

Letter of Interest:

Dear Sebastopol Public Arts Committee Members

Thank you for providing continued support for artists and art that helps make our small town be more beautiful and cared about. We are happy to attach our application for the Sebastopol South Entrance Public Art Project. These mushroom sculptures have been living in our minds for over a year now, and thanks to this application, we are closer to making the project a reality.

Making electronics work in an outdoor environment is not an easy task. The sculpture we are presenting will work as a beautiful static piece as well as when it is fully motion-activated. We have learned from various art projects (The Meter Made outdoor sculpture for the City of Santa Rosa with Dana Woodman, and other indoor pieces) how to maximize the uptime of the electronics and minimize the maintenance required.

We are striving to make these metal mushrooms look as “organic” as possible. This means they are not intended to evoke the “junk art” aesthetic. Careful attention to detail will help that become a reality. The metal sculpture will be powder coated, and should not require anything more than a pressure wash cleaning once in a while.

We are hoping that the mushrooms will become a joyful and iconic stopping point for locals and visitors, and that people will want to have their pictures taken with the mushrooms!

Thank you.

Jim Wheaton & Briona Hendren

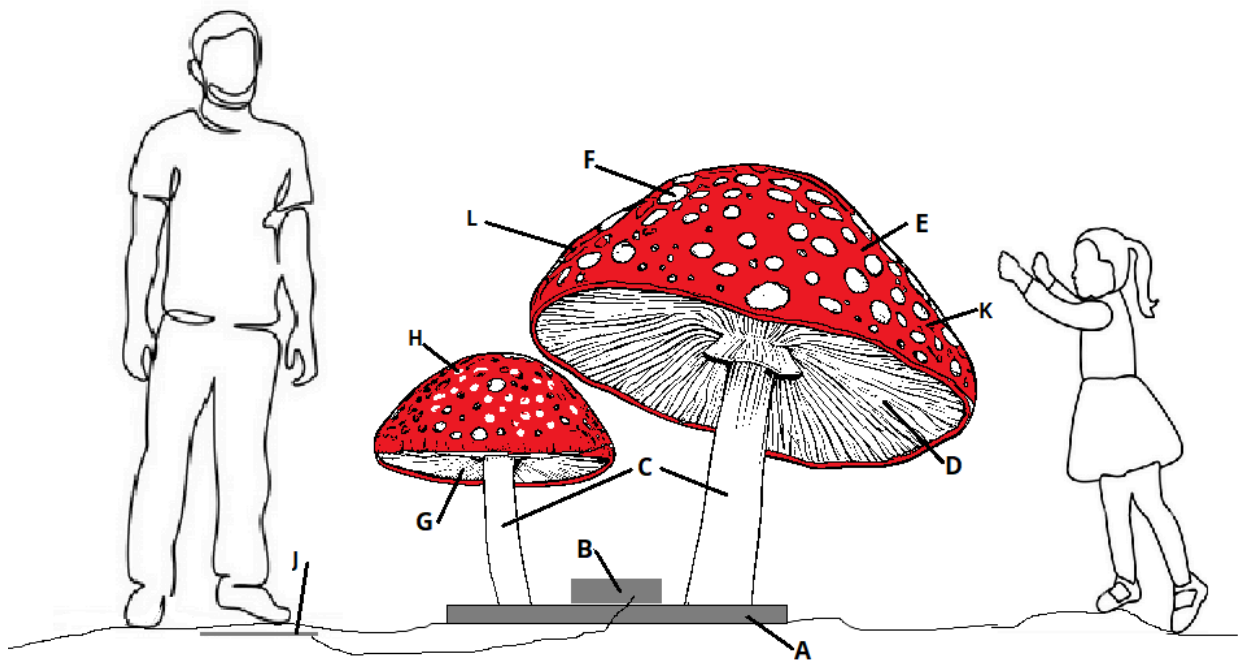


Art Description:

