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First iteration of proposal with Trevor Bonas

1. OVERVIEW

Hollow

We propose a project that focuses on the Hollow Tree (Fig. 1), a touristic attraction in Stanley Park, and the windstorm of 2006. The project is made up of a brochure and a projection event, as well as an off-site video screening; the brochure offers a divergent perspective on the tree, while the projection responds to the tree's surroundings and history. We consider the tree's history and presence in culture to further a discussion on human apprehension of natural phenomena, our selective monumentalization of nature, and the anthropocene.



Figure. 1

2. RESEARCH AND PROCESS

A park's ecosystem holds a wide range of timelines, some that precede, and some that might succeed, a nation's life. This suggests a variety of processes--from geological formations on the shoreline to ecological facilitation on nursery logs. These processes happen in parallel and/or intersect with each other. This idea led us to research how human activity, as one of those timelines, is influencing other processes in Stanley Park. We looked into the theory of the Anthropocene — the geological period mainly regulated by human activity — in its effects on Stanley Park's diverse populations (non-human, human, non-animal, etc.). With this theory, we saw how the local occurrences in the park's environment are discursively and physically connected to global phenomena. We further employed Lucy Lippard's term "land use"¹ to expand the array of human activities on the land and how these shape our relationship to land. With this perspective in mind, we began researching both the physical and cultural land uses in Stanley Park and its adjacent areas. We identified industries that have had material impact on the land. Upon these diggings, we found that the relationship between the park as a colonial logging site, touristic experience, and ecological habitat was of interest to us all.

In *Undermining*, Lippard also delineates how complicit art, culture, and tourism can be in allowing an ecological plundering of the earth. Researching further, we came upon the windstorm of 2006 and its effects on the Hollow Tree. This specific tree is a touristic spot that has attracted primarily settler visitors since before the park existed as such (Fig. 2). Once a Western red cedar of roughly 800 years, the trunk that remains was badly damaged during the windstorm (Fig.3). After this, a number of citizens did not allow its removal by the Parks Board, instead they privately funded keeping it up with artificial concrete and metal "roots." The monumentalization of this trunk to the point of artificially suspending it took it from being an ecological and cultural element to strictly a cultural one. We feel that it has been removed from its biological decaying and nursing process in the name of tourism and settler colonial canadian history. This process interests us because of how it speaks of human's controlling use of park land, and how this control shapes our perspective on natural processes to the point that we interrupt or misunderstand nature's doing.

When we found out that the Hollow Tree was set on fire twice since its upholding, it ignited our imaginations as to what a future where the trunk could finally be used as firewood or left to decay would look like. What would our perception of natural phenomena, as the cultural and geological agents that we are, be like in order for us to allow this to happen? How could we conceptually come to understand the effects of our selective monumentalization of nature? Could this deepen our understanding of our own nature as a species and our place in the biosphere? Finally, if we respectfully regard the Hollow Tree as a sentient being-who witnesses all of these actions taken on its existence- how do we imagine the remains perceive all of this? These questions emerged through our research, and we found the Hollow tree as a rich historical, cultural, and touristic site to work them through.

¹ Lippard Lucy. "Undermining: A Wild Ride Through Land Use, Politics, and Art in the Changing West." New Press New York 2014. Print. 6.



Fig. 2. Fig 3.

3. CONCEPT

We envision the brochure and projection event as complementary elements to address the intersecting meanings the Hollow Tree and the Windstorm of 2006 carry. We feel both elements will better encourage discussion surrounding our subjects. Our site will be directly in front of the tree and its circumambient field (Fig. 4) with the tree as our nucleus. Our artwork's components are as follows:

i. **A brochure** containing photographs of the tree, in its previous location, in a historical or archival context, its possible disappearance, and its current state. This will be accompanied by a text discussing our conceptualizing of “natural disasters” in relation to the Hollow Tree. If possible, this text will be commissioned from an ecology expert who will be compensated accordingly. Its layout is closely inspired by City of Vancouver's Public Art Program brochures. It will also help promote and locate our classmate's events and installations. Our brochure will be available at Park Board buildings, touristic information stands, SFU campuses, as well as at the Hollow Tree itself. (Fig.4) The brochure will be printed and released about two weeks before the other events. We expect to print a run of approximately 500 copies.

ii. **An event to display a projection piece** consisting of images (fire, windstorms, colours, etc.) (Fig.5) onto the tree, referencing the two previous acts of arson committed against it as well as the tree's condition as a maintained cultural monument. The projection will be created with projection mapping and specialized lighting software, and it will utilize projectors, lights and other stage equipment. The natural sounds and elements will contribute to our projects atmosphere, as well as our lighting of the surrounding area. The event will be held in the evening to ensure the images can be viewed clearly, respecting the park's' hours of operation. We will work with available power supplies, or bring a generator to power the equipment. We will ensure to coordinate with the Park's schedule, ideally working towards the evening of either June 22nd or June 23rd.

