presenting works that reflect upon such themes as: “Blockading Progress”, “Revivifying Bio-diversity”, “Regenerating Forest Chaos” and “Forming Poly-cultural Relationships”.

Invited artists include: Paul Walde (Victoria), Tasha Lavdovsky (Jordan River), Rande Cook (Victoria), Ernest Daetwyler (Atwood, ON), Johannes Zits (Toronto), Simon Frank (Hamilton), Quan Steele (Etobicoke), Dermot Wilson (North Bay), Sid Bobb (Nipissing First Nation), Donald Chretien (Nipissing First Nation), Nicola Jane Whiting (Kitchener) and Norma Vieira (Campinas, Brazil).

The Deforestation/Disruption Project will explore new artistic “terrain” and create land based contemporary art installations that comment upon the extraction practices of BC forestry corporations and current efforts, on the part of scientists and environmental activists, to implement Regenerative Forestry practices in all Western Canadian coastal forests.

The ongoing work of the Broken Forests Eco-Artists Group has addressed threatened green and forest spaces in several regions in the recent past. Through various artistic practices and engagements in the natural environment, we hope to encourage residents, hikers, forestry workers, keepers of the land and all affected peoples to consider the ramifications of the loss of Old Growth trees and biologically diverse forested areas; the impacts on all beings, including humans, of these commercial activities. We also hope audiences will participate in discussions offering up ways and means of creating Regenerative Forests in B.C. and lands cared for by Salish nations of the west coast. Deforestation/Disruption is not only focusing on our relationships to the land, but also our relationships to complex ecologies happening within this rapidly changing climate and environment.

In this project we have assembled a diverse group of Canadian contemporary artists from Indigenous, to settled Canadians, to new Canadians coming together as a unified voice and raising awareness of the destruction of some of the last Old Growth coastal forests in the World. Deforestation/Disruption directly addresses the commercial exploitation and destruction of the last remaining forested and "wilderness" areas in existence.

These short-term Interventions and site-specific performances will be installed in an urban environment and at two forest sites near Victoria, B.C. on beaches, clearcuts and along publicly accessible trails (the West Coast Trail). Our planned public discussions and workshops will be held at the Legacy Gallery and the University of Victoria and in the forests near Port Renfrew, B.C. The installations will all speak to the life and welfare of the forest and natural spaces threatened by the global and unchecked demand for wood products and by ineffective or destructive forestry practices.

The Broken Forest Eco-Artist Group creates contemporary land based environmental installations to raise awareness and encourage forest and land protection. We are a diverse group of artists of action and we care about the natural environment.

Our multi-disciplinary artistic practices reflect our desire for a better tomorrow, a better future, an addressing of climate change and climate anxiety. We are about the land, the forests, the water. Our language is site-specific contemporary art and we come together with all others who will stand with us in engagement with the land.

In this project we also recognize the lack of consultation with First Nations on the sale and depletion of Old Growth forests and biologically diverse lands in British Columbia. In this project, we will be not only seeking consent but will also be in direct collaboration with Indigenous artists and with communities across Vancouver Island and within the Coastal Salish traditional lands.

Timeline and Work Plan (Obviously subject to change)

- Artist site visit for choosing locations – Sept. 14 – 20, 2023
- Artist statements on specifics for their projects – Oct. 14-20, 2023
- Confirm artists and obtain contracts - Sept. 15th, 2023
- Branding and marketing due - April 20th, 2024
- Launch web presence on brokenforests.com - May 20th, 2024
- Contracts and permits from land owners signed - May 20th, 2024
- Artists featured in blog posts on website, starting May 21st, 2024
- Media release in both southern and northern Ontario – July 30th, 2024
- Create QR code links for the projects – Aug.1st, 2024
- Materials lists for artists installations due - July 5th, 2024
- Transportation requirements for works installed at the site – July 20th, 2024
- Create signage – July 10th, 2024
- Site visit for any necessary preparations - August 11th, 2024
- Printed materials due - August 11th, 2024
- Secure volunteers for installation date – Aug. 11th, 2024
- Final site preparation, all tools and necessary materials for installing procured or located to area - Aug. 14, 2024
- Installation date - Land based installations and performances – Aug. 15th, 2024
- Opening and curator talk at the site - Aug. 15th, 2024
- Legacy Gallery reception and Media Conference - Aug. 18, 2024
- Confirmation of Eco-Artists for Columbia Valley Interventions - Sept., 2024
- Site-planning in second chosen Intervention sites in Invermere and Golden, B.C. - Sept., 2024

Through these projects we hope to develop a new area of discourse, new purposes for our artworks and new audiences for contemporary art. We hope to fill an important role for Canadians affected by rampant and often ill-considered deforestation practices and the subsequent “erasure” of healthy natural environments by extraction and expansion industries.

Because the BC Forestry practices and continued development will affect Indigenous communities across British Columbia, there will be other sites across the province for installations of this show (and more audiences interested in these themes). This plan describes the first iteration of Deforestation/Disruption and the series of exhibitions, site interventions and performances to be installed in the Victoria/Port Renfrew area.

This Project Description centres around a show being installed next summer, but we are confirming other locations (Columbia Valley) to place these installation in other threatened forests across BC. This body of work has relevance to many places throughout Canada because many forests are suffering from rampant and unchecked deforestation. As such, the first iteration will be installed in August, 2024. We will be looking to set this show up again, at a new location, in the summer of 2025. We are currently in conversation with different conservation authorities around partnering for installations in the summer in the interior of the province.

If we can gain permission to install artworks on the grounds of the University of Victoria, clearcut areas in the coastal rainforest and in the trees, the works themselves will be viewed publicly and witnessed through marketing and news releases. We have already engaged with local agencies and galleries around the awareness of Eco-arts and the scope of the project (Legacy and Open Space). These meetings resulted in important points preparing us for on site forums focusing

on contemporary art practices and the ecologies to which they speak.

In site specific work, we are considering the very nature of humanity, Indigeneity, immigration, and stewardship by addressing ecological depletion and exploitation.

We will be using Broken Forests and NRCC Facebook pages, Instagram, and Vimeo to engage online. These are linked to both the Broken Forests Group and NRCC websites which will host different materials relevant to the projects. NRCC will host promotional materials, Broken Forests Group will host promotional materials, blog posts, media releases, artists statements, artists bios, curatorial statements, galleries, videos.

The Awi' Nakola Artists Group and Legacy Gallery in Victoria will cross-promote the show nation-wide. Signage with QR codes will be installed at the sites to enable the public to directly engage with the work by easy access to the online materials.

These activities are central to the mandate of the Broken Forests Eco-Artists Group, a discursive and makers' space dedicated to fostering global bio-diversity and ending the exploitation of Wilderness areas and Sacred Sites all over the planet. For last year's Escarpment/Erasure project (Collingwood, Ontario, May - July, 2022), we successfully moved from work that exists with and on the land into work that stands in principled engagement around issues of deforestation, climate change and ecological destruction that are facing the planet. The Broken Forests Group has created site actions and environmental awareness campaigns in Canada, Brazil and Poland since 2018. We believe that contemporary artistic practice now includes direct engagement with the landscape and environment. This project allows artists and their works to create awareness and dialogue that will affect social and environmental change.

In this project we will be engaging with site owners, loggers, forestry managers, First Nations, and the land itself as we create spaces for artistic engagement in Victoria and Old Growth groves in the area. Our exhibitions have always focused on awareness building within these fragile and vulnerable ecologies through artistic works that are self aware, reflexive, and critique the political landscapes of conservation, forestry management, and the specifics of threatened ecologies.



Quan Steele – Sunset of the Bone People