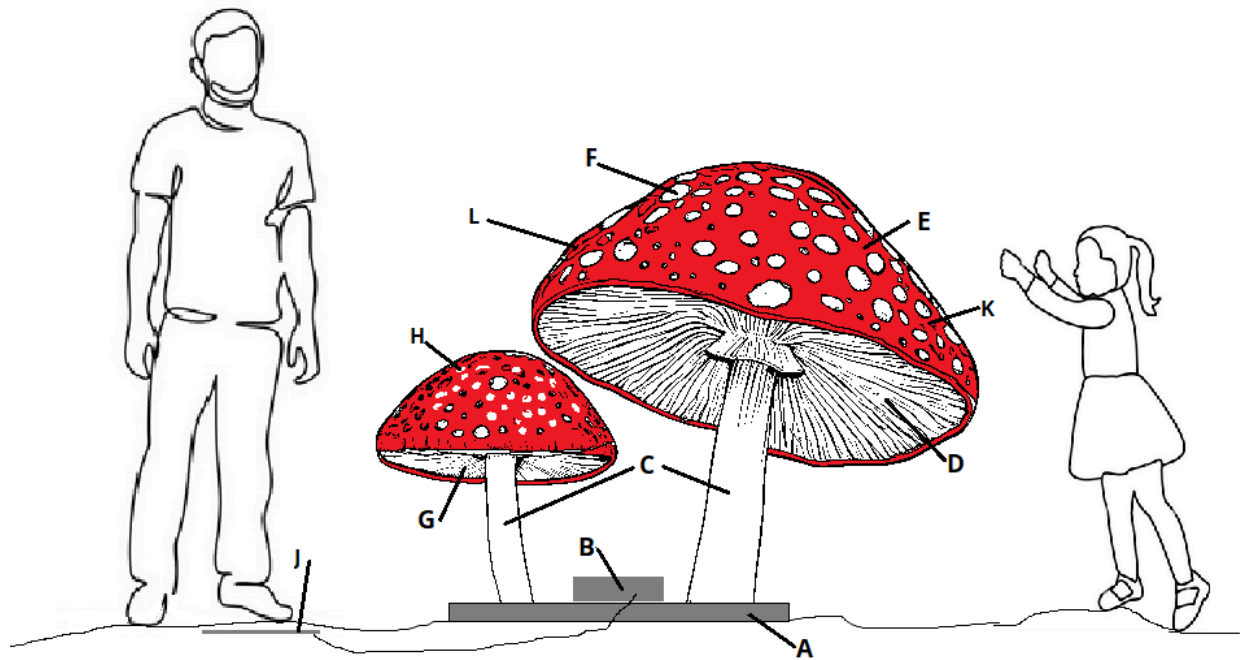
“Amanitas Sebastopolius” or “The Mushroom Sculpture”

An interactive, outdoor sculpture for Sebastopol.

A pair of steel mushrooms will evoke a sense of wonder, announcing the Joe Rodota trailhead and entrance to downtown Sebastopol. The mushrooms are designed to be approached and touched by people. The interactivity (light and sound) is designed to be very subtle, and inactive during the day. But at dusk and in the evening it will be more noticeable, as soft lights and sounds are triggered by sensing the presence of people nearby. The goal is to evoke a sense of wonder and joy in passers-by. Even cars driving by should be able to catch a glimpse and immediately recognize these special works of nature. Although the interactivity is part of what motivates us as artists, the sculpture will also stand on its own as a non-active, durable structure that will last for decades.



Sculpture Details



A - Steel plate. Designed with mounting holes to be bolted to concrete pad, or can be placed on a prepared compacted earth, or buried under the soil to make the sculpture more integrated into the earth. Approximate size will be 4' x 6'.

B - Control box. Contains electronics and battery in a theft-proof, waterproof box with plaque on top identifying the sculpture and artists. The box has a lockable hatch which can be used to access the electronics and also the battery can be swapped out with a fresh battery on a periodic basis.

C - Metal Stems - Hollow steel tubes that have been hand forged or “roughed up” to give an organic appearance. Strong enough to support the weight of the caps and even if people climb on the sculpture.

D - Gills - Thin, metallic, folded surface with some translucency or holes in some areas. There are low intensity colored lights inside the cap which can cast a glowing light onto the gills.

E - Cap - Metallic surface that is powder-coated bright red. Starts out smooth at the shop. Holes are drilled and the surface is flattened in places where the warts will be welded, bolted or epoxied.

F - Warts - There are white metallic “warts” that are welded onto the surface. Many of the warts are glass or crystal formations that are glued to the surface. The glass warts are on top of holes that are drilled through the cap, revealing a single LED that can shine up through the glass wart. We estimate about 30-40 LED warts.

G - Speaker - embedded in the cap, pointing down through the gills. Weather proof exposure with small holes drilled in the gills.

H - Light Sensor - measures the ambient light so the sculpture knows when it is night time.

J - Pressure Sensor - optional pressure sensor buried under earth to detect when someone is standing close to the sculpture..

K - Proximity Sensors - either IR or ultrasonic sensors facing out from the cap. Can detect the presence of people standing close to the sculpture.

LED Lighting

The LED lights in the warts will be off during the daylight hours. During the dark hours they will be on and will show various colors that slowly change. It is possible to program a wave effect of the warts turning colors from left to right or inside to outside. There are programs that happen when no people are nearby so that cars driving by will be attracted to the subtle light show.