A short video will be shown in the A-frame building and posted online. It will consist of images of our interventions superimposed with other visual works surrounding the tree. The intention will be to question the place a monumentalized nature holds. This may be exhibited before and/or after the

events of June 22nd/23rd.

The community of metro Vancouver, the arts community, and personal acquaintances, as well as the participants of Landmarks 2017 will be invited to witness our project. At the beginning of our performance we wish to thank the hosting nations of the area we perform on and the park's board cultural planner Rena Soutar has agreed to help us with this. Subsequent projects coming out of the process and documentation may follow independent of Landmarks 2017 and Laboratory Landscape timelines.

Budget

*fees are either an approximate or subjected to availability ** projectors and lighting will first be requested from SFU free of charge

1. 500 copies brochures	600
2. Commissioned text (300-550 according to PWAC guidelines)	400
3. Projector (3 days @ 50)	150
4. Lighting (100-200)	150
5. Fog machine juice	25
6. Portable generator weekly ent	184

Approx. Total:

CAD 1509



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

3. CONTEXT OF PROPOSED WORK

Miwon Kwon was influential in our understanding of public art. The project that we are constructing fits into two of Miwon Kwon's paradigms for public art². The first is "art as public spaces," where the work is "less object-oriented and more site-conscious art that [seeks] greater integration between art, architecture, and the landscape." Our proposed work is almost entirely site specific — it uses the Hollow Tree as its focus to explore or instigate discussion on topics like regulation, human activity, tourism, colonialism, preservation, nostalgia, etc. The second paradigm, "art in the public interest," relates to our project since we will not be building a permanent structure, but will instead construct a temporary space to facilitate an event that aims to develop cultural, aesthetic and ecological discussion. This tree is not isolated from already existing artworks; most notably it has been cast in a gold likeness by Douglas Coupland and placed at Marine drive and Cambie (Fig.7). His public artwork, *Golden Tree* (2016), monumentalized the dead tree, whose last growth rings appeared in 1867. Though he aimed to address the topics and memories of the community around the hollow tree we feel he further commodified it. He even said, "I think the funniest sensation would be if someone arrived here, and maybe lived around the "Golden Tree" and drove around the park one day and said, 'What's that?' and didn't realize that the Hollow Tree existed in the first place."³ His approach perpetuates an ecological separation from the tree and its context.

² "Miwon Kwon: Public Art and Urban Identities." Eipcp. 6 April, 2017.

³ Griffin, Kevin. Douglas Coupland To Create Replica of Hollow Tree for Development at Marine Drive and Cambie. Vancouver Sun. 3 March, 2003.

Cease Wyss is another artist whose work in Stanley park addresses the redwood cedar's role for both humans and nature (Fig. 8). We were able to discuss these implications with Wyss during a class guided by her through Stanley Park. We want to include a similar awareness in our work, enhancing it through an increased nuance of perception. Selena Couture's *Performing History and Land* (2017) book has given our group further nuanced insight in considering the park's colonial history, which we will use when considering the site, especially in regard to "grounded practices" that include interactions between land and performance based practises which strategies tactically engage the land.

Collectives such as *Decolonize This Place* inspired us with their event-based work intended to bring people together in the name of art to shift collective perspectives. Their *Radical Tour of Natural History Museums* (2016) around the US inspired us to deconstruct established narratives around monuments with didactic material. The use of projection is another strategy used by some of these collectives, such as G.U.L.F. with their *Illuminator project* (2016) (Fig. 9) for institutional critique. Ala Plástica's *Reed/Emergent Species* (1995) is another useful reference in their use of a native reed species in a range of biological and artistic processes: the plant became an ecological ally to mobilize their socio-political intentions. Finally, Britt Kramvig & Margrethe Petterson *Living Land - Below as Above* (2015) (Fig. 10) reminded us to listen to actors in the ecosystem other than ourselves. Their soundwalk respects and listens to the land to find answers in how to continue living on it responsibly; this made us reconsider our project site's soundscapes and enhance its voice.



Fig. 7 Fig. 8



Fig. 9 Fig. 10

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