

Poetry of the Wild/ A project that celebrates Place and Community Creativity

Description

Poetry of the Wild is centered around an installation of poetry boxes built by diverse members of communities: poets, artists, residents, students, and ecologists. The more diverse the participants the richer the project. Each box features a poem selected by the box maker, it can refer to the site or be by a locally known poet. Once the finished boxes get installed in their sites, whether indoors or out, a journal is put in each for public response. The format for the “box” is totally flexible, it can be made out of found materials, sculptural or in the format of bird houses or shrines. The only prerequisite is that it withstands the elements and public use for 3 months.

The multi layered template of this project invites diverse audience and participants to be involved. The cross-generational and cross- disciplinary nature of the project plus the investigation of local landscape to select sites, allows for meaningful participation and creative stimuli for an entire community.

Here is a list of different kinds of participants:

1. Community planners:

can include representatives of arts groups, environmental groups, schools, gardening groups, community garden groups.

2. Poets

3. Artists

4. Students

5. Poetry wardens: volunteers who check on the boxes and their contents

6. Installation crew

The inauguration of the project has always featured a “Poetry Walk” which includes the makers and poets of the boxes sharing their process and reading the poem.

The deinstallation of boxes has often been celebrated with a poetry reading and an auction of the boxes.

Role of Ana Flores

My role is that of community catalyst. I come in and explain the template to the potential planners and then do a number of public presentations and/or workshops in the community at libraries, schools, etc... I keep in regular communication, design anchoring systems and consult with box makers on how to make safe boxes for public use. If necessary I'll help with technical problems, I personally contribute one or two boxes responding to your site. What I've learned over the years is the more the community does the more its their project not mine. My process of community engagement has changed with my years of experience. If a sound design is in place, the more I let go, the better and more surprising the results. I've changed from being a choir director to the person who comes in to put down a dance floor— so everyone can dance.