The Gill-light is a subtle glow that will pulse by changing brightness or color slowly. It will also change its behavior in the presence of people.

Audio

A small speaker is embedded in the cap pointing down through the gills. When it is quiet and dark there is a very low-volume sound. The sound design will be more of a natural sound (think wind/rain/synth) than musical. When people are nearby the volume is increased and the sounds will change, encouraging the quiet admiration of the mushrooms.

Interactivity and Sensors

The sculpture will have some ability to detect the presence of people nearby. We have three options in mind, and it will require some experimentation to decide upon the final configuration.

A capacitive touch capability would allow the electronics to determine when the mushrooms are being touched. We have used this technology in the lab but haven't explored how it works outdoors in various weather conditions, but we really do want to have the mushrooms interact when they are touched.

An ultrasonic sensor placed inside the mushroom could detect motion within a few feet of the sculpture in certain directions.

A pressure sensitive plate could be buried under the ground close to the sculpture and send a signal to the electronics when weight is placed upon it.

The idea is to have the lights and/or sound react to the presence of people nearby.

Maintenance

A 12V deep cycle lithium battery will be installed in the Control Box (B). This battery will be large enough to run the demands of the sculpture for months at a time without any recharging. A time-table of "battery swapping" will be made and the artist will maintain this schedule, replacing the battery at the intervals required to maintain operation of the electronics. Instructions on how to replace the battery will be pretty easy, so that anyone could do this in the future.

An optional solar panel "trickle" charger may be installed that would allow the battery life to be extended. Until measurements of the amperage used in normal operation of the sculpture is made, we cannot predict the battery life. But the LEDs and electronics are designed to be low-power consumers and to be dormant for most of the day.

It is possible to install a nearby solar panel that is large enough to keep the battery charged indefinitely. But this has added costs, and wiring to a nearby pole and also introduces more likely vandalism or weather decay. Nevertheless, it has advantages that allow the sculpture to operate indefinitely without much maintenance.

The battery will need to be replaced every 5 years, so that it is an added cost that will be factored into the equation.

Timeline 2024:

May	Order electronics; Mock up interactive components; Order Metal stock
June	Explore different mushroom cap metal fabrication methods
July	Fabricate the sculpture components (caps, stems, warts, gills)
August	Transport parts for powder coating and do final assembly and testing.
September	Site preparation and installation

Budget

Category	Description	Amount
Artist Fees	Design concept; electronics, power system, and metal sculpture;	\$5,000
	Metal Fabrication and Design	\$4,000
Engineering	Structural engineering fee to approve for possible (but unlikely) human climbing on	\$500
Materials	Metal Stock (4'x6' steel plate; 6" steel pipe and flanges; bolts, sheet metal for gills and warts; electronics enclosure; used tanks for caps	\$4,000
	Battery; electronics; solar charger and panel; wiring; sensors; LEDs;	\$2,400
Studio Fees	Rental space at Fabrication location	\$1,200
Transportation	Delivery and pickup for powder coating	\$500
Installation	Truck with small crane for installation	\$700
	Ground preparation	\$300
Lighting	Ambient street light will be enough for evening viewing, and the inner lighting will cast a ground glow. But if a small solar powered spot light is required it would be separate from the sculpture.	\$300
Insurance	Temporary installation insurance	\$400
Taxes	Including in materials costs above	
Documentation	Dedicated website with documentation and other information for long term maintenance and eventual part replacements, 20 years at \$50/year	\$1,000
Batteries	3 purchased for future use.	\$1,200
Subtotal	expected costs	\$21,500
Reserves	cost overruns and unexpected costs	\$3,500
Total Project costs		\$25,000

RESUMES

Wheaton, Jim 

Education:

B.S. in Philosophy, Program in Language and Mind, M.I.T. - Cambridge, MA

Work Experience:

Computer programming in small and large corporations, in high-level languages and embedded systems. Previous employers included Yamaha Music Technologies, Muscle Fish LLC, Audible Magic Corporation. Currently self-employed by Harmonic Systems, Inc.

