



Photo by Christopher M. Carruth

## **'Earth Wear'**

**August 9th-30th, 2020**

**northwest corner of Iris/26th Street, Boulder CO**

We are pleased to announce the launch of the community public art installation, 'Earth Wear' by Creative Catalyzer director, Angie Eng. With a Boulder Arts Commission community arts grant, Eng initiated this collaborative project to raise awareness of our over-consumption and the waste we generate. Inspired by the urban street art of 'yarn bombing' where people crochet colorful yarn around tree trunks, Eng conceived of replicating that decorative action, into a socio-ecological one. She highlights the amount of plastics and electronics one household generates by transforming garbage into art. In conjunction with a global crisis of plastic and electronic waste, we witness more and more contemporary artists such as El Anatsui, Vik Muni, and Thomas Hirschhorn incorporating these materials into their work process.

When the critical period of COVID-19 struck her state, Colorado in March, Eng, like other artists and art educators around the world, assumed her project would be canceled; Her original proposal involved working with an art instructor in her 70's, a group of artists experiencing homelessness and volunteers from a support group for recovering addicts. They were to convene weekly this past spring for 3-4 hour studio workshops to make the tree wraps together at a meditation center. But instead, she received news at the peak of the COVID crisis in mid-April that she was awarded a \$5000 grant to produce a project that in the end would clock in 400+ hours to accomplish under the shelter-in-place protocol. The goal of bridging communities and empowering marginalized populations through a group art project would have to be quickly adapted. With the meditation center closed, the homeless artists scattered and no shelter to work nor video conference tools, the volunteers under shelter in place, the senior art instructor at risk, the homeless shelters in crisis, the recycling centers closed, Eng felt like she would have to put out these fires in order to get to

the river. These obstacles were familiar to any artist trying to make collaborative art under COVID-19 regulations.

After a couple of months of settling into this new existence, the project gradually took shape. 10-minute video tutorials of making each aspect of the wraps were shot and edited together. New possible collaborations were established with Mother House, a shelter for pregnant women, and Attention Homes a shelter for homeless teens. With the temporary closure of restaurants, thrift stores, recycling depots (the sources to recuperate the art materials), she would mobilize local businesses and 100+ neighbors to collect their plastic tote bags, old electronics, plastic caps, and obsolete media (CDs, tape cassettes, floppy discs).

Phase I of the project which will be installed for a brief three weeks at the North Boulder location. A more extended phase II will be on view May through July 2021 at Boulder Central Park. 6-8 trees will be decorated with recycled electronics and plastics. Artist engineer, Bryan Constanza will assist in the design and development of the interactive sound component of the e-waste tree wraps.

When people experience 'Earth Wear', they will not just be gazing at a socially-engaged art project, but moreover interacting with a collective accomplishment made by many together (but separate) under COVID-19.

This project was funded by a grant from the Boulder Arts Commission, an agency of the Boulder City Council. It was co-produced by Creative Catalyzers and made possible by the donations and support of Mother House, ArtParts, Green Girl Recycling, Respect Your Mother Recycling, and the Parkside HOA. Special thanks to the 100+ individuals who put time, energy, and recycled material donations into this project.



Creative Catalyzers is a nonprofit cultural leadership organization founded in 2020 serving Boulder County. We are a group of leaders from four main sectors

of society: the tech industry, the arts, sustainable businesses, and human service organizations. We have chosen these four sectors of the community because they reflect our values and dedication to increasing innovation, creativity, sustainable practices, and inclusivity. Our goal is to instill the value that art is a necessary catalyst for a united and prosperous community.



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