

M ____ S _____ '13

Working Title: Know Your Trees!

Type of Project: printmaking/public art

Project Description: My project: to turn the Brandeis campus into a makeshift arboretum. I want to combine the skills I've learned in Field Biology and printmaking classes to achieve this goal. I will select chunks of campus- starting with the road leading from the Village to Rabb, ID all the trees, and then attach semi-permanent labels with each tree's Latin and English names. Each label will be designed to include an element of woodblock print and will be handwritten. I want to laminate each label and attach them with wire or nails to each tree so that they stay as long as possible. This project will be ongoing throughout the semester so that I can label as many trees on campus as time allows. There are a wide variety of trees on this campus, but many go unnoticed; people tend to care more for things they know about than the ones they don't. So my goal is to draw attention to this beautiful element of our campus and foster a sense of ownership for Brandeis' wildlife (or landscaped-life) among the student body.

Total amount requested- \$360

Other funding: I will be using the laminating machine in the Student Activities office. As far as the budget goes, I do not have any other funding and also cannot afford to lay out money for reimbursement. I would need to work out a way to pay for these items without laying out the money myself.

Faculty Contact: Eric Olsen

Project Statement: Early last spring, I visited Boston's Arnold Arboretum for the first time. Walking among the different species of cherries, birches, beeches, and vines, I began to notice the subtleties of species variation in a way that had been previously sparked by the work my Fall 2011 Field Biology class had done. After examining each interesting tree in great detail, I returned back to Brandeis for the day and realized I had been completely spoiled by the presence of the arboretum's labels. Although I could identify a significant number of trees on campus, I wanted to know far more than was--and is--possible through the amount of information given about campus wildlife. Then I enrolled in a printmaking course with Alfredo Gisholt, and the idea to label campus trees myself began to take root.

For my project, I will be working under the guidance of Eric Olson, a professor of biology in the Heller School. The first step will be identifying as many trees as possible, mapping out their locations, and keeping a count of each type of tree on campus. I will start by IDing trees on the road leading from the Village to the SCC, up to Volen and the library, past Usdan and ending at the patch of pines by the Rabb bus stop. Once I have assessed the time commitment of this, I will attempt to ID the trees in other parts of campus which receive significant foot traffic: the area within Rabb Quad, around the arts buildings, by the Louis Brandeis statue and Rosenthal Quad, and hopefully around the science buildings as well. I'd like to get other students involved in this step as well, possibly by reaching out to the Ecology Club, Field Biology class participants, or including information about the project in the student-wide weekly emails.

The next step is making the labels. I will design a series of 4"x3" woodblocks, separated by genus or family, and use each one to write the Latin and English names of each species of tree. The reverse side of the labels will include a small blurb about the tree- where it originates, its reproductive habits, and its cultural or medicinal historical value. They also may include a direct translation of the Latin name—this is of particular interest to me as a Classics major! In cases where there are clumps of the same species, I may label one or two of them instead of each individual in order that I have enough time and resources to get to as many parts of campus as possible. To make these labels semi-permanent, I'd like to laminate each one and attach it by wire or nails to the trees. If the demand is

there, I'd like to involve other students in this step as well. As far as the printmaking itself goes, I would like to get finer tools than the ones I currently own in order to make the prints as detailed as possible. I expect to do a lot of experimenting in this area- if these labels are to be semi-permanent, they should be quality work. In a real, accredited arboretum, the tree labels include Latin and English names, the place where the arboretum procured the specimen from, and the year of procurement. I will depart from that tradition by focusing more on the aesthetic value of the label itself and including information that I deem more valuable for this project—that is, interesting information about each tree—in lieu of technical information like the time and place whence each individual specimen came.

We are incredibly lucky that the Brandeis campus boasts such a wide selection of wildlife. We are situated on this hilly piece of earth so that large boulders and rock structures quietly peek out from behind our academic buildings, and wild turkeys, foxes, and coyotes routinely make their homes on campus itself or in the surrounding woods and wetlands. In my experience, the students of Brandeis always seems to be interested in learning more about the world around them, and I think it would foster a great appreciation for the local environment to complete this project. When spring rolls around, we breathe in the fragrant purple flowers of the trees lining the pathway between the SCC and the library and picnic among the tall pines outside of Usdan. But the only tree I've seen labelled on campus is the lone shaggy walnut beside Lemberg. In addition to the local wildlife, a good deal of Brandeis' campus is landscaped with foreign species that the student body is not likely to know much about. I think that labelling the trees on campus would inspire appreciation for local biodiversity, foster ownership among the student body of the physical campus, and overall enhance the sense of community that the students and faculty at Brandeis already love. I also think it would develop the value of environmental stewardship which the students and administration both appear to hold dear. Furthermore, I think that there is incredible potential for beauty in this project, which is why I'd like to use printmaking as the vehicle for achieving these goals.