Non-Profit Work:

- Charter Foundation (President) - Sebastopol Independent Charter School.
- Analy High School Education Foundation (President)
- Chimera Arts & Makerspace (Board member) - my current position

Awards & Honors:

- 2017 Emmy Award in Technology and Engineering (Audible Magic Corp.)
- Inventor or co-inventor on over 9 different US Patents

Public Art Projects:

The Occupy Bench - Sebastopol - I designed and helped build a 14' diameter circular set of 3 benches that are installed in the Sebastopol town square. Contracted with the City of Sebastopol. In honor of the Occupy Movement of 2012 and designed to promote human interaction between people sitting on the benches. <https://www.facebook.com/occupybench>

Meter Made - Santa Rosa - Collaborated with other artists and fabricators on a 12' high tower built out of 100 old parking meters. Each meter had LED lights that lit up in patterns and responded to local movement with an IR sensor. Installation of solar panel system and work on software and wiring. Dana Woodman was the artist. <https://www.srcity.org/761/Meter-Made>

The Bell Clock - Sebastopol - A public performance installation that will play non-religious musical themes in the form of bells or chimes at certain times of day or certain days of the year. <http://www.harmonicsystems.net/bellclock> (Private installation, 309 S. Main Street, Sebastopol).

Education

2016 BFA Sculpture with Distinction, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California
2019 AS Machine Tool Technology, Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, California
2018 AA Art, Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, California
2011 AA Social and Behavioral Sciences, Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, California
2019 Certification CNC Machine Tool Technology, Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, California
2018 Certification Manual Machine Tool Technology, Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, California

Professional Art

Affiliations

Pacific Rim Sculptors - chapter of the International Sculpture Center (current)
SOMO Arts Council (current)
Arts Society of Sonoma County
Weld Like a Woman (Founder)

Awards and

Recognition

2023 Luther Burbank Center for the Arts Honorarium
2022 City of Sebastopol - Public Arts Honorarium
2021 Voigt Family Foundation Honorarium
2020 Museums of Sonoma County Honorarium
2019 Gene Haas Foundation Scholarship
2016 Namaste Foundation Artist Stipend
2016 Make-A-Thon Art Award
2015 Commence Sculpture Project Award

Selected

Exhibitions

2024 *A Question of Balance*, Museum of Sonoma County, Santa Rosa, California
2024 *She/They*, Santa Cruz Art League, Santa Cruz, California
2024 *The Paradigm of Poison*, Available Space Art Gallery, Las Vegas, Nevada
2023-2025 *Geometry in Art*, Luther Burbank Center for the Arts, Santa Rosa, California
2023-2024 *Four Women*, Pepperwood Preserve, Santa Rosa, California
2023 *Journey to the Future*, Santa Rosa City Hall, Santa Rosa, California
2023 *Laws of Nature*, Petaluma Arts Center, Petaluma, California
2022-2023 *True North*, di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art, Napa, California
2022 *Under Current*, Horse and Plow Winery, Sebastopol, California
2020-2022 *Resilience*, Paradise Ridge Winery, Santa Rosa, California
2020-2021 *Outdoor Sculpture*, Museums of Sonoma County, Santa Rosa, California
2019-2020 *Iron Garden*, Franconia Sculpture Park, Shafer, Minnesota
2019 *When Pigs Fly*, 180 Studios, Santa Rosa, California
2018-2019 *Sculpture Now*, Peninsula Museum of Art, Burlingame, California
2018 *Forms & Sequences*, Siskiyou Arts Museum, Dunsmuir, California
2017 *September Residency Exhibition*, Arts Letters and Numbers, Averill Park, New York
2017 *Shared Spaces*, ACAD, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
2017 *Juried Group Summer Art Exhibition*, DAC Gallery, Los Angeles, California
2017 *The Next Generation Art Show*, Arts Guild of Sonoma, Sonoma, California
2017 *14th Annual National Arts Program Exhibition*, Santa Rosa Recreation & Parks, Santa Rosa, California
2016 Emerging Artist Show, Healdsburg Center for the Arts, Healdsburg, California
2016 *Sisters Exhibition*, Honey Badger Coffee, Rohnert Park, California
2016 *BFA Exhibition*, Sonoma State University Art Gallery, Rohnert Park, California
2016 *Juried Student Show*, Sonoma State University Art Gallery, Rohnert Park, California
2015 *High Art*, Sonoma Coast Surf, Petaluma, California
2015 *Commence Sculpture Project*, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California

Artist Residencies & Internships

2021 Iron Internship, Sculpture Trails Outdoor Museum, Solsberry, Indiana
2019 Hot-Metal Internship, Franconia Sculpture Park, Shafer, Minnesota
2017 Artist in Residence, Arts Letters and Numbers, Averill Park, New York
2017 Artist in Residence, Alberta College of Art and Design, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
2015-2016 Assistant Curator Internship, Healdsburg Center of the Arts, Healdsburg, California

Work

Experience

2022- Present - Curator, Voigt Family Sculpture Foundation, Sonoma County, California
2022- Present - Operations Manager, Pacific Rim Sculptors, Chapter of the International Sculpture Center
2019- Present - Arts Curator & Metal Arts Director, Chimera Arts and Makerspace, Sebastopol, California
2023 Creative Team- Artist, *Santa Rosa Forward*, Kimzin Creative & City of Santa Rosa, California
2018-2019 Sculpture Teacher Assistant, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California
2018 Bronze Sculpture Teacher Assistant, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California
2016-2017 Programming Coordinator & Metal Arts Director, Chimera Arts and Makerspace, Sebastopol, California
2016-2017 Volunteer Art Tech Assistant & Teacher Assistant, Art Department, Sonoma State University
2016 Collections Management Team, Image Winery Collection, Sonoma State University
2015-2016 Assistant Curator, "*Geometric Reflections: Celebrating Ten Years of Voigt Family Sculpture*," Paradise Ridge, Santa Rosa, California
Sept/Oct 2015 Jury Team, "*Secrets*", Museum of Contemporary Art, Marin, California
2007/2008 Photography Teacher Assistant, Rancho Cotati High School, Rohnert Park, California

Bibliography

- Dan Taylor, "Seeking Balance", The Press Democrat, January 26, 2024, <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/entertainment/santa-rosa-sculpture-exhibit-weighs-question-of-balance/>
- David Templeton, Laws of Nature, The Press Democrat, July 19, 2023, <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/entertainment/art-show-demonstrates-honors-laws-of-nature/>
- Dan Taylor, Momentum at Paradise Ridge Winery, The Press Democrat, June 9, 2023, <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/entertainment/new-sculpture-show-opens-at-paradise-ridge-winery/>
- Dan Taylor, "Luther Burbank Center sculptures explore 'Geometry in Art'", The Press Democrat, November 2, 2023, <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/entertainment/burbank-center-sculptures-explore-geometry-in-art/>
- Dan Taylor, "Resilience in Paradise", The Press Democrat, June 19, 2020
- John-Paul, "Briona Hendren Sebastopol's Athena. Strength, Art and Healing" Sebastopol Living magazine, November 2020 (cover story)

Collections

WikiUp Tennis & Swim Club
SOMO Village, Public Art Collection
Sonoma State University, Public Art Collection
as well as numerous private collections

Images of Past Work (Jim Wheaton)



Sculpture Title: "Meter Made".

Artist: Dana Woodman.

Metal Fabricators: Kyle Thompson and Mike Solari

Electronics: Jim Wheaton and Alex Wayne

Materials - powder-coated steel; LEDs and electronics

12' high and 6' in diameter at the top

Installed in 2018 in Santa Rosa (Parking lot at 5th and B). \$14,000 grant from the City of Santa Rosa and donation of 100 old parking meters.

The solar panel on top of the tower provides power to a 12V battery and electronics. The LEDs installed inside of each of the parking meters light up according to different times of day with different patterns.

Artists: Jim Wheaton and Briona Hendren



Sculpture Title: "The Occupy Bench".

Artist: Jim Wheaton

Wood Fabricators: Jim Wheaton, Peter Santulli, Steve Pierce

Installed in 2019 in Sebastopol Town Plaza

\$12,000 grant from the City of Sebastopol and donations from private individuals.

The circular 3-part bench was designed by Jim Wheaton and manufactured from reclaimed cypress wood using compound curves of wood that were steamed and glued together. The Bench was fabricated at Circle Tree Studios in Penngrove. It continues to provide a unique gathering place in downtown Sebastopol.

Artists: Jim Wheaton and Briona Hendren

Images of Past Work (Briona Hedren)



Sculpture title: *My Garden of "Heirloom" Tomatoes*

Artist: Briona Hendren

Installed in 2020 as a part of SOMO Village's permanent art collection in Rohnert Park, CA. A 5-part cement heirloom tomato installation of various sizes spanning a 16' x 12' space marking the entrance of SOMO Village's Event Center. These tomatoes are called the "meeting place" for SOMO. \$16,000 project.

Artists: Jim Wheaton and Briona Hendren



Sculpture title: *Duality* (daytime and nighttime views)

Artist: Briona Hendren

Installed in 2021 as a part of SOMO Village's permanent art collection in Rohnert Park, CA

A 6-part sculptural lighting installation (painted steel and lighting) at SOMO Villages Event Center. These stand as a figurative veil between two spaces. \$100,000 project

Artists: Jim Wheaton and Briona Hendren



Sculpture title: Kindness Matters

Artist: Briona Hendren

Installed in 2021. Private commission at Wikiup Tennis & Swim in Santa Rosa, CA

This installation is a memorial sculpture for Peter and Exine LaMonica who established the country club.

Painted Steel. \$14,000 project.

Artists: Jim Wheaton and Briona Hendren