Space: Please refer to the campus map on my Tumblr page to see the areas of priority in the tree labeling process.

Project Goals:

1. Hone my own tree identification skills while sparking interest in tree ID in other students.
2. Practice my printmaking skills through the beautification of campus.
3. Help students become more aware and appreciative of the local environment; part of my project will involve including other students in the tree ID and labelling process.

Budget:

paper ~\$60, ink ~\$20, wood ~\$20, tools ~\$60, laminating ~\$150, wire ~\$25, nails ~\$25

Total ~\$275-300

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Working Title: Meditations in an Emergency

Graduate Student 2015 (projected)

Type of Project: Music, Sculpture, Installation or public art, Other performance

Project Description: Meditations in an Emergency, based on ideas of Roland Barthes and poetry of Frank O'Hara, is a pair of portals with specially made and designed musical instruments placed opposite and far away from each other, in which viewers/performers standing at a portal can communicate through sound, which can only be heard at either portal, not in between. With a public display of intimate communication and connection, this project aims to explore our desire for communication and our simultaneous desire for anonymity and deep, complex connections.

Budget: \$500

Other Funding: Personal funds (confirmed) - \$100, In-kind support / use of Goldman-Schwartz tools (confirmed) - \$75"

Faculty Contact: Deb Todd Wheeler

Project Statement: In order to hide without lying... I shall divide the economy of my signs. The task of the verbal signs will be to silence, to mask, to deceive: I shall never account, verbally, for the excesses of my sentiment... I can do everything with my language, but not with my body. What I hide by my language, my body utters." (Roland Barthes)

Roland Barthes, in the above excerpt from a chapter in *A Lover's Discourse* (1977) titled "Dark Glasses / cacher - to hide", articulates the constant dualism present in human interaction and communication. Our language and our body may communicate a cohesive, unified message or they may each communicate different, conflicting messages, the conflict of which may be the true message we hope to get across. Here, Barthes, known for his work with semiotics among much else, pinpoints how we deliberately separate the verbal sign from the bodily sign "in order to hide without lying."

This (sometimes deliberate) disconnect between a planned, directed verbal utterance and the mute truthfulness of body language can be seen every day, from dark glasses worn indoors to provoke an expression of concern for the wearer, to someone unaccustomed to lying who either moves or says too much, to an expression of sympathy belied by unsympathetic eyes.

This project, *Meditations in an Emergency*, takes its title from the collection of poetry by Frank O'Hara and directly responds to these notions of conflict in communication. *Meditations in an Emergency* will consist of a pair of outdoor structures, placed far away from each other, whose forms will borrow elements from acoustic mirrors (whisper dishes), religious gates, altars, and temporary sacred spaces. Each structure will act as a portal for communication, in which a person standing in one portal can communicate aurally (but not visually) with another person standing in the other portal. This non-verbal sonic communication will be made possible by acoustic mirrors (or other surfaces that direct and reflect sound) placed in the structures. In each portal, there will be an acoustic musical instrument specifically designed to create sounds that can only be heard at the other end of the portal and not in the public space between. The viewer/performer standing at a portal will be the only one able to hear the music from the other portal, creating a kind of intimate connection made even more intimate through the public setting.

With this public display of intimate communication and connection, *Meditations in an Emergency* aims to explore our desire for communication and our simultaneous desire for anonymity. This piece

also responds to the Barthes excerpt above, by creating a voyeuristic, multi-layered experience of performance in the viewer/performers and their audience (who they cannot see directly while in the portals), ideally provoking a recursive experience of non-verbal, non-literal, complex communication.

This project involves aspects of many disciplines including: physics, acoustics, architecture, instrument design, music composition, performance, sculpture, construction, poetry and philosophy and will be built on the Brandeis campus, using tools and resources from the Goldman-Schwartz sculpture studio. Relevant experience regarding the realization of this project includes sculpture classes with Tory Fair (past: 3D design, Intermediate Sculpture, Implicating the Body in Sculpture), Senior Studio in sculpture with Deb Todd Wheeler (current), stroke, a large-scale site-specific multimedia installation on the Rose Art Museum lawn for the 2012 Leonard Bernstein Festival of the Creative Arts, doctoral coursework and creative work in music composition and theory, instrumental performance studies (piano, voice, erhu, guzheng, and others), and other professional experience in concert and event production.

I would like to work with the Bernstein Festival of the Arts to find an appropriate location for this outdoor public installation.

Goals:

1. To create an opportunity for the Brandeis community to explore the experience of communicating through sound and structure.
2. To build structures that successfully transmit sound across a large distance without the use of active technology.
3. To continue working in interdisciplinary art in order to clarify my artistic identity and to receive critical feedback about my work."

Materials (steel, wood, wire, paint, tools, etc): \$675

Total amount requested from Bernstein Festival of the Arts: \